

# Newsletter

September 2022

## Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

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### TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal  
Transition Minister

#### CREATING COMMUNITY

What did you do on your summer vacation? Or was it a staycation? Either way, summer presents a time of seeking refreshment and respite. I am back from my vacation and study leave, where I was able to catch up with family, do a few chores around my home, travel a bit from the environs of Dallas, and, hopefully, get some perspective. After a summer of sojourns, it will be good to have the congregation back in more fullness this month. School is starting, work is accelerating.

Appropriately enough, our September worship theme is the Path to Belonging. This suggests that belonging is created, planned, nurtured. On our ingathering Sunday Sept. 11, we'll experience a central ritual in our UU tradition, the Water Communion, where we highlight coming back together as a congregational community. On other Sundays we'll explore the meanings of belonging (and not belonging), especially in these days when we UUs engage with our own history of not always being the people of belonging we've imagined ourselves.

We'll also explore how we UUs have traditionally experienced a deep sense of belonging in our notions of covenant. We'll introduce an exciting new program in the congregation of small group ministries called Covenant Groups, which offer all an opportunity to explore a deeper sense of being human together in our free faith.

It's great to be back! See you in church.

In Our Living Tradition,

*SAM*

#### Inside This Issue

Transitional Thoughts	1
Circle Suppers	1
President's Message	2
Pride Festival & Parade	2
Book Report	3
Music Notes	3
Membership	4
Questers	4
Family Ministry	5
Stewardship	5
Dealing w/ Reality	5
Poll Worker Reflection	6
Tidbits	6
Fun-Raising	7
September Worship	8

#### CIRCLE SUPPERS

Save the dates of October 7, 8, and 9 for our first round of Circle Suppers for



the new church year. These small pot-luck gatherings in homes are a good, fun, yummy way to get to know people better. Watch for sign-up instructions in the September weekly announcements.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Greetings from the hot and humid Northwest. Steve and I are taking a month-long travel vacation in the Northwest visiting friends and relatives. It is a new experience – having the same weather here as we do in Arizona. Unfortunately, the political atmosphere is also much the same here as in Phoenix.

I think most of you are aware we were targeted by those in our community who believe if you are not like them, you are somehow less in the eyes of the world. Our building and a banner were defaced, and a window broken in the minister's office. I did not see the physical damage. However, seeing the pictures was enough. My first reaction: I felt sick – then angry, and finally just sad. We can weather the physical damage – it is the mental stress that does the damage.

We must not let the words and deeds of others influence either our actions or our reactions. Our building and banner were spray painted; those can be replaced, repainted and the window can be fixed. We can feel uncertain, angry, and depressed, BUT if we look around and recognize what we have - the love, acceptance, and support of one another, we can begin to feel truly sad for those who behave in a negative and hateful manner. Think of what they are missing and be reminded of our first UU Principle.

While in Portland we have been attending the UU Congregation in Oregon City and on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup>, I heard the perfect message for how I was feeling. The focus was on removing stress - learning to remember and appreciate the good moments in our lives and move on from the others. The damage and vandalism done to our physical structure was painful, costly, and inconvenient; however, in comparison with what we have done and will do, those actions add up to only a few bad moments of time.

We have so many good moments happening. The Search Committee has begun the quest for a settled minister. Rev Sam has returned, and we have social activities planned for members in September, (an Ice cream social), in October (the first ever “Coffeehouse” entertainment night) and culminating in November - an all-member Barbecue. We are doing these to help fill a gap in our funding as we have not yet made our pledge goal (there is still time if you have not yet completed your pledge), and at the same time we are inviting “us” all to come together to celebrate and remember truly wonderful moments.

Yours in Faith, Friendship and Appreciation for your support and commitment,

*Sherry Robinson*



## PHOENIX PRIDE FESTIVAL AND PARADE OCTOBER 15 & 16, 2022



Come join your UUCS members and friends at the 2022 Phoenix Pride Festival and Parade, and help promote our Welcoming Congregation! The Pride Festival is being held on October 15th and 16th (12pm-9pm) at the Steele Indian School Park in Phoenix. The Pride Parade will take place on the morning of October 16th and will end at the Pride Festival.

Last year, the UUCS only participated in the Parade. This year we will also have a booth at the Pride Festival where we will be distributing information about UUCS and talking to people who may be interested in joining us. Volunteers will be needed to staff this booth and promote our Welcoming Congregation. We will be setting up 2-hour time slots for volunteers to work at the Festival booth.

Those who participated in last year's Pride Parade had a great time, including the RE kids. We are looking forward to another fun morning spreading the word about UUCS but need many volunteers to walk the mile-long parade route. Parade volunteers will gather at 8:30am at the Parade staging area in Phoenix (location to be announced) and end at the Pride Festival in Steele Indian School Park.

(Pride Festival & Parade cont'd)

Sign-up sheets to volunteer for the Festival and/or Parade are located on a table in the Social Hall. It is a great way to support our Welcoming Congregation and its LGBTQ+ members. For more information about the Pride Festival and Parade, contact Sharon Steigmann (sds49@msn.com, 480-650-4644) or Mary Ellen Baker (mebakercpa@msn.com, 480-206-607)

## MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian

**School Bells...Church Bells** - Bells are ringing for the beginning of the fall season. And with fall we have three new books for your reading pleasure. You may find these new additions in the library on the new books shelf.

**A heads-up from your librarian...**

If our fall arrival to Sun City plan continues on schedule, **the library should have its official opening on Sunday October 2.** Watch the weekly e-blast for the open house announcement.



**"A Dream too Wild"**, by Barry Andrews, Ed., number 814AND. Subtitled: 'Emerson meditations for every day of the year.' The author is a UU minister of religious education. "There have been few anthologies of Emerson's sayings and none quite like this one. Drawing from all of Emerson this unique book of thoughtfully selected passages captures the many textures and nuances of his exceptional mind. We find a spiritual message at the heart of his philosophy." This is a 4-star Amazon reviewed book. It provides a new look at some of the great man's forgotten work.

**"In Praise of Animals"**, by Edward Searl, Ed., number 808SEA. Subtitled: 'A treasury of poems, quotations and readings.' The author, a UU minister, "has gathered poems, prose, blessings, chants--tributes of all kinds, ancient and modern. He explores the varied topics of pets, wildlife, stewardship, ecology, evolution, and the spiritual connection among all creatures. The book offers selections on mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds, work animals, and more." If you enjoy this collection, the author is a popular editor of other topical anthologies such as birth and marriage. This is a 5-star Amazon reviewed book.

**"Heart to Heart"**, by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins, number 253.7ROB. Subtitled: '14 Gatherings for reflection and sharing'. The authors, the first a UU minister and the second a small group minister, "offer resources for 14 gatherings on topics such as gratitude, doubt, forgiveness, loss, nature, money, friendship and more. The book is a re-imagined model of small group ministry; it offers readings, journaling suggestions, and thought-provoking exercises to help participants prepare for the spiritual practice of sharing in community. Promotes listening rather than back-and-forth discussion." This is a 4.5-star Amazon reviewed book.

*Welcome back everyone and enjoy a great day shared with a terrific UU library read!*



## MUSIC NOTES



Paul Yoder—Music Director

Musical innovations of previous generations have greatly enriched us. Can you imagine living in a time before the Hallelujah Chorus? And the piano! Without it would we even know the name Elton John?

The first pianos were but a distant ancestor of today's instrument. The keyboard (black and white keys) was standardized by the mid-1400s, but solely used for organs. The keys were so stiff they had to be played with the fist, so the intricate organ music of J.S. Bach would have been unthinkable. Tinkerers continued to improve the organ, and not only did keyboards become more playable, a whole new family of "keyboard instruments" appeared, of which the harpsichord became the "King" (the organ has always been called the "Queen"). Baroque composers were able to write exactly what they wanted thanks to these two instruments. Musical tastes changed (as they inevitably do), and the King and Queen became unsuitable for the more delicate Rococo style.

Inventors searched for a more versatile instrument, and finally a harpsichord builder decided to substitute hammers for jacks, which pluck the strings in a harpsichord. Since it could play both loud and soft, (which the harpsichord could not), it was called a pianoforte, (soft-loud in Italian) and was a major breakthrough for Rococo composers, but the new piano still had drawbacks. Bach made a list of everything that needed changing.



Susan, is a professor at a university in Kansas. She was informed by the staff that several professors, including Susan, had their Social Security numbers stolen. I notified Linda and she gave me step by step information about what Susan should do to protect herself, and it worked. I was scammed on the net a few months ago. I contacted Linda and was given information about how to resolve my problem. I am attending Linda's presentation so I can become more knowledgeable and avoid becoming a victim again."



## FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director

It will be so good to have everyone back from travels, have our classrooms filled, and our halls bustling. The first day of class is on Sunday, **September 11<sup>th</sup>** following our **Sunday School Welcome Back Family Breakfast**. The breakfast is the time for parents to schedule classroom participation dates, register their children, meet and greet friends, teachers and volunteers, hear about this year's curriculum and find out about other volunteer opportunities in the family ministry program. This year breakfast is being prepared for us by the Stewardship Committee. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone and hopefully making new connections. Please R.S.V.P to [uucslisal@gmail.com](mailto:uucslisal@gmail.com).

Then on **Sunday, September 18th**, Family Ministry will be serving up your favorite ice cream for the first in a series of fundraisers by the Stewardship Committee to raise money for new flooring in the church. Tickets for this fun event are \$5 and will be available for purchase beginning August 28th in the social hall.



I've been busy all summer long making plans for a successful upcoming year. To achieve this goal, I've created various new volunteer positions:

Would you like to help turn our **Trunk-or-Treat** into a community-wide event? *We need help with special events. I can't do it alone!*

Would you like to receive training on how to become an awesome storyteller and present the occasional **"Story for all Ages"**? *A workshop is being planned.*

Do you have a flair for the performing arts that you'd like to share with our youth for this year's **Holiday Play**? *We need help with **direction, costumes and aesthetics**.*

Do you love children and want to contribute to their **spiritual growth** and well-being? *We need **classroom teachers and assistants**.*

**With your help, this year is going to be fun, fun, fun!**

Please shoot me an email if you are interested in joining my team.

As always, to find out more, please visit the Family FB page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily>



## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

### UPDATES



The Stewardship Committee focuses on developing and implementing fundraising projects that provide financial support for this congregation and our faith home. In mid-July, you should have received your quarterly statement

and a reminder to keep your pledge current. **To date our 2022 pledge goal has not been reached. Therefore, 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 given in memory of or honoring someone. 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 that will be **fun-raising** social events: Ice Cream Social in September; Coffee House in October; BBQ in November. Watch the Weekly Announcements emails for opportunities to support these events by volunteering and/or simply attending.



## DEALING WITH REALITY—

### ABORTION RIGHTS

It is clear the majority of Americans believe women should have control over decisions affecting their bodies. Nearly 60% of voters in Kansas affirmed that right in early August, thus keeping a woman's right to choose in their

state constitution. The abortion rights movement is alive and well.

For background, consider this link. This is a terrific secular philosophical discussion about abortion. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-kate-greasley.html>

If you are looking for information regarding donations, there are many effective choices. Consider giving to local organizations to help reinforce the abortion rights movement here in AZ. Here is one option:

[Abortion Fund of Arizona](http://AbortionFundofArizona.org)  
 [\(abortionfundofaz.org\)](http://abortionfundofaz.org) .



## “...TO GUARD THE PURITY OF THE ELECTION...”

A Reflection—Claudia Yeager-Smith



We are living and making history in this moment. This is an election cycle like none in our lifetimes.. and the threat to our Democracy right now is REAL.

I have served as a Poll Worker for 24 years in Texas and now in Arizona. I believe in the process. I believe in this Grand Experiment. I have seen the incredible safeguards in place during elections and am proud to be part of serving and guarding that process both as a Poll Worker and recently, also as a Poll Observer. “...to guard the purity of the election....” These words are part of the mandatory oath I took/administered **in every Texas election**, but are not actually part of the AZ oath taken by Poll Workers. Nonetheless, these words are part of my soul and intention whenever I work an election...”to guard the purity of the election” For me, voting is a passionate interface of history and future that truly makes a difference. In a way.. participating in the process is my gift to the future.



Those elected in November will be the people in our state who WILL AFFECT how the 2024 Election goes. Among all the possibilities of involve-

ment is the **NEED** for **POLL WORKERS** and **POLL OBSERVERS** as this is the interface.. when the votes are cast. **Feel a nudge to be a Poll Worker or Observer? Contact Claudia—Call/Text—480-387-1973.**

# TIDBITS

## 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.

## 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.



# FALL FUND & FUN-RAISERS TO GET ON YOUR CALENDAR



## UU Surprise October Coffee House



It's time to come out of the shower. If you've got a talent to share with an audience that will be with you all the way, then we have a gig for you. Yes, it's your invitation for all ages to have your 5-10 minutes of fame for a worthy cause...your faith community... at the first-ever UUCS Coffee House in October.

Let's "break a leg" and have some fun.

Contact Lynn Melby at [lynnmelbycae@gmail.com](mailto:lynnmelbycae@gmail.com) to add your act to the lineup.

## Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

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### 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.*

## September Worship Theme: *The Path of Belonging*



**See *Weekly Announcements* emails for weekly topics.**

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*