

Newsletter

August 2022

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

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TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transition Minister

LOOKING UP, REACHING OUT

An editorial cartoon by Joe Heller in the Washington Post showed a couple standing on their deck, looking up at the night sky. Inside their TV screen shows "James Webb Telescope Success." One says to the other, "I almost forgot what it's like to hold my head up."

Indeed. The news of the wonders of the Webb telescope was in stark distinction to the earlier news: war, gun violence, and a flurry of blockbuster Supreme Court decisions that removed the Constitutional right to abortion, struck down a New York gun law that may jeopardize other licensing laws, redefined the separation of church and state in allowing a coach to pray with his team on the field, and limited the regulatory power of the Environmental Protection Agency. And other such difficult news.

Then the news of the James Webb telescope showing us pictures of galaxies never before witnessed, giving us the taste of the infinity in which we live. The details of the telescope are staggering. From its perch in space the telescope is almost one million miles from Earth. With the advanced technology of its mirrors has the capacity to record images up to 18 billion light years away. The first images gave us a taste of the infinite creation in which we exist.

Meanwhile, on earth we struggle with the harsh realities that unsettle and shatter the lives of so many. What do the two realms have to do with each other? The one reminds us of our work in the world, to reach out and help heal the world, especially in these days. The other gives us hope and so we look up to know peace, hope and love are possible. Within these realities we live.

I return to the office August 16. Thank you for allowing me a time of rest and study as we approach our second year of transitional ministry. It will be a busy, active and productive period as we lay the foundation for a new generation of ministry in your congregation.

In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Greetings: To all those who are enjoying a change of climate brought about by leaving “The Valley” and to those who remain sequestered here, I send a warm (well actually “hot”) hello.

Not much has happened in the last month that will be new to you. We have chosen our Ministerial Search Committee members (MSC), and in case you missed the announcement, those members are Reggie Johnston, Jeff London, Libby Christianson, Juliet Gustavson, Michael Gentry, Brent Garrett, and Amy St Peter. Their work has yet to begin; however, when that happens you will hear. As I mentioned in the announcement, our part in this process is to stay involved and connected, as much of the work is done in the background.

Buildings and Grounds:

In June, our parking lot was resurfaced, and new lines painted. The job was done ahead of schedule and looks great. Asphalt Restoration was able to finish quickly, and we saved close to \$3,000 off the original estimate. The owner also reassured us we will have four good years before anything else needs to be done. We are still working on the Memorial Garden Fountain to be able to maintain it easily; hopefully, that will happen soon.

The Board, upon suggestion, has postponed replacing the carpeting in the Social Hall and Offices until we paint the interior walls. We are working on doing this soon (would be quicker if we had a Coordinator for Building and Grounds). We did have one unplanned expenditure this month; the hot water tank in the Office area (which feeds the restroom and workroom sinks) decided to give way. Thank goodness we have Frank Thomas – “our resident plumber.” He not only replaced the drinking fountain in that area, but he is currently replacing and installing the hot water tank. Thank you, Frank!

Board Notes:

At the last Bard Meeting, we reinstated the Church’s Financial Committee and approved membership to include the Chairs from Investment, Stewardship and Buildings and Grounds, as well as the Past Treasurer, and a member-at-large from the congregation. The current Board Treasurer serves as Chair of this committee. They will be creating a Charter for their work and policies to assist the Board with fiscal management.

We also started the first of two discussions on Board Goals for the next year. We have created a list with Social Justice being at the top and widening our circle the goal. Our final list will be shared with you as you will be a part of these goals, and we will implement them as time and cost allow. You will be hearing more on this as we continue to come back together to recreate our truly beloved community.

Until next Month – Stay well, and if you are traveling – stay safe.

Sherry Robinson



UPDATES FROM STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Stewardship Committee focuses on developing and implementing fundraising projects that provide financial support for this congregation and our faith home. Reaching our pledge and donation goals for 2022 are an important part of the life of our community. In mid-July, you will have received your quarterly statement and a reminder to keep your pledge current. **Our pledge goal has not been reached this year, and we encourage everyone to do their part by fulfilling a pledge or donating.** Fulfillment of pledges received will only contribute 80% of the pledge goal of \$225,000, although donations that were not pledged do add to income as do legacy gifts (in memory of or honoring someone or from gifts of members who have left us). If you are one of the many who send a donation annually, please consider doing it sooner than later.

As noted in the last newsletter, we are planning a series of fundraising activities and events at UUCS. These fun-raisers

will be social events at the church. Stay tuned for more information in announcements about type of event and how to support the event, including volunteering.

On September 18th, Lisa Lawrence and our youth families will hold an "Ice Cream Social" after Sunday service. Come and enjoy ice cream and toppings and support our youth!

In October, a "Coffee House" with talent from our community will be held on a Saturday night. Please consider sharing your talents ... music, poetry, whatever. What could be better than an evening with friends, fun entertainment and your beverage of choice – be it coffee, wine, spirits or other. Come join us!

In November, we are planning a barbecue! Talented BBQ aficionados from our community will be making brisket, pork ribs and chicken for your delight. There may be a competition for the best flavors. Salads, baked beans, corn on the cob and a dessert selection will be included.

With Gratitude, Friendship and Faith,
Your Stewardship Committee



MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Summer is in full swing; the Arizona monsoon arrived early and strong. Time to pull up a cozy chair and stay cool from the hot wild weather days! Your UU Surprise library is proud to preview three more new books for your summer reading consideration. Please enjoy a good UU read or, if out of the area, a public library download or an online/in person purchase:

"The Soul of America", subtitled 'A battle for our better angels,' by John Meacham, number 904MEA. This donated book is from the NY Times Best Seller List by the Pulitzer Prize winning author. It is also one of Oprah's 'books that help me through'. This must read "helps us understand the present moment in American politics and life by looking back at critical times in our history when hope overcame division and fear." Meacham examines Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and on into the modern political scene. The struggle of hope over fear

continues. A terrific timely read.

"Pagan and Earth-Centered Voices in Unitarian Universalism", by Jerrie Hildebrand, number 290HIL. "These 22 essays by some of the most prominent leaders in UU Paganism bring this theology to life for a new generation. Featuring the writings of clergy and laypeople, this...collection demonstrates the many expressions of nature-based spirituality and the ways they feed the souls of so many. The essayists describe a broad array of practices...that bring us into harmony and balance with our natural environment." From the 5-star Amazon review.

"Haiku Mind", subtitled '108 Poems to cultivate awareness and open your heart', by Patricia Donegan, number 808.8DON. "If you want to know what haiku is about, what a haiku can do, why haiku are important, read this book. The author looks into the heart of haiku by exploring outstanding individual examples with a perceptive, aware, and sensitive eye. Donegan is a poet, translator, and promoter of haiku as an awareness practice." *Note from your librarian: This is a wonderful spiritual read! A 4.5-Star Amazon reviewed book.*

Blessings on your day shared with a terrific UU read!



DEALING WITH REALITY

NOW WHAT? "Informing, Educating and Mobilizing Progressive Churches for Reproductive Rights"

Welcome to a new column in our newsletter. Each month we will present a few ideas to help you reflect and take personal and/or community action regarding this important issue. Much of this information comes from a webinar held by the Southwest District of the United Church of Christ, attended by members of our congregation (Sherry Robinson, Maggi Mahan and Ruthie Swank) in an effort to learn what other progressive spiritual communities are doing.

This month: See next page for a few do's and don'ts regarding effective language.

Yes Say Reproductive Liberty or Reproductive Justice. (Emphasize that Abortion is a JUSTICE and LIBERTY issue.)	No Don't say Abortion Rights or Women's Rights.
Abortion (Use the real word.)	Do not talk about "camping" or use other euphemisms.
Connect with RCRC (Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice) https://rcrc.org OR Abortion Fund of Arizona (abortionfundofarizona.org) to VOLUNTEER OR DONATE.	DO NOT offer your home or transportation online. You could become a target.

More Next Month!



MEMBERSHIP

Welcoming visitors to our church community is a group activity. Membership is a journey, and we begin immediately to see how visitors might find a way to

belong with us. After a warm welcome a goal of the Membership Committee is to connect people to activities or events outside of Sunday services. There are many wonderful activities originating from the church throughout the week. Just look at our website (uusurpriseaz.org) or the back of the Order of Service on Sundays to see what's available. Connecting through activities or events is a great way for people who are new to the church to learn more and meet us on a more personal level. We encourage visitors to complete a Welcome Form, so we can communicate with them, mostly through email.

How many of you were able to attend New Member Sunday on the first of May? We welcomed three new members to UUCS; Cathy Cowen and Shirley and Evan Hammond. You could watch the service on our YouTube channel if you missed it. Be sure to introduce yourself to new members when you have a chance. More recently two more people became members; Barb Voth and Paul Playford. You'll learn more about them soon.

Also, wearing your name badge is an act of hospitality.

We all have a vested interest in welcoming newcomers to our church, as we work to build the beloved community. Thank you.

Libby Christianson - Membership Committee Chair



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director

What a welcome break this summer has been so far! I love having the time to get to all the little projects that I'm normally too busy for. Families have still been taking advantage of the summer Sunday childcare, but things are much quieter around here during the week.

My first project was to promote an Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.) Facilitator Training Workshop. In one long weekend (Th-Sun) individuals can become certified to teach up to two different OWL curriculums. O.W.L. is a lifespan sexuality education workshop. There are seven curriculums: K-1, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, young adults, adults, and older adults. If you are interested in becoming a trained facilitator, please contact me at uucslisal@gmail.com.



Next was the completion of the Family Lending Library which is located right outside the nursery. There are over a hundred titles relating to a variety of topics, such as: Behavioral Health, Big Questions, Character Development, Childhood/Concerns,

Environment, Fun/Activities, Health, Parenting/Family, Sexual Identity and Gender Orientation, and Unitarian Universalist Identity. The purpose of this library is to provide educational resources for parents and children to assist with life's many mental, physical and spiritual developmental stages and challenges.

Other summer projects include: reaching out to other faith homes to potentially partner in the development of an Interfaith Youth Group; planning a co-hosted, family-friendly workshop with Temple Beth Shalom called "Hanukkah and Christmas as an Interfaith Celebration"; and planning next season's curriculum.

Our Sunday School season begins on Sunday, September 11th following the Sunday School Ingathering Breakfast from 9:00-10:00 a.m. Our very own Stewardship Com-

mittee has volunteered to prepare a cooked breakfast in support of our families. Let's be sure to give them a big turn-out, families. So, save the date!

As always, weekly postings and family communications can be found on the UUC Surprise Family FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily> .



Believe it or not, September is just around the corner. And on Saturday, September 17 your Questers Committee is ready to launch the 2022-23 season of adult enrichment opportunities with an experiential workshop facilitated by Rev. Sam from 9:00-2:00pm in the Social Hall. THE 7 STAGES TO MONEY MATURITY will offer participants time to reflect on where our attitudes about money come from, how those attitudes influence our lives, and how we can approach financial issues with honesty and without fear, no matter what our financial situation might be. Full details are available on our website – [uusurpriseaz.org/Adult Programs/Questers/Offerings](https://uusurpriseaz.org/Adult_Programs/Questers/Offerings) .

In planning the 2022-23 season we seek to bring you a diverse selection of experiences that affirm and promote our 7 Principles, particularly Principle 3 - Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations and Principle 4- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Toward that effort, here are a few additional offerings on the menu.

The Spirituality of Aging w/ Libby Christianson

Hikes w/ Jessica Rose (starting in October)

ASL (American Sign Language) as Visual Communication w/ Sherry Robinson

Learn To Play the Native American Flute w/ Laura Lee Perkins

Community Walking Meditation – A Spiritual Practice w/ Yvonne Bentley

Voting Rights In The U.S., 1787 To The Present w/ Dr. Bonnie Saunders

Stop by the Questers table on Sundays, see the weekly announcements, or check the website ([uusurpriseaz.org/Adult Programs/Questers/Offerings](https://uusurpriseaz.org/Adult_Programs/Questers/Offerings)) to keep up to date with Questers opportunities.

TIDBITS

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.

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 623-826-3365 or 623-537-9449.



**Unitarian Universalist Service
Committee**
Ukrainian Emergency Relief Fund
To give: www.uusc.org

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

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Surprise, AZ 85378

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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.



UUCS SUMMER
WORSHIP SERIES

See your *Weekly Announcements* email for August worship details.

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



 YouTube

Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister

Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry

Paul Yoder, Music Director