

Newsletter

May 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

Living Creatively Is Messy Work

"Human beings are works in progress that mistakenly think they are finished."

—Dan Gilbert

Imagining the future and predicting how to get there is difficult. Hindsight is 20/20. Not foresight. Harvard psychologist Dan Gilbert is famous for his scientific research and witty writing style that makes that research accessible. We are works in progress, he reminds us, that don't realize we are works in progress.

Congregations are works in progress as well. The recent news that despite the good, hard work of so many over this past year, no candidate for settled ministry was found in this cycle. We thought we were finished with that task. Not so, says Life.

Of course, this result was always among the possible outcomes and this congregation is certainly not the first to be so disappointed. The Board is working out next steps to bring in another minister for a shorter-term ministry. Transition ministry, my craft, is more art than science. We have done much good work over the past (almost) two years of our ministry, which puts the congregation in a better position. There is more work to do.

A disappointment, yes. A failure, no. An invitation that invites the congregation into its as-yet-unknown future, very much yes. It is a time full of creative potential.

The Path of Creativity is our worship theme for May. Given that the search for your eventual settled ministry is now expanded, this is a good subject to engage. How might the congregation move into its future creatively? This month we'll take one Sunday to explore the beginning of everything: the Big Bang. It was a messy start. It evolved slowly, in the way we experience time. And—surprise—it's not over. The Big Bang continues, creating, evolving, emerging in our own lives and time. It's not over until it's over.

Yes, the ministerial search continues. Inviting us into our future, just around the next bend. And the next. And the next. Another psychologist was Erich Fromm. He said, "The capacity to be puzzled is...the premise of all creation..." Indeed.
In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

Inside This Issue

Transitional Thoughts	1
President's Message	2
Auction Update	3
Music Notes	3
Family Ministry	4
Questers	4
Monthly Book Report	4
Membership	4
Getting Involved	5
HomeBase	5
Dealing w/ Reality	6
New Members	6
MSC Thank You	6
Share Your Passion	7
UUCS April Memories	7
May Worship Theme	8

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Welcome to May. April began with much promise. Our waiting and wondering to know if we would have a new minister would soon be over. We knew there was no match in the first round of the search; however, we all held out hope we would be successful in the second round. Unfortunately, that was not to happen. Our Search Team was superb, taking their role seriously and working to find the very best match for our congregation. Their choices, in the end, were valid and based on the criteria the congregation helped generate. Our trust in their skill to do the work was well placed. We move on now to the next steps. Your board will meet with the UUA Transition's Office and with our Search Team members, and we will, together, choose the best path forward. We do have options, and we also have time and now experience on our side.

Keeping in mind our disappointment, I want us to remember and cherish the April we had. This year began to feel normal at UUCS. We had an April filled with wonderful events and opportunities. We began by introducing 24 new members to our Congregation on New Member Sunday, April 2, and on the same day saying farewell to our beloved Librarian MaryAnne Balzer. MaryAnne's leaving is a loss, but she is off on the next chapter of her life, and we wish her well. Having so many new members helps to soften her leaving.

On April 8th, members and guests participated in a Seder, which is the ritual feast held at the beginning of the Jewish Passover. Suzi Walling and Rich Manalis joined with a talented committee to give us an evening filled with good food, thoughtful conversation and the opportunity to experience something very special in the Jewish faith. It was well attended and much enjoyed. Thank you, Suzi, and Rich.



Easter was the following day for those celebrating an important Christian Holiday. We, UU's, had a lovely Service followed by an enthusiastic Easter egg hunt for our kids - young and old. There was something for everyone that weekend. (See picture on p. 7.)

Saturday, April 15th, after three years, we held our annual Auction accompanied by a Western BBQ Dinner. The attendance was great, conversation lively, meal enjoyable and bidding on items enthusiastic. We had a wide variety of items . . . all available for bid in support of our Religious Education programs. (PS: We made some money for the effort.

