

Newsletter

April 2023

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

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TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transition Minister

Of Sunrises and Sufferings

*"We sing of golden mornings, we sing of sparkling seas,
of prairies, valleys, mountains, and stately forest trees.
We sing of flashing sunshine and life bestowing rain,
of birds among the branches, and springtime come again."*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

This triumphal verse from one of our hymns is confident about life, especially in the spring. With a cooler-than-usual winter this year, we welcome the spring. This year we can enjoy the pleasant weather on our patio even more with the patio tables donated by our incoming members and friends from the West Valley UU congregation.

Speaking of golden mornings, April is Golden Rule month in Arizona and the City of Surprise. The Golden Rule is an ongoing ministry of the congregation. In worship we'll explore "loving our neighbor(hood)" and what that suggests about our mission. On Earth Day we'll engage our relationship (and our responsibilities) to our earth home through the lens of earth-centered or Pagan spirituality.

We also welcome the return of the Jewish Seder dinner Saturday April 8 (see page 3) where all ages will gather for joyful singing and observing of the traditional seder that celebrates freedom from oppression. As the seder suggests, oppression knows many seasons. History is replete with those who suffered in search of truth and freedom, and it's good to honor that struggle.

As I was preparing to preach in March on the book *Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism*, I saw a quote from the UU minister Rev. Natalie Fenimore. She said our congregations should build places to process pain and struggle as well as love and celebration. "You cannot really get to the mountaintop until you've been in the valley. You can't just skip over the struggle. As an institution, Unitarian Universalism does Easter without Good Friday." She said this in the context of people (and ministers) of color in our congregations seeking a fuller experience of Unitarian Universalism.

Might all of us have a fuller experience of life, and the depth and breadth of our faith tradition. Might we honor life as well as death, victory as well as struggle.
In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



We have moved into April when our snowbirds begin to depart for cooler climates and our lives begin to slow down - or not. We have had a productive Winter – adding new members and friends, more and varied music, new social activities, and new educational experiences.

Lynn Melby provided a second enjoyable Coffee House Evening featuring talent from our congregation. If you missed it, catch the next one in the fall. The West Valley contingent provided a lovely luncheon of soups, salads and desserts on March 11 after worship, and we responded by having the largest number of members attend worship that day since before Covid. It was a beautiful day celebrated with a very generous group.

The Stewardship Committee is busily preparing the return of our **Annual Auction** to be held **Saturday, April 15th**, with drinks, hors d'oeuvres, a professionally prepared BBQ buffet, and a Live Auction. There will be music to entertain you, and beverages available for a slight donation. There will be no silent auction this year; however, we will have a variety of interesting items presented by our best auctioneers on which you may spend your dollars. The cost \$20 for adults and \$10 for children under 13. Remember this all goes to support the Congregation.

Check out the newly arranged **Information Hallway** (off the Social Hall on the way to the library) Priscilla London and Carol Calkins have arranged this space for getting information to you. We have labeled the areas, so if you are looking for a specific piece of information, there will be an indication of where to look. Hopefully this will keep similar activities and information together. We have a place for Social Justice, Community Activities, Golden Rule ideas, Questers offerings, Social Activities and Volunteer Opportunities. If you have something to share, check with Priscilla or Carol to see where to best place it.

This Information Hallway is where you will find more about the **UU General Assembly** happening in June. If you are interested in attending and maybe even being a delegate, let me know. You can attend virtually. There will also be information related to Article II and the modification of our principles and sources. The first vote on these changes will be taken at this year's GA. Additional Information is available on the UUA website (UUA.Org).

What more could you ask for? I know - our new settled Minister – be patient. It will happen. If you think it is difficult waiting – just think how the Ministerial Search Committee feels. Keep the faith and hold positive thoughts.

Sherry Robinson



OUR ANNUAL AUCTION IS BACK WITH A NEW LOOK!
An evening featuring Western BBQ and a live auction
SATURDAY, APRIL 15

4:30pm appetizers and beverages – 5:00pm BBQ - 6:00pm Live Auction

TICKETS

Adults and Teenagers (13 years or older) - \$20
Children (12 and under) - \$10 – *Childcare provided*
Purchased at the event - \$25/person.

Tickets on sale on Sundays in Social Hall and online at <https://uusurpriseaz.org/get-involved/#donate>. Click on donate and select the Auction BBQ. You can pay using PayPal up to April 10th. Please consider clicking on “add to pay cost of fee” so your ticket price is paid in full.



YOU CAN DONATE A LIVE AUCTION ITEM/ EVENT AND/OR HELP ON APRIL 14TH AND/ OR 15TH

Possible Items or Events:

HOST an EVENT – such as a lunch or dinner, tea and conversation, pool party, game night.

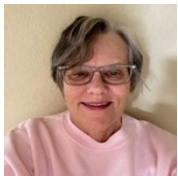
CREATE a GIFT BASKET with a theme.

BAKE or MAKE a DESSERT to be auctioned to individuals of tables at the event

DONATE A SERVICE—such as dog walking, driving to airport or UUSC, checking someone’s home while they’re away, computer work, baking cookies several times a year.

Help on April 14th and/or 15th: Food preparation, décor and/or room set-up and take-down, selling 50/50 raffle tickets, helping with food and beverage service.

You can sign up to volunteer in the Social Hall on Sundays or by emailing Janet Jeffrey at uucsazstewardship@gmail.com.



MUSIC NOTES



HOW DOES CHANGE TAKE PLACE?

In the UUCS music program here is how we arrived at our current status. The domino effect has been infused with excitement, suspense, stress, fun, hope, joy, and eager anticipation.

Enter from stage left, March 2020

OOPS, Covid

OOPS, Streaming from Individual Homes

OOPS, Music Director Retires

YAY! Music Search Committee interviews several capable candidates

YAY! New Music Director hired

YAY! Return to in-house worship with on-line streaming

YAY! We have new choir members!

OOPS, Streaming on-line requires copyright permissions for all streamed music.

OOPS, we need a copyright license.

YAY! The Board has approved purchase of a copyright license that covers all music from ASCAP, BMI, and SES-AC.

OOPS, we need a dedicated volunteer to track copyrights, report our music to the licensing agency, and notify musicians if changes are needed.

YAY! Our Music Committee has developed a policy and procedure to cover streaming our music.

OOPS, Music Director Resigns.

YAY! We have an Acting Music Director.

YAY! We have a dedicated copyright tracker, Mary Anne Poggenburg.

OOPS! Not all of the music we want to play in our services is included in the 20 million songs covered by our copyright license. Even some of the hymns in our two UU hymnals are not covered for streaming. We have to 1) call our licensing agency and learn who has the copyright, 2) request and pay for a special permission, assuming we get the permission, 3) substitute new music choices, 4) play the music without streaming it, 5) take a risk and stream it anyway, knowing that it is likely that Facebook and YouTube will delete the streamed service.

YAY! We have another new choir member!

YAY! We have a superb Special Music Consultant, Nico Barberan

OOPS, Based on our experience during the first year we need to re-clarify our original policy for streaming music. The Music Committee needs to tweak the policy based on our experience to date. For instance, there must be time to change music selections, if necessary.

OOPS, it is illegal to re-stream a video already posted on YouTube without seeking and obtaining written permission. Another possibly expensive and time-consuming process.

And that brings us to April, 2023.

YAY! YAY! YAY! This month our music will celebrate the energy of new membership, the renewal of spring, the beauty of indigenous music, and Mother Earth. Piano and vocal music will be featured April 2. Our choir will sing April 9 and 16. Nico Barberan will be with us April 16 and 23. Our service on April 30 will feature flute and guitar.

MINISTERIAL SEARCH INFORMATION

Available 24-7— uusurpriseaz.org

**Come Celebrate Freedom from Oppression
Come to our Passover Seder
Saturday April 8th at 5:00PM—UUCS Social Hall**



Passover, the oldest and most important of Jewish religious festivals, celebrates the entire sequence of events that led to the Israelites' freedom from slavery in Egypt. Today it continues to commemorate freedom from oppression, and may remind us to be ever vigilant regarding contemporary slavery. Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, and Secular Humanist Jews have diverse ways to celebrate Passover, but all believe the story of Passover, historic or not, celebrates freedom from oppression...freedom from slavery.

There is still room for you to celebrate freedom from oppression at our Passover Seder. You are invited to join us for a meaningful evening of traditional Seder food and activities co- led by Rich Manalis, Suzi Walling and Pax Whitmore.

TICKET SALES CLOSE THIS SUNDAY, APRIL 2!

UUCS Members & Friends

Adults - \$25 | Pre-teens & Teens - \$15 | Children under 13 – FREE

Guests of Members & Friends - \$35

If you are attending the Seder and are able to assist with setting up, serving, and/or cleaning up, you can sign up at the Seder Table on Apr. 2 or call Suzi Walling (602-750-3293) or Rich Manalis (260-240-9961).



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director

It's been a very busy month for Family Ministry.

On March 3-5th, Paige Rappleye, Annie Converse and I had the pleasure of attending an Our Whole Lives sexuality workshop facilitator training down in Tucson. Annie and I were trained to facilitate O.W.L. for grades 7-9 and 10-12 while Paige was trained to facilitate O.W.L. for young adults, adults and seniors. We also have facilitators trained to teach k-1st and 4th-6th grade. That means that we are able to teach the full spectrum of workshops! We look forward to offering some soon. It's been far too long.

Our Sunday morning classroom was bursting at the seams with a major influx of new and visiting families. So, when I returned from Tucson I turned our elementary classroom into a preschool, for ages three through first grade, and the elementary class is now for grades second through fifth. Gradual improvements are also being made to accommodate nursery families. The worship service can now be streamed into the nurse-

ry .

The UUCS Dungeon's & Dragons Group has switched to Sundays and is seeking brave and bold adventurers to join their new campaign. The next meeting date is Sunday, April 2nd from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Please contact Morgan Oviatt or Lisa Lawrence to r.s.v.p. or if you have questions.

And, so that the parents have a little time off, I've set up a Parents Night Out/Kid's Night In, Saturday, April 22nd. Hey parents! Join us for dinner on the patio at Macayo's in Surprise on Saturday, April 22nd from 6:00-8:30 p.m. Meanwhile, childcare will be available for kids at the church. Activities will include board games, movies and crafts and dinner—Little Cesar's pizza, juice and cookies. Childcare drop-off time is 5:30 p.m. and fees are \$10 per child/\$15 for two. Email familyministry@uusurpriseaz.org to R.S.V.P. no later than Friday, April 7th. *Macayo's Location: 15565 W. Bell Rd. Surprise, AZ 85374. Cross streets: Bell/Rheems.*

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





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



The latest science on the state of our climate has been laid out in a powerful new report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The [Sixth Assessment Report](#) puts our planet in Code Red, which makes the **Questers Climate Crisis offering** with Rich Manalis exceptionally timely. Below are a few words from Rich about **Climate Crisis**—3 sessions, starting April 13, 10:00-11:30am.

Sylvia's and my interest in the climate crisis began a year ago when we attended an online course offered by Sylvia's sister, who co-authored a book with her husband called "Wake Up World", which can be read for free at www.wakeupworld.earth.

During that course I got the idea to facilitate a Questers Climate Crisis class. We know it is a scary topic. Sylvia jokes that her sister held a gun to her head to get her to take her class. But she was right. It's something we must not ignore!

I will be the facilitator of the three sessions, not the expert. Please join us.

For sure we must no longer bury our heads in the sand!



SUMMER IS COMING and our Snowbirds will fly away.

But not everyone will leave the desert.

The Questers Committee doesn't close shop for the summer, but we need to know what offerings or kinds of offerings those who remain would like to participate in. So come to the Sunday Questers Table and share your ideas or send your ideas to Jeff London (jvlondon@yahoo.com).



MEMBERSHIP

Spring has sprung and we have even more new members at UUCS! Please welcome Maryke and Eric Deschamps, Hank and Susan Gupton, Barry Linden, Sandra Mahoney, and Peter Royers to membership at UUCS. We are so grateful that so many people have joined us this year.

Please plan to attend New Member Sunday on Sunday, April 2. We will introduce and honor all who have joined UUCS in the new year.

As we say goodbye for the summer to our snowbird members and friends, we encourage all who identify as year-rounders, firebirds, etc. to sign up to be a Greeter or Usher to keep things running smoothly at UUCS throughout the summer months. Volunteer to help the Social/Hospitality team by bringing a snack to share for social hour or agreeing to help in the kitchen on an occasional Sunday morning. These are all great ways to pitch in and meet other members, friends, and visitors. Our congregation runs on love, and you can show yours by volunteering at UUCS.

Did you know that April 16 – April 22 is National Volunteer Appreciation Week? Take a minute during that week to thank a volunteer or two here at UUCS. Appreciation is always appreciated.

Yours in Service: UUCS Membership Committee



MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian

To everything there is a season.....Welcome to Spring, full of promise and change. We say adieu to our winter members and friends until next season. And this year my own 'moving on'. Yes, as of April 2 we will have moved on from our beloved community for the final time.

A new librarian will carry on. Until that point I will continue remotely, as I do every summer as we travel. I am still available to help you with your reading until September or later as you may need me. Please feel free to call or text me 303-589-5729 or email me balzerfreespirit@gmail.com.

I will miss you all very much. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as your librarian the last nine years. Together we have built a program to be proud of; books of the highest caliber on current topics important to our congregation. And as always please 'enjoy a beautiful day shared with a great UU book!' Now let's have a

look at a few of our newer books:

“Breaking and Blessing—Meditations”, by Shawn Parker Dennison, number 242DEN. “So timely for these trying times. This is indeed balm for all healing, surviving humans. So... for ALL humans. Such a blessing!” From the Amazon 5-Star review. This book is part of the InSpirit bookstore yearly meditation series.

“How We Live is How We Die”, by Pema Chodron, number 294.3CHO. The author “shares her wisdom for working with the flow of life, learning to live with ease, joy, and compassion through uncertainty, embracing new beginnings, and ultimately preparing for death with curiosity and openness rather than fear.” From the Amazon 4.5-Star Review.

“Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist.” By Judith Heumann, number 362.4HEU. The author, paralyzed from polio since childhood died March 4. As the ‘Mother of the Disability Rights Movement’, “One of the most influential disability rights activists in US history tells her story of fighting for the right to receive an education, have a job, and just be human.” From the Amazon 5-Star review.



FUN... FOOD... FELLOWSHIP... all included at UUCS CIRCLE SUPPERS!

The next Circle Suppers will be held May 4-5-6, with sign-up a couple weeks prior in the church Social Hall. Come join us!!

For information, contact Susie Cole, 406-600-8857 or Claudia Yeager-Smith, 480-387-1973.

Bean Bag Day – Saturday, Apr. 22, 8:00am-12:00pm

Show your community pride by participating in the 6th Annual "Bean Bag Day" event! Join the community by pitching in to bag a thousand pounds of nutrition. A great family project! Contact Larry Garcia 623-222-1522 or larry.garcia@surprise.gov for more information.

A TRIBUTE AND THANK YOU TO OUR LIBRARIAN



That little room tucked between the offices and Social Hall is our library, a room you may have passed through many times. Perhaps you've already discovered it to be filled with wonderful choices, thanks to MaryAnne Balzer, who has loved and cared for this library since 2014.

From the time she was a kid, MaryAnne loved books. Loved looking at them...what she could see in them...the worlds they introduced her to. Since MaryAnne was never a professional librarian, where did her library experience come from? Her Mom didn't know what to do with her in the summer, so she found an opportunity for MaryAnne to work with the school librarian, and at NAU she also did work study in the library. As a result of those and other library experiences, MaryAnne learned how to do everything a librarian needs to do. **Being our librarian is one of the things MA chose to do when she joined our UU community. How fortunate for us!**

MaryAnne joined the UUCS Community in 2008. When she arrived, Jane Eisenberg was librarian with Mary Lou Rideout, her assistant. In the years before Jane's passing in 2014, MaryAnne had time to see and reflect on what the library was, as well as to imagine what it might be. When Jane passed, Mary Lou Rideout knew exactly who should replace her – MaryAnne. And with the agreement that Mary Lou Rideout would remain as assistant, the two set to work.

One of MaryAnne's goals was to make the library a welcoming space where people in the congregation would be drawn. The first years were a cleaning out time, and there was no pushback at the changes, which was not surprising, knowing that how people read and what they read changes over time. She kept what our readers preferred and the others were donated where they could be of use. Nothing went to waste.

MaryAnne has loved sharing and introducing new books – books on a variety of subjects and by a variety of authors.

She has appreciated hearing what people think about the books they check out. She has listened to people when they share what they would like to see in the library. As she has had funds, she has added books to the library...those that were requested and those she has found.

A unique service she has provided on the quiet – MaryAnne has assisted members and friends in writing invocations, prayers or statements of faith when they didn't have the words for what they wanted to say. In her words, "I do love what I do. I love being able to help people find what gives them a **broadening of faith, deepening of faith, or solace**, as the case may be." It's a spiritual mission.

I believe it's safe to say that we have had an improbable librarian with an activist approach that has created an unlikely little gem of a library. And it is now time for us to say good bye to our friend and UUCS's special librarian.

MaryAnne is leaving us to spend some time in travel and then perhaps locating closer to where her daughter is living. She will be sorely missed, **but** her love of books and her spirit of support will remain in that small room between the Social Hall and the office as a rich resource on our spiritual journeys.

Thank You MaryAnne, and we wish you the very best in this move
into the next chapter of your life.



Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

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Surprise, AZ 85378

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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.

April Worship Theme: *The Path of the Golden Rule*



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*

