

Newsletter

March 2023

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 Spring of our Souls (Almost)

"Sometimes, the weight of things brings us to our knees, brings us to a common pool in which we're forced to see the underside of what we show no one, and in that moment, God breaks our dearest principle and we are left with the truth of each other..."

—Mark Nepo, *The Way Under the Way*

What's the old saying? We plan. God laughs.

Such is my own experience of late when I tested positive for Covid. After a couple of days, I felt fine. But that darned T line in the home test kept showing up, signaling a positive diagnosis. I plan. Fate laughs.

Paradoxically (or not), our worship theme in March is the Path of Vulnerability. It's a good theme for our place in the seasons as winter winds down to the spring equinox on March 20, a day with equal hours of light and dark, the beginning of spring and the noticeable lengthening (and warming) of days. In the Christian tradition March comprises much of the season of Lent leading up to Easter, a time of introspection and understanding our mortality. It's a good time to take stock of things before the full blossoming of the earth in spring.

We often deny our vulnerability and announce our knowledge, strength and power. Hiding our vulnerability dilutes the power of our true selves. As I've mentioned, my core spiritual practice as a young person was the 12-Step movement in Alateen, the group for teenagers of alcoholics. We learned to work the steps for ourselves (taking care of ourselves before trying to fix everyone else). One of those steps was making a personal "moral inventory," and the next step was sharing that with another person. It was a version of traditional confession.

It's a paradox that we find our strength in large part through our (so-called) weakness. We find the way under the way, to quote Mark Nepo's book title. Being vulnerable to allow life to get us down to the more essential creature we are gives us perspective. It invites a journey of curiosity and possibility.

In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

Inside This Issue

Transitional Thoughts	1
President's Message	2
Dealing w/ the Reality	2
Stewardship	3
Book Report	3
Music Notes	3
Seder Supper	4
Family Ministry	4
Questers	5
Membership	5
Ministerial Search	6
Tidbits	6
March Worship Theme	8

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



We have survived and made it through what was one of the coldest and wettest winters in recent history. And Spring is on its way. Our congregation continues to expand slowly with new members and the addition of young children. This is a new phase in the life of our congregation. We are working to establish a suitable location for parents of young children to go, if needed, where they can participate in the Worship Service and care for their youngsters at the same time. These youngsters are the future of our congregation.

This month I want to talk about General Assembly, commonly referred to as GA. This is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where business of the Association is conducted, theological underpinnings of our faith are studied, and we, as members, learn to lean fully into our mission and principles.

This year's meeting is being held - June 21 - 25, 2023, online or in-person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Most GA events will take place at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh.

Anyone may attend. Congregations must be certified annually to have voting delegates. And the number of delegates is dependent upon membership. We are certified, and our membership allows up to 3 delegates. We have over the years asked for volunteers, rather than go through an election process or by minister and board choice. Delegates must be full members of the congregation, and they can change from year to year. We need two this year.

The programs, meetings and workshops are a multi-platform experience - both virtual and in person. (Some both and others one or the other). I have attended the last three virtually due to circumstances; however, I am considering attending in person this year unless the cost is prohibitive, as the congregation does not have the funds to support member attendance. There is a plethora of information on the UUA website - (UUA.org and search General Assembly) And you can be a delegate either in person or on-line.

If you are interested in attending either in person or on-line, as a delegate or just as a member, please contact Sharon Beard (sabeardaz@gmail.com) or me, Sherry Robinson (uucsazpres20@gmail.com). Last year's GA was an inspiring experience for me even in virtual mode. Check it out!

As we head into spring and the last phase of our Ministerial Search - let us do so remembering that this is Our Year of Giving Thanks. Please continue to be generous with your time, your talents, and your treasures.

Namaste'

Sherry Robinson



DEALING WITH THE REALITY

Are you up to date on the status of abortion laws in Arizona? It is important to know the legal ramifications, especially if you are in contact with someone who may be seeking help and is confused about her choices.

The Arizona Court of Appeals overruled the pre-statehood law which effectively banned all abortions in the state. The judges ruled on December 30, 2022 that abortions performed in the state by licensed physicians are legal up to 15 weeks of gestation despite a 19th-century, near-total abortion ban. Kris Mayes was sworn in as the AZ Attorney General in January, thus avoiding an appeal of the decision by former Attorney General Brnovich.

Abortion is currently banned after 15 weeks, 0 days of pregnancy in Arizona due to the law currently in effect.

All abortions are subject to a mandatory counseling session, compulsory ultrasound, a 24-hour waiting period, and parental approval for those under 17 years of age. It is legal to travel out of state to get an abortion.

A new Arizona law that completely banned abortion in Arizona went into effect September 23, 2022. Right now though, that law is being challenged in the courts, and it is currently not in effect. The ADHS will now presumably regulate licensed abortion clinics in accordance with the 15-week limitation even though their rules don't include such a restriction.

For more information about abortion in Arizona and information about laws in other states, go to <http://abortionfinder.org> on the internet and click on State-by-State Guide.



A Year of Giving Thanks

The formal 2023 Pledge Campaign has concluded. Although most of our pledges are received during the campaign, you may pledge or donate at any time during the year. The quickest option for making your pledge is to 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.

We have shifted our focus to fund raising events. Information about the details of a Coffee House in March and events in most other months will be in the weekly announcements email.

We thank you for your generosity.
Your Stewardship Committee



MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Springtime is blossoming in the Valley. Religious observation seasons are underway. This month we travel outside our usual UU explorations to look at faiths and peoples outside our doors.

“The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions”, Edited by John Bowker, Number 290.3BOW Ref. “The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions is an exceptionally wide-ranging A-Z reference guide to the history, beliefs, dogmas, practices, individuals, customs, and artifacts of the world’s religions past and present.” From the Amazon 4.7 Star review.

“Kanenuiakea; Indigenous Hawaiian Faith and Practice”, by Kuma Glen Kila, Number 299KIL.”This book de-

scribes the faith and practices of a living Indigenous Hawaiian religion. After two centuries being huna (hidden, sacred) because of persecution and fear, its faith and practice is now shared publicly in so far as it will not be exploited.” From the Amazon 5-Star review.

“Singing for Power; The Song Magic of the Papago Indians of Southern Arizona”, by Ruth Murray Underhill, Number 299UND. Note: The frontier label ‘Papago’ is retired and the native people returned to their historic name Tohono O’odham. The people have a “culture of dreaming and then making poetry and songs from their dreams. This is what distinguishes them from other tribes. They are great believers in magic, and songs are handed down from father to son, but each generation has its own dreams and songs to add.”

“An Indigenous Peoples History of the U.S.”, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Number 970DUN. “Recipient of the American Book Award. The acclaimed historian activist author offers a history of the US told from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and reveals how Native Americans, for centuries, actively resisted expansion of the US empire. Today in the US, there are more than 500 federally recognized Indigenous nations comprising nearly 3 million people, descendants of the 15 million Native people once here. This is their story.” From the Amazon 4.7Star Review.

Have a beautiful month shared with a special UU book!



MUSIC NOTES



Maggi Mahan —Acting Music Director

TO CLAP OR NOT TO CLAP

Picture this: A member or visitor enters a sanctuary in hopes of finding solace and comfort. The prelude is especially moving and helps that person sink into a place of ease. At the end of this exceptionally impactful music, how does the member or visitor respond? Sighing, crying out “BRAVO/A”, clapping, waving hands, calling out “AMEN”, standing up?

Which of these best fits the environment of UU Surprise? In truth, the best answer is ALL OF THE ABOVE. Why? Because the response is elicited, not by the performance, but by the connection between the music

and the listener.

Questions such as these are potentially challenging to us all. Music during our services is not intended to be stage performances but to set a mood, express a concept, enhance the message of the service. Some of the responses suggested above may seem jarring, an interruption to worship. Some may seem bland, a lack of connection. Yet, all of them fit if they are in sync with the listener's emotional response.

My request, as Acting Music Director, is that you monitor your own feelings and express your appreciation of the experience in a way that is consistent with your listening experience. AND, that we make room in our services for a variety of expressions. Some anthems may make you feel like dancing. Then, DANCE.

Some may make you feel like quietly waving your arms. Then, WAVE.

Some may make you feel like shouting out. Then, SHOUT

As the hymn says, "We gotta DO when the SPIRIT says DO."



Passover
Seder
Saturday,
April 8,
5:00pm

Join us at a Passover Seder to be held in our UUCS Social Hall. We will enjoy an evening of traditional Seder food and an abbreviated Seder service, co-led by Rich Manalis and Suzi Walling. Whether the Seder is a part of your family tradition or a new experience, we hope you will join us for a delightful evening of food, wine, song and a chance to socialize while taking part in this special spiritual event that **celebrates freedom!**

Because of limited space, congregation members and those who attend services on a regular basis will have first "Dibbs" on signing up at a cost of \$25 per adult, \$15 per teen between the ages of 13 – 18 and FREE for children under 13. Payment by check (made payable to **UU Church in Surprise**) is preferable, but cash is also welcome. **Your reservation will not be confirmed until payment is received.** (Note: There will be a planned

activity for the children related to Passover.) To sign-up and pay, visit the **Passover Seder table** in the social hall. Contact Seder Committee co-chairs Rich Manalis (260.240.9961) or Suzi Walling, (602.750.3293) for more information.

In past years, the Seder has sometimes been fully booked and gotten rave reviews. So we suggest you secure your reservation early.



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director

February and March are turning out to be wonderfully busy months for Family Ministry.

Did you hear about the **new UUCS Dungeons and Dragons Group**? They launched their first campaign on February 25th. The group is led by Dungeon Master, Morgan Oviatt, and assistant moderator, Jack Lawrence. Dungeons & Dragons is a fantasy, tabletop, role-playing game where players form an adventuring party who explore fantasy worlds together. D&D benefits individuals by providing a creative outlet, social interaction, focus, teamwork and collaboration. Adventurers put their UU principles and values to use while experiencing the mystery and wonder that, although fictional, all cultures and worlds provide.

Although they are aiming for younger players, all members of wizeden ages and knowledge are certainly encouraged to join the adventure and prove they are young at heart. The only requirements are: attendance at Session Zero, preferably age 12+, relatively reliable attendance, a yearning for adventure and very basic math skills (add/subtract two digit numbers, know multiplication tables).

Brave and bold adventurers will be heartily welcomed! However, once a campaign is launched, newcomers must wait for a new adventure in order to participate. New adventure dates will be posted online. So be ready!

A Road Trip... four UUCS members (myself, included) are headed down to Tucson the first weekend in March for a **multi-level, Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.) facilitator training workshop**. Two of us will be trained to facilitate O.W.L. for high school students and two will be trained to facilitate O.W.L. for adult and senior workshops. Once completed, our congregation will have

trained facilitators to teach the full spectrum of lifespan courses to members and the broader community.

Finally, **Sunday, March 26th is the date for our White Tanks Cookout.** I reserved all of



Picnic

Area 7 for us from 2:30-6:00 p.m. All are welcome! Bring a main entree for your family to grill and an additional dish to share with the group. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Social Hall as the event gets closer.

Bring along any outdoor games you'd like to play, as well as your own chairs, as Ramada seating is limited. Park entry fee is \$7 per vehicle. Hope to see you there! Please contact familyministry@uusurpriseaz.org with any questions.

As always, to find out more, please visit the Family FB page at: <https://www.facebook.com/uusurprisefamily>.



To sign up for the following offerings, visit the Questers Table in the Social Hall or the UUCS Website—uusurpriseaz.org/AdultPrograms/Questers.

HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY SERIES— DEALING WITH LIFE CHALLENGES: Care for Caregivers—Tue., March 14, 10:00- 11:30am, Social Hall

Join this session and explore caregiving and how we can provide support to those in our lives who are caregivers or those who are in need of caregiving. With a Hospice of the Valley representative, discuss how to optimize a loved one's well-being while taking care of yourself in the process or how to support a caregiver you know.

KLEIDONS INSPIRE WITH IDEAS, IMAGINATION—March 17, 24, 31, 10:00-11:30am, Social Hall

On March 17 and 24, Dennis Kleidon will show how to increase optimism and use creativity to empower your life at any age, starting with paying attention to feelings and putting your imagination to work. The 10-11:30 sessions will be both lecture and workshop.

In his book, *Unleash Your Imagination: Transform Your Life*, Dennis Kleidon explains design thinking and applies it to life planning. He has had a long, successful career as a designer and fine artist. The two sessions will build on each other, but if you cannot come to both, feel free to attend the second one.

On March 31, Rose Kleidon will give a PowerPoint presentation inspired by the historical research required for her novel, *1836: Year of Escape*. Titled "Fantastic News," the presentation is filled with data about the immense differences between today and 1836, when 85% of people lived in extreme poverty and only 10% could read.

Rose makes a case for rational optimism based on the facts of our recent history, beginning with the Industrial Revolution and picking up steam (literally!) in 1870, a year some historians call a hinge of history. The half-hour presentation will be followed with Q&A and discussion.

The Kleidons' recently published books, *Unleash Your Imagination* and *1836: Year of Escape*, are not required reading, but a copy of each is available in the UU library, and you can buy them wherever books are sold.



MEMBERSHIP

We've seen another burst of new members this past month!

Barbara Hughes an active Friend of the congregation recently signed the book.

The following new members are from West Valley UU:

Mary Lynne Shroyer
Darren Reale
Susan Gupton
Hank Gupton

Please seek out new members to congratulate and welcome them. Also, you could invite them to join you in congregational activities and events. Let's continue the warm welcome they received that made them want to join us well into their membership years.

Just a reminder that only Members have a vote when the MSC presents the ministerial candidate to the congregation in a few months.

Curious about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation? Join us in March for the New UU Class. Rev. Sam

Schaal facilitates the class which will be held on three consecutive Sundays at 9:00am before worship. Sign up for this informative class in the Social Hall or email Libby Christianson, Membership Chair, at maestro25@comcast.net. New members will be presented to the congregation on New Member Sunday, April 2, 2023.

Are you interested in talking to Rev. Sam Schaal about becoming a Member? Please contact him at minister@uusurpriseaz.org or call 623-875-2550 to make an appointment.

The Membership Committee has room for new members. For more information contact Libby Christianson at maestro25@comcast.net

Your Membership Committee: Lee and Mary Jane Askern, Carol Calkins, Libby Christianson, Ray Mahoney, and Judy Reynolds



Our Ministerial Search Committee is hard at work in the search for a new Settled Minister.

Want to know where we are in the process?

Do you wonder what the process is?

There is a place you can go to get lots of questions answered, and it's available 24-7.

**MINISTERIAL SEARCH
INFORMATION**

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

The website is always available, but you can also talk with one of the Ministerial Search Committee members—Brent Garrett & Juliet Gustavson (Co-chairs), Libby Christianson, Michael Gentry, Reggie Johnston, Jeff London, Amy St. Peter.

TIDBITS

SOMETHING NEW!



**CALLING
members
and
friends!**

Those who are interested in congregational participation in worship music are invited to meet with Special Music Consultant Nico Barberan on Sunday, March 5, after worship. Nico is interested in developing music selections that include the congregation.

AND

PLEASE BRING THEM HOME . . .

IF you have copies of UUCS choral music in your car, your library, your piano bench, your picnic basket. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE return it to the top of the file cabinets in the music corner of the Multi-purpose Room. We are missing numerous copies of numerous pieces.

THANK YOU

THE New UU

An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism

Sundays March 12, 19 & 26

9 to 10:15 a.m.

Curious about Unitarian Universalism?

Considering membership in the congregation?

Meet lay leaders of the congregation and how you might find your place here.



OPPORTUNITY TO CARE & SHARE YOUR LOVE



Could you be available to be that occasional loving presence caring for our toddlers during Sunday service?

If so, there's an opportunity for you in our nursery.

Simply send an email to Lisa Lawrence (family_ministry@uusurpriseaz.org) for additional information and/or to add your name to the list.



**Friday, March 10—Moderate Morning Hike
in West Wing Mountain Preserve, Peoria.
(8:30am Meet at UUCS to carpool)**

Sign up at Sunday morning Questers Table or
email Carol Calkins (carolpcalkins@gmail.com)

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts

Surprise, AZ 85378

Ph: 623-875-2550

Email: admin@uusurpriseaz.org

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.

March Worship Theme: *The Path Vulnerability*



Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.

In-Person and Livestream



*Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister
Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry
Maggi Mahan, Acting Music Director*

