

Newsletter

October 2022

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

Transition Minister: Rev. Samuel Schaal
Minister Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Walt F. Wieder
President: Sherry Robinson



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TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transition Minister

LEAPING INTO THE FUTURE

*Tell me, friends: What have we got to lose?
Our fear of failure? Our mistrust of our own talents?*

*What wonders await us in the space between the first leap
and the moment our feet...touch down softly on unknown soil?...*

Rev. Leslie Ahuvah Fails

Leaping from one place to another is scary. In transitional ministry, a congregation leaps from a known ministry with a long-term minister, to a transitional minister who arrives unknown and walks with you for two years. Then, introduced to a new ministerial candidate carefully chosen by your Ministerial Search Committee, after a short and busy Candidating Week, you go into a meeting to elect that person as your minister to serve into your foreseeable future.

Sounds exciting. And scary. "But what do we have to lose? What wonders await us in that journey and in the future that beckons?" concludes the text quoted above.

That journey takes courage. Courage is a good thing to have these days. I was reminded by one of you that we live in liminal times. Coming out of the earlier days of Covid, adjusting ourselves to the fact that Covid remains for years in some form, not fully knowing the changes that strange period enacted. And, lots of things in our community, nation and world strain our patience, worry our hearts and burden our souls. But we walk on, with courage.

Another aspect of courage is being who we are in a world that doesn't always support that. In July, our campus was attacked and defaced with homophobic messages. Our response? Celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride with a festival and parade Oct. 15-16. This is the first year we've staffed a festival booth, giving all a chance to show our Unitarian Universalist love and welcome. Watch for details.

In this journey of liminal times and transitional ministry, be gentle and faithful with yourself and others, as we work toward a fruitful ministry in the next generation, beginning at the meeting calling your new minister sometime in spring 2023.

In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



I don't know how a month passes by so quickly. It seems like I was writing this message yesterday. Perhaps it is because we are moving ahead. I have two requests I would like to make of you so that we can continue this momentum forward.

First: Our Transitioning Journey has actually begun with selection of the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC), and they have begun their work. They started with a retreat, assigned tasks, and have created a Congregational Survey. They are now looking at us for input, ideas, thoughts, and feedback to help in finding our new minister. They cannot do this alone. You have (I hope) filled out the survey that was emailed to members and friends in September. There will be invitations to join Cottage Meetings and Focus Groups held in October and early November. **My request is that each member and friend accept these invites, attend these group meetings, and participate in this most important task. This is your opportunity to share thoughts, beliefs and hopes for UUCS and to let the MSC members know what you would like in your new minister.**

Second and this one is harder: When I asked at the annual meeting for a "Budget of Hope" – no one expected a downturn in the market, a rise in cost of living, a resurgence of Covid causing a slowdown again on our return to normal Sunday Service activities– (passing the basket during the Offertory) and a plague of serious vandalism. All impacting our precious resources - as we were preparing to begin our search for a minister. We have negligible discretionary funds so when the unexpected happens- we struggle.

We will not reach our Pledge Goal of \$225,000; however, I am grateful for your support and response to the original request. We have close to \$190,000 in pledges. And, if we can reach that number and add it to other donations and contributions – we will come close to meeting our budget needs for this year.

We are coming to the end of the year, and I am respectfully asking all who pledged to aim for meeting their pledge goal no matter the size. Pledge payments added to Sunday offerings and other gifts all count. I am aware some in our community are struggling and may not be able to meet their goal at this time. If those who are able do, the year will end well. The Board is looking to reduce where it can at this late date, but members and friends are still our major resource for support.

And for whatever we receive, you have our sincere and grateful thanks. We will continue our work, move forward and be successful. How can we not be! Look at who we are and what we have done.

Yours in faith, friendship, and gratitude for your generosity,

Sherry Robinson

PHOENIX PRIDE FESTIVAL AND PARADE OCTOBER 15 & 16, 2022



JUST 2 WEEKS AWAY...Come join your UUCS members and friends at the 2022 Phoenix Pride Festival and Parade, and help promote our Welcoming Congregation! You can take a shift at the UUCS Festival booth and greet people who may be interested in learning more about our faith community **OR/AND** march in the parade.

ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME.

Sign-up sheets for the Festival and/or Parade are located on a table in the Social Hall. Join us and support our Welcoming Congregation and its LGBTQ+ members. For more information 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



Cooler days and jack-o-lanterns . . . sure signs of fall in the Valley. Time to return to your roots and pick up a new read in your UU Surprise library. Come on in next Sunday and let the librarian help you find what's just right for you. In the meantime, below are three new books to consider:

“Nothing Gold Can Stay; the Colors of Grief”, by Mark Belletini, number 248.8BEL. “In 22 simple yet profound reflections, this UU minister explores the many and varied forms of grief. His honest, poetic essays serve as a prism, revealing the distinct colors and manifestations of grief in our lives. He addresses the way we respond to the loss of people in our lives, loss of love, loss of focus, and loss of the familiar, understanding that grief is as much a part of our lives as our breathing. The author uses specific and personal stories to open up to the universal experience.” From the Amazon 4.5star review.

“Not for Ourselves Alone”, Subtitled ‘Theological Essays on Relationship’, by Burton Carley and Laurel Hallman, Editors, number 248.8CAR. “These 12 essays from UU leaders emerge as part of a movement in the faith from focusing on individual identity to relational connectedness. Through personal stories and thoughtful reflections, the contributors describe how we might grow our souls through our connections. They invite us to move beyond the age-old theological question “Who am I?” and ask instead, “Whose are we?” From the Amazon 4star review.

“A Long Time Blooming, Meditations”, by Marta Valentin, number 242VAL. “The author reflects on the spiritual dimensions of her intersecting identities as a Latina, lesbian, feminist, God-worshipping UU minister. With candor and insight, she probes what is universal in her own very particular history and what it means to strive for beloved community in the face of marginalization and cultural misunderstanding.” From the Amazon 4.5star review. One public reviewer wrote: “Heartfelt poems.

Lovely Spanglish. Intimate tone.” This slim volume is a beautiful read—your librarian.

Enjoy a beautiful fall day with a terrific UU library read!



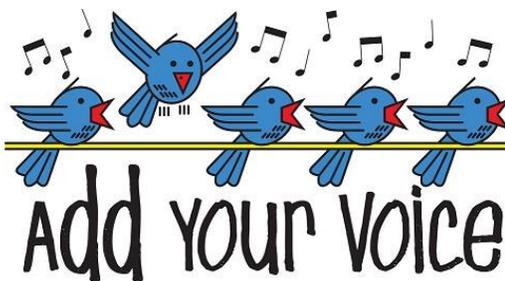
MUSIC NOTES



Paul Yoder—Music Director

Now that September is all but in the rearview mirror, our Sunday morning services are starting to fill up again. People returning home from cooler climates, or leaving home to return to a warmer one, they come from East, South, West and North, together forming our church.

Throughout history music has always played a major role in the church, and the most basic component has always been the choir. Originally undefined, composers wrote for however many voices they had available, sometimes two or three, sometimes sixteen or even twenty. As symbolism grew more important in worship the search was on for a sign that would represent our coming together to form one body. The obvious symbol became the choir, and the number of voices stabilized at four (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) to represent the four points on the compass coming together to form one voice.



Here in our church we are blessed to have a wonderful choir and after a rejuvenating summer break, we have started rehearsing again. It's actually a lot of fun, and since it's not just 4 or 5 people, no one ever has an unfair amount of pressure to “save the group”, and since it's a choir, nobody ever sticks out (hopefully).

One of the best parts of choir practice to me is the amount of time we spend laughing together as we polish up our selections. If you think you might enjoy some laughter and the chance to create something larger than the sum of its parts, why not consider joining us? We meet every Sunday morning at 9:00 and practice for

an hour, then break for a little relaxation before church. If you call the office (623-875-2550) and tell us you're coming, we'll be sure and have a folder ready to go for you!! It's helpful to have some musical experience, but by no means necessary.



MEMBERSHIP

The fall is a time when more people come to visit us at UUCS. As the temperatures cool and people return from their summer travels, we see an uptick of new faces. Of course, members and friends return to Sunday services and the social hall is buzzing with activity. It feels like a time of new beginnings.

Over the past year (since last October) we have had 65 visitors. During this time, we welcomed 7 new members including Cathy Cowen, Evan and Shirley Hammond, Barbara and Paul Playford and Caryl Mroczek, and Paige Rappleye.

In October Rev. Sam Schaal and the Membership Committee will host another series of New UU Classes. Beginning Sunday, October 23, and lasting for three weeks, the New UU Class is open to all who are interested in learning more about UU history and about our own church customs and culture. On Sunday, November 13 we will celebrate New Member Sunday, a ritual that welcomes new members who have signed the book.

The Membership Committee: Libby Christianson, Judy Reynolds, Ray Mahoney, Carol Calkins, Lee and Mary Jane Askern, and Rev. Sam Schaal (Ex-officio) welcome your questions about how you can become a member of UUCS.



CAFÉ JUSTO—COFFEE WITH A CONSCIENCE

In 2015 I went on an educational immersion trip to Mexico to learn about the link between coffee and migration. We met with the Border Patrol, walked to a water station in the desert, visited "the Wall", ate dinner at a shelter and bunked at the community center. We stayed in the homes of coffee farmers in Salvador Urbino, hiked into the jungle to see coffee plants, toured the roasting facility, and attended Cafe

Justo Coop meetings. We also visited a number of shelters and a rehab center in Guatemala for migrants who had lost limbs as a consequence of falling off trains. It was a moving experience that changed me.

So what is the link between coffee and migration? Even though Fair Trade practices have increased the amount farmers are paid for their crops, most farmers still sell to a broker employed by coffee processors, who grind, roast, package, market, sell and distribute coffee, adding value to the product and reaping the profits. Cafe Justo (pronounced: *ka fay hoos toe*) is a coop of Mexican coffee farmers who grow, tend, harvest, de-pulp, dry, roast, grind, package, market, sell and distribute their coffee. All of the profits belong to the coop and all of the money stays in Mexico. The Cafe Justo Coop has started a health insurance and retirement plan for its members and Salvador Urbino installed its first water treatment plant. If farmers can support their families they are less likely to leave home in order to earn money to support their families. We heard some sad and harrowing stories from our hosts about their migration experiences.

Cafe Justo is **Fair Trade Plus**, certified USDA organic, shade grown, and bonus-- by buying this delicious coffee, we can make a difference. UUCS will begin serving Cafe Justo coffee on Sundays after our service. I hope you enjoy this delicious coffee.



Most of the original members (socios) of the Café Justo Cooperative.



FAMILY MINISTRY Lisa Lawrence—Director

*Each of the stars in the heavens is unique,
one of a kind, yet together they form the night sky.
Each of us in this room is unique, an individual, yet together we form a community. For the glory of the night sky and the strength of our community,
we light this chalice to celebrate love.*



The words on the preceding page are what we are saying when we light the chalice in the Navigators classroom. A reminder that everyone has worth and value just by being ourselves; and it takes all of us to make a successful community. Our classroom program this year is called “Navigating the UU Universe”. Children will be navigating their way through the universe to a new destination each week while using the wisdom from our Sources and Principles to help answer life’s big mysterious questions with an emphasis on love.

Our older youth, 7th grade and up, have the option of participating in the “Sunday Morning Shadows” program. By volunteering in different areas of the church they can begin to get a feel for being active congregation members, what it takes for a church to function, and what kind of opportunities there are.

Now that my families and members are back from traveling, I would like to relaunch the new **Family Lending Library!** It may be called the Family Lending Library but it’s open to everyone. 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. Sign out instructions are on the green cup on top of the bookcase.



October is a busy month for Questers, one of the signs that most of our people are back to enjoy fall and winter with their UUCS community. Dive into one or several of the following October Questers options. Signing up is easy and can be done on Sunday mornings at the Questers table in the Social Hall or by contacting the person listed for each offering on the UUCS website where there are full details—

[QUESTERS OFFERINGS-UUSURPRISEAZ.ORG](https://uusurpriseaz.org) .

Aging as a Spiritual Practice: A Book Discussion w/ Libby Christianson – Saturday, Oct. 15, 10:00-12:00pm, UUCS Social Hall - *In her decade of work in the senior*

living industry Libby has presented numerous workshops and programs on changing the way we look at aging. She is grateful to be aging within this loving congregation.

Voting Rights in the United States: 1787 to Present w/ Dr. Bonnie Saunders – 6 Monday Zoom Sessions Starting Oct. 17, 1:00-3:00pm – *How did we get to where we are w/ voting rights? Dr. Saunders will take you on that significant journey.*

UUCS Hike – Thunderbird Conservation Park Cholla Loop w/ Jessica Rose – Friday, Oct. 21, 7:30am (meet at church to carpool) – *A moderate 3.5 mile hike on a West Valley desert fall morning.*

Meditation Walk for Peace: A Mindfulness Practice w/ Yvonne Bentley – Oct. 22, 9:00-10:00 Meditation Walk w/ Intermittent Peace Readings/10:00-10:30, Optional Guided Meditation, UUCS – *We long for peace. We can walk for peace.*

Learn to Play the Native American Flute w/ Laura Lee Perkins – 4 Sessions, starting Saturday, Oct. 29, UUCS – *There is compelling power in this simple indigenous instrument. Experience it as you learn to play it.*



DEALING WITH REALITY— ABORTION RIGHTS



The mid-terms are a month away, and the time is now to recognize the importance of the Nov. 1 election. And what is at stake. We are talking about the profound decision made by our US Supreme Court on the Rights of Women to control their own healthcare. In the last two newsletters we gave you information and references for where to go for help or information. Today we are asking you to make sure you are registered to vote, and then cast your vote for candidates who will support abortion rights, women’s rights, human rights when in office, because these issues are definitely on the ballot.

And those chosen to legislate will be in a position to support or deny those rights.

"Everyone" said the court would not overturn Roe vs Wade. The newest Supreme Court Justices all said in their sworn testimony that Roe vs Wade was settled law. Months later, it all changed. We cannot change the Court, but we can choose not to support candidates who are not truthful. Reality is complex. What one reads on a candidate's website today, may be the result of wiping it clean, hiding the unpopular and extreme positions previously touted on the site.

So, when you make your choice, make sure you understand what the candidate really stands for, because that is how they will vote. And that vote could directly impact you and your loved ones. Read fully, dig deep, and vote carefully.



Ministerial Search



Our ministerial search has begun in earnest with the Congregational Survey completed and more opportunities for congregational input coming in October Focus Groups and small group Cottage Meetings. Be sure you take advantage of these opportunities to help us learn all we can about who we are, so that we stand the best chance of finding a candidate that's a good match for now and our future. Yes, **we** are the Ministerial Search Committee, but we represent our **UUCS community**, and in order to do that, it's our goal to have input from the broadest sector possible.

Here's what lies ahead from now until January 2 :

October – Focus Groups and small group Cottage Meetings;

- MSC members working to complete assignments in their areas of responsibility, e.g., compiling documents for the Congregational Record and Documents Packet.

November – Nov. 12—Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop – Zoom opportunity open to all.

- Nov. 15 – Goal for Congregational Record to be completed and reviewed by the UUA Transitions Program Manager, Interim Minister & regional staff.

December – Congregational Record approved and published. *Searching ministers are looking at churches in the search process, but we don't know at this time who might be interested in applying.*

- Documents Packet approved – approval for Ministerial Search Committee to receive applicants as of January 2.

We are here for your questions—Co-chairs: Brent Garrett (bcgarrett45@gmail.com)/Juliet Gustavson (julietgus@msn.com).

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.

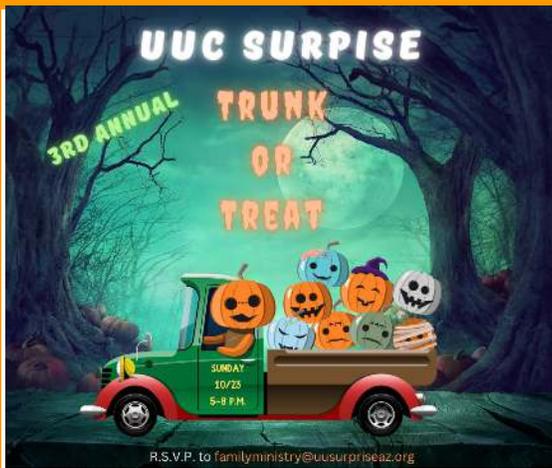
If you need wheelchair accessibility, please schedule your ride 24 hours in advance with the transportation provider.

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.





Trunk-or-Treat:
Sunday, October 23rd
from 5:00-8:00 P.M.

Do you like to dress up? Need a creative outlet? Really like candy? Then come to our 3rd annual Trunk-or-Treat!

Whether you have young children, old children, grandchildren or no children, there will be plenty of fun to go around. Plan for an evening of spooky car decorations, costumes galore, crafts, games, and contests.

Please R.S.V.P. to: familyministry@uusurpriseaz.org to reserve a parking space.



First-Ever UU Surprise Coffee House

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

6:00-8:00pm, UUCS Social Hall

\$15 per person and children under 12 free

A fund-raiser & *fun-raiser*

An evening of entertainment, featuring UUCS performers

Coffee, tea, and dessert provided

If you'd like, bring a light hors- d'oeuvre to share
and a beverage of choice.

A great event to share w/ friends and neighbors

Space limited

Tickets available at Sunday services & in the office between 9am and 1pm.

Don't miss it!

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.

October Worship Theme: *The Path of Courage*



See *Weekly Announcements* emails for weekly 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