Steve Calkins and Lynn Melby did an outstanding job as dueling auctioneers with the winner being the congregation of UUCS. Thanks to all for attending, volunteering, contributing items for auction and participating in the giving of funds to support these programs. Your generosity is accepted with sincere appreciation and thanks. Together – we made this a successful event.

Listening Groups for collecting your thoughts, feelings, and suggestions on changing, or modifying our name have begun. Andrea Schmidlin is working with me as recorder and a second set of ears. We have met with the Women's Group and the Men's Group. There will be a **third Listening Group on Sunday, April 30, after worship in the Multipurpose Room (Old Choir Room). We are collecting information only. Join us if you have an idea or are simply curious.**

Looking forward, some of our members and friends are beginning their journeys to their summer homes. We will miss them and wish them safe travels. For those of us remaining – we will begin the process of selecting a minister to guide us on our continuing journey forward. We will have activities and projects to keep us busy and we will be doing these together. Stay well and stay connected.

*Blessings,
Sherry Robinson*



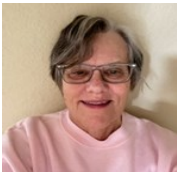
Successful Annual Auction with Western BBQ held on April 15, 2023



to all who contributed to the first auction we have held since 2020: from the donors to those who purchased, from the check-in desk to the auctioneers and cash-out team, from the people who decorated the space and prepared/served food, to those who cleaned up and put the social hall in order for Sunday service. This event could not have happened without you. THANK-YOU! These are the names, in no particular order: Carol and Steve Calkins, Sherry Robinson and Steve Shanklin, Claudia Yeager-Smith, Joye and Lynn Melby, Barbara and Bill Hughes, Jan Murphy, Mary Ellen Baker, Priscilla and Jeff London, Liz Thomas, BJ Martindale, Sharon Beard, Janet and David King, Sharon and David Moore, Brooke and Jim Gaunt, Boe St. Peter, Darren Reale, Rich Manalis, Judy Reynolds, Maggi Mahan, Lisa, Sam and Jack Lawrence, Nancy Flann, John Benefield, and Kay Vogt. To anyone I may have missed – thank you for all you did. (See picture on pg. 7.)

The Stewardship Committee is holding a debriefing meeting soon, at which time we will begin to plan for the Auction event in 2024 and continue to plan other fund-raising events for 2023. I am reviewing financial information from the event ... purchases, ticket sales, expenses, etc., so that I can report on funds raised for UUCS.

Janet Jeffrey
Stewardship Committee



MUSIC NOTES



Don't miss this great concert!

Put this Latin American concert on your calendar right now! You've likely already heard Nico perform on a Sunday. Now you get more music from him, and from his talented musical partner on clarinet. Percussionist Andres Lopez adds dynamic rhythms played on congas, cajón peruano, and shakers. Join us Sunday, May 7, 3 p.m. at UUCS for unique and captivating tangos, sambas, and cumbias, among other popular Latin American rhythms.

Q'iru, meaning "wood" in the Quechua language, is the name the duet chose to honor the actual source of their instruments, as well as the traditional culture from which their music arises. The Quechua people, indigenous to South America and primarily residing in the Andes mountain region, have a rich cultural heritage that inspires Q'iru's musical creations.

This promises to be an afternoon filled with magical music, friendly company, and a welcoming ambience. To purchase advance on-line tickets go to uusurpriseaz.org and click Event Tickets. On the dropdown menu, choose Concert Series. Repeat this process for each ticket desired. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door; \$5 for children under 13. Your emailed receipt is your Ticket. Advance tickets will also be available this Sunday after worship in the Social Hall.





FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director



And just like that, the RE season has almost come to a close. Our last day of religious education instruction will be on Sunday, May 21st.

Beginning the first Sunday in June, we will be offering the “Share Your Passion” summer program for children ages 3 and up. On days when we don’t have a presenter scheduled, crafts, games and toys will be available in a supervised classroom. If children wish to sit through service with their families in the sanctuary, they are welcome to. (See page 7 for how you can be part of “Share Your Passion”.)

Have a fun and safe summer!

