

Newsletter

January 2023

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

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TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transition Minister

2023: A Pivotal Year

It is a common new year tradition to speak of possibility and discovery. The new year reminds us of a chance to move from past to possibility, from what was to what will be. I've preached that sermon bunches of times.

Now, on the cusp of 2023, for this congregation, in this wider community of the Valley of the Sun, we are at a pivot. A pivot is something upon which a turn is made, in the middle of movement and energy, creating the possibility of new direction. This turning point is not inevitable, but possible.

Many in the congregation have noted the presence of new energy, new members and families, a new spirit. In the second year of my transitional pastorates as a congregation prepares to call a new settled minister, I often speak of "a new generation of ministry." At this congregation I think it is especially true.

How might we continue to coach the culture (or the system) of this congregation toward a successful ministry with your new (as yet-unknown) leader? Remember that the pivot is not inevitable, but needs awareness and strategy to continue moving.

This month in worship we focus on Finding Our Center. One Sunday we'll explore the work of the Article II Commission of our Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). That article in the UUA bylaws contains the principles, sources and purposes of our living tradition. The commission is considering how we might refocus what is the center of our evolving faith. Another Sunday we'll consider how leadership (and followership) creates the conditions for successful ministry, asking that age-old question, "Does the minister make the congregation or does the congregation make the minister?" On another Sunday we'll engage the role of conflict in religious community and how that has the capacity to bless us when we engage well. We'll celebrate the new year. And we'll consider the work of Martin Luther King and how his work might suggest the work at the core of our faith.

This year is pivotal. We enter that pivot together.

In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



May I take a moment to remind you on **Sunday January 8th UUCS will hold its Annual Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary following Services.** Members will be treated to pizza and salad between services and the meeting. This is your opportunity to cast a ballot for the new Board Members and Nominating Committee members and to pass the budget we will be working from this year. If you cannot attend - proxy ballots are available.

Once again, we are starting a new year— filled with hope and anticipation for what the Year 2023 – will bring. On the nation side - the US is beginning to move forward economically with inflation slowly dropping; politically we have entered a new era with a split congress BUT with a President who has grown in stature and gained approval on his accomplishments; and Healthwise we are beginning to accept we will be living with this virus and hopefully learning appropriate coping mechanisms.

In our faith home, our members and friends have mostly returned, and we have welcomed many wonderful new members and friends – young and older, enthusiastic, and caring, eager to become a part of our community. We are half-way through our ministerial search and the most exciting part is yet to come. Our committee has done their job well, and the congregation has remained involved, and of course we are all anxious to have a successful conclusion.

The 2023 Pledge Drive is off to a good start, and we are hoping for a successful result there also. We have much to do and it all takes resources: human, physical and financial. More of what is happening there in February when the formal drive is complete.

The Board has its work cut out – developing policies and procedures to make our lives easier and to clarify processes for doing business. We have established a Finance Committee to assist the Treasurer and the Board in making financial decisions and creating the procedures for keeping our finances in order. We are aware of the needs of our congregation and will be looking at long range ideas for addressing these. I know that with new members come new ideas, new thoughts, and new activities. Do not be shy about getting involved.

We could use help on the Building and Grounds Team coordinating with our CA to make sure our building remains structurally sound, our equipment functional and our surrounding property continues to thrive. While we are caring for our building needs, we must also address the social, cultural, educational, and spiritual needs of our members and friends. We will be looking at expanding the Questers program, finding ways to include music in our activities and provide social gatherings for our members and friends. We will also be looking for ideas, suggestions, and recommendations on new ways to become more inclusive and welcoming. We do not have to be the largest UU congregation – BUT we would like to be the most welcoming. Everyone is invited to help us do this!

Blessings,

Sherry Robinson

Wishing You all The Happiest of New Year's



MINISTERIAL SEARCH INFORMATION

**Available on UUCS Website—
uusurpriseaz.org**



A Year of Giving Thanks

A Year of Giving Thanks is the theme chosen for the 2023 Annual Stewardship Campaign. The chalice lights the way to our future as the Ministerial Search Committee has our support to find a new minister. Since we are a self-sustaining congregation, pledges are our largest source of funding.

The 2023 Pledge Campaign was launched on December 4, 2022, after the church service. Pledge envelopes have been mailed to those who were not present. Pledges were submitted that day and have been each Sunday since. Although we have a long way to go to meet our pledge goal of \$225,000 with everyone doing their part, we can get there together.

Please pledge by January 31, 2023.

We need your pledges for supplies and equipment used by programs, professional and support staff, and for upkeep and maintenance of our building and grounds. In turn, we have wonderful facilities in which to meet and celebrate, and where lay leaders create and lead programs, such as, the Questers, Men’s and Women’s Groups, BUKK Circle, Social Justice Activities, Circle Suppers, and the library.

In January, you will hear testimonials from congregation members during the service. Each one will tell you, in their own words, what UU means to them personally and why they support the work of our congregation. Remember, it’s up to each of us, who count on UU being here for us, to make those generous gifts in support of this liberal Faith Home.

For the quickest pledging option, go online to <https://uusurpriseaz.org/get-involved/#donate>. Clicking on the *Pledge Now* link will take you to the Pledge Form. Complete the form, then follow directions and submit.

You may choose to give the completed pledge form to our Congregational Administrator, Judy Gilmore, in the UUCS office Monday-Fridays from 9am to 1pm or put it in the basket on the Stewardship Table in the Social Hall. Alternatively, mail the completed form to Judy Gilmore,

Unitarian Universalist Church, 17540 N. Avenue of the Arts, Surprise, AZ 85378. If you use ACH to make your pledge donations from your bank account, complete a new ACH form ONLY if there is a change in bank or the amount being donated.

We thank you for your generosity.
Your Stewardship Team



MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Happy New Year Faithfull Readers! I hope everyone is taking a good cleansing breath and ready to jump into new 2023 reading. Offered in this month’s column are several new books to get you started. Each book is on a separate topic to help us on the UU path this New Year.

“Beyond Welcome”, Subtitled, ‘Building Communities of Love’, Editor Linnea Nelson, Number 391.NEL. “How do we go beyond welcome to build compassionate, authentic, and equitable communities? Editor Nelson and contributors dream of a future Unitarian Universalism that upholds abundant love and universal justice within every community. Through personal and collective reflections, these heartfelt essays tell stories of how it feels to be in Beloved Community, while prompting readers to imagine what it will take to get us there.” From the 4.7Star Amazon review.

“Seven Stages of Money Maturity”, Subtitled, ‘Understanding the Spirit and Value of Money in Your Life’, Author George Kinder, Number 332.024KIN. Authored by “financial advisor and Buddhist teacher Kinder, the book presents a totally original look at the ins and outs of individual economics. Drawing on timeless spiritual wisdom in addition to modern fiscal doctrine, he deftly combines the philosophical and the practical to help readers broaden their understanding of the overall role that money plays in life from childhood onward—and put themselves on firmer footing with it today.” From the 4.5Star Amazon author review.

“The Good Grief Devotional”, Subtitled ‘52 Weeks Toward Hope’, Author Brent Christianson, Number

155.9CHR. "Pastor Christianson's 52 reflections offer wisdom especially for the difficult first year after a loss. He considers what each stage means for the reader's self-understanding and relationships. Each devotion ends with questions to think about and talk about with another person, healing actions one might take, and a prayer. Whether mourning the death of a loved one, the end of a marriage, the loss of a job, etc., readers will want to return to these resources year after year as they are changed by their journey." From the 4.7Star Amazon review.

*Have a blessed New Year
shared with a terrific new UUCS read!*

POLICY UPDATE!

As many of you may know, the UUCS building is offered for use by members and outside groups, both non-profit organizations and the public. Obviously during the height of the pandemic, the building was not open to the public or being used for outside events or meetings. However, as more people gather in-person, requests have started again for use of the building.

Recently the Board has developed and adopted new forms and a new more formal process for use of the building. These policies were primarily implemented to provide protection for the church and our equipment and encourage better stewardship from our renters.

First, we ask that the old forms no longer be used to request use of the building. The new rental request form, policies, and rental agreement can be obtained from our Church Administrator, Judy Gilmore. It is important that all rentals are done using the new procedure. This is true even if your group or event has previously used the building. Once the rental request form is completed, the Board Vice President (currently Brooke Gaunt) will review for approval and pricing. The pricing system is tiered based on the specific use of the building and who is using it, as well as what portions of the building and equipment will be used. The prices are listed on Schedule A of the Building Use Policy. Once a request is approved, then Judy will provide the Building Use Agreement to be signed.

If you have any questions about the process, policy, pricing, or use agreement, please refer them to the Board Vice President. Additionally, UUCS is looking for a few volunteers to act as Rental Monitors when the church is being used. The Rental Monitor would unlock

the church and be available during the rental time period to answer any questions that the renter may have. They would also lock the church up after the event. If you are interested in volunteering to be on our list of Rental Monitors, please contact Brooke Gaunt at ba-gaunt37@gmail.com.



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director



I look forward to a coming year that feels rejuvenated with vigor and youth. Our new friends from the West Valley UU Church and beyond are a welcome addition to our church community, as well as the Family Ministry program. We can now divide the classrooms into more age appropriate groups! I'm also excited to hear some new ideas that we may be able to incorporate into current programming.

It was very apparent at our holiday potluck that we are evolving into a new era as an almost entirely new group of young children and families gathered in the social hall to celebrate and get to know each other. It was wonderful! I've been a member of UUC Surprise since 2007 when my oldest child was just 4 years old. He is now 19! He was there too, as were other families with older youth that I've known since then. All important. All with gifts to share. Exciting times await!

Below is a photograph from our Intergenerational Holiday Service, on December 11th, "Would You Like to Hold the Baby" by Joyce Poley. You can go to page 7 to see additional photos.





MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to the blank canvas of another year. We welcomed many new members in 2022, including Amelia Davis and her daughter Margot, and Rose and

Dennis Kleidon, who joined us in December. May this wonderful trend continue. Be sure to introduce yourself to new faces. You never know who you'll meet.

steward-ship: the conducting, supervising, or managing of something, the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

The idea of stewardship is not just about financial support of this congregation. The "careful management of something entrusted to one's care" means that the life of this congregation is entrusted to all of us, not just the membership committee, minister, or board of directors. We all help to create our beloved community.

One way to extend your stewardship of this congregation is to volunteer. There are numerous ways to help. Will you commit to just one Sunday morning as a Greeter? Maybe your whole family would like to try it. Invite a friend to join you. It's easy, just sign up on the list located on the Greeters table. There is a list of responsibilities for Greeters also located on the Greeters table.

Are you a visitor and wondering how to become a member of UUCS? To learn more, you can contact Rev. Sam Schaal at minister@uusurpriseaz.org or call him at 623-875-2550

Happy New Year from the Membership Committee:

Lee and Mary Jane Askern, Carol Calkins, Libby Christianson, Ray Maloney and Judy Reynolds



So it's 2023, which promises to be a significant year for our UUCS congregation. Our hope is that Questers will add to the significance with offerings that take you inward, as well as outward, that stretch you and enhance your life with us and beyond.

Here is a taste of what Questers has on the agenda for 2023.

The Spirituality of Aging – 6 sessions beginning Jan. 2 (Registration Closed – Class Full)

Monthly Hikes – Through April – Next Hike Jan. 20

ASL (American Sign Language) as Visual Communication – 6 sessions starting Saturday, Jan. 21

Dealing with Life Challenges – Hospice of the Valley Series – 4 Monthly Tuesday Presentations: Jan. 24 – What is Dementia Anyway?/Feb. 14 – Understanding Grief and Mourning/Mar. 14 – Care for Caregivers/April 11 – Hospice and Supportive Services

A Feast for the Eyes – Photography as Art – March 18

A South Africa Teacher Exchange Adventure – March 25

BUUK Circle (2nd Tue of Month – Oct. through April)

Insight Meditation – Mondays and Saturdays all year

Men's Group (2nd & 4th Wednesday as scheduled) and Women's Group (1st & 3rd Tuesday as scheduled)

The Questers webpage is the place to find full offering details as they are available – <https://uusurpriseaz.org/questers/offerings>. Or you can visit the Questers table for information and signups.

Your Questers Committee: Carol Calkins, Juliet Gustavson, Darnell Kirksey, Joye Kohl, Jeff London

Angel Tree UPDATE

The Angel Gifts you purchased found their way to students among the 100 high schools in Maricopa county. Rick Wambach and I took

the beautifully wrapped gifts over to the new HYC home base office and dorm in Phoenix on December 9th. We were amazed at the organization of gifts lining the hallways in preparation for pick up by staff counselors who then will deliver the gifts to their assigned schools. Our congregation served 12 among the 300 students who provided wish lists this year.

This year the Homeless Youth Connection is working with 513 enrolled young people who are on their way



to finishing secondary schools. By the end of the year ninety percent of their clients will either graduate or enroll in their senior year—a remarkable feat given their stressful circumstances. Here in Surprise 100 Dysart District homeless students are assisted by grants from the federal McKinney-Vento Act. These grants provide for transportation from temporary housing to the school of choice and back again as well as school supplies and some other amenities. The US Department of Education starts the funding stream.

As we return to active engagement in our surrounding communities, supporting students feels like an important way to show our hope for the future. Our planet will always need well educated generations to replace those passing on the challenges of creating a safe and wholesome society. What skill sets are you ready to offer through the church. Make your list on a 3 by 5 note and place into the offering basket on Sunday.

Building community through our Social Justice committee, Tom Reemtsma

CIRCLE SUPPERS



Start the new year getting to know your fellow UUs. In

2022 there were eleven dinners that included 82 participants. They are good food and great fun. The latest dinners were hosted by Joye Kohl and Andrea and Greg Schmidlin. A big "thank you" to them.

The next dinners are scheduled for January

20,21,22. A sign up form will be in the Social Hall. Any questions should be addressed to Susie Cole 406.600.8857 or scole100@msn.com or Nancy Flann 623.670.4570 or nancyflann@hotmail.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.

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.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JANUARY 8 FOLLOWING WORSHIP (PIZZA & SALAD SERVED BEFORE MEETING)

“WOULD YOU LIKE TO HOLD THE BABY?” Intergenerational Holiday Family Service



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:

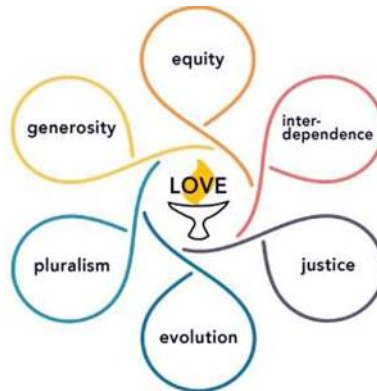
To dwell together in peace;

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.

January Worship Theme: *Finding our Center*



Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Jan. 1 "What Illuminates Your Life?"

Jan. 8 "Revisiting the Center of Our Faith"
Annual Meeting Sunday

Jan. 15 "Praise and Protest"
MLK Sunday

Jan. 22 "Creative Conflict"

Jan. 29 "Leadership and Followership"

In-Person and Livestream



Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister

Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry