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



Questers 2022-2023 Sept thru May program year is coming to an end, but we will not be taking the summer off. In fact, summer gives us the opportunity to bring you offerings with an emphasis on relaxing enjoyment, one-session offerings that you may be able to participate in between your other summer plans. For those of us we fondly refer to as the Firebirds (people who don’t fly away from the desert heat), here’s a glance at our summer plans to date and an invitation to share your ideas for summer offerings.



June 21 – “Read Me a Story” with Emily Whitmore – A chance to share a favorite children’s picture book from your own childhood or from reading with young chil-

dren. Picture books can spark memories long since forgotten or imagination that keeps us young at heart.

July 18 – **A Play Date with Juliet . . . Improv for Everyone** – Playing is improvisation. If you are really playing, you are in the moment, responding as you go along. Young children are masters at improvisation. Somehow most of us lose that gift along the way. But we can find it and have some fun in the process. Come. Play with me.

August (Date & Time TBD) – **A Comfort Food Potluck** – What is your comfort food and why? Participants will bring a comfort food to share and the recipe. And they will share why that particular food has earned the comfort food label in their book.

The **UUCS Women’s Group** will continue meeting through the summer for conversation in the Social Hall from 10:30am to noon on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Contact Judy Reynolds (jmr2642@yahoo.com) or sign up at the Questers Table to get on the mailing list.



MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer

Hello to all our UU Readers. I hope everyone is enjoying the finally warmer area temperatures. Great times to enjoy a terrific library read on the patio in the beautiful shade.

A reminder for everyone looking for a library book on how to find the one you want; or if you want to browse for the perfect patio read: All the library shelves are identified with the general type of book located on that shelf. Remember these are *general*, but will help orient you.

If you wish a particular book or subject of books you can easily use the ‘*card catalogue*’. At the check-out desk you will find a drawer with all our books filed alphabetically by *author*. Next, there is a drawer with all our books filed alphabetically by *title*. And then, a great place to look for your topic is the ‘*subject*’ box. Every book has several cards in this box. Please be sure to enjoy your library anytime!

“***Love Beyond God Meditations***”, by Adam Dyer, number 242DYE. “This timely collection explores faith, race, love, identity, and more, and invites us to think deeply about our place and role in contemporary society. A newer installment in the popular Skinner House inSpirit series.” Review from the 4.0 Star Amazon rating. This is a terrific and popular meditation volume.

“***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings***”, by Maya Angelou,

number 818.5ANG. “Poetic and powerful, this book is a modern American classic that will touch hearts and change minds for as long as people read or listen.” “The author is an American classic of literature. Here she explains her early influences and life events. She was such a deep poet, writer, and so much more. There was so much emotion. It was raw, riveting, sad, and powerful all in one.” Strong comments from the 4.5 Star Amazon review.

“The Righteous Mind—Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion”, by Jonathan Haidt, number 201.6HAI. “The acclaimed social psychologist challenges conventional thinking about morality, politics, and religion in a way that speaks to conservatives and liberals alike, a “landmark contribution to humanity’s understanding of itself.” From the NY Times, Amazon 4.5 Star review.

*Have a blessed day shared
with a terrific UU library book!*

NEW TO UUCS? WANT TO MEET PEOPLE? LONGTIME MEMBER? WANT TO MEET NEW PEOPLE?

One of the best ways to meet folks at UUCS is to volunteer. When I joined in 2010, I started working in the kitchen and met tons of people serving coffee and snacks on Sunday mornings. **We are currently in need of 3 categories of volunteers for one time or ongoing responsibilities.** First, we need **Door Greeters**, one or two folks to stand (or sit) outside or inside the front doors to greet people when they enter our building. Second, we need **Guest Table Attendant**. This person welcomes visitors once they are inside the Social Hall, assists them with name tags, and answers any questions the visitor may have. They also help folks complete a visitor form, if they want us to follow up with them. Finally, we need **Rental Monitors**. As you may have noticed, more folks are back to meeting in person, and we have several outside community groups who rent our building for meetings and events. Rental fees help generate income for the congregation, as well as help get our congregation noticed in the wider community. Each event needs a designated Monitor who can unlock the church for the group, ensure that set-up is complete and as requested, answer any questions that the group organizer may have, and lock the building back up at the completion of the event. Set up of furniture can be done by the Rental Monitor if they are able but is not required.

If you are interested in being a **Door Greeter** or **Guest**

Table Attendant please contact Membership Chair Libby Christianson at 847-975-6745 or maestro25@comcast.net.

If you are interested in being a Rental Monitor please contact me at 602-332-3973 or bagaunt37@gmail.com.

In Faith and Friendship – Brooke Gaunt . . .
Board Vice President



Partner- ship

HomeBase Partnership, our congregation’s support for homeless 18-26 year olds in Surprise, is now operating and moving forward. We have contributed hygiene kits and are collecting nonparishable breakfast food under the leadership of Sharon Beard. Here are the names of the other contribution project leaders.

- Patricia Balfour—Recognitions
- Sharon Beard—Food
- Brooke Gaunt—Computers
- Reggie Johnston—Assist Personal Hygiene Items, Posters/Displays
- David King—Summer Coordinator, Mentors
- Jeff London—Personal Hygiene Items
- Jan Murphy—Finance, Computer Tutoring
- Tom Reemstma—Assist Food
- Sherry Robinson—Assist Personal Hygiene Items, Pillows
- Julie Wambach--Assist Coordinators, Publicity
- Rick Wambach—Winter Coordinator

So, stay tuned and consider how you might get involved. You are welcome to contact any of the contribution project leaders. Starting in June, David King. as our Summer Coordinator.. will be in charge.



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. The Lay Pastoral Care Committee maintains close contact with the minister regarding people in need.

For help please call **623-826-3365** or **623-537-9449**.



DEALING WITH REALITY

From the New York Times, February 2023

Current abortion laws in Arizona and it's neighboring states:

Arizona: Abortion is banned after 15 weeks of pregnancy. Enforcement of a separate ban on abortion from 1864 with no exception for rape or incest is blocked by an appeals court. **California:** In November, voters enshrined abortion protections in the State Constitution. State law protects abortion, and in 2022 the governor signed a bill to shield patients and providers from laws in other states. **Colorado:** State law protects abortion, but a 1984 law prohibits using state funds to cover the cost of most abortions. In 2022 the governor issued an executive order to shield those seeking or providing abortions in Colorado from laws in other states. **Nevada:** State law protects abortion, but state funds cannot be used to cover the cost of most abortions. In 2022, the governor issued an executive order to shield those seeking or providing abortions in Nevada from laws in other states. **New Mexico:** Abortion will most likely stay accessible, though it is not expressly protected by state law. In 2022, the governor issued an executive order to shield those seeking or providing abortions in New Mexico from laws in other states. **Utah:** Abortion is banned after 18 weeks of pregnancy. A separate ban on most abortions was indefinitely blocked by a judge.

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS . . . Not Just For Kids

If you are in the Social Hall on Sundays at 12:30pm, you will most likely see a group gathering in the RE classroom. They are settling in to play a game that you might think is just for kids, but you would be wrong. Dungeons and Dragons is a game for all ages, where players get the chance to create and play fantasy stories together that make a simple game a unique game. The stories are called campaigns. The current campaign is an urban story involving large amounts of cash. Campaigns are inspired by movies. "Oceans 11", "Pink Panther", and "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" are among the many films lending creative plot lines to the post-Easter campaign. If you could be game for D&D, email Morgan Oviatt (archaractar@gmail.com). There's always room at their table for one more.

The Ministerial Search Committee looks back on our year of searching for a new minister with gratitude. From the very beginning we felt the support of this congregation.

Thank you for sharing your learned a great about ourselves, search process



trusting us and thoughts. We deal along the way this committee, the and UUCS.

Like all of you, next-steps as our work comes to a close.

we look forward to

Juliet Gustavson, Brent Garrett (Co-chairs), Libby Christianson, Reggie Johnston, Jeff London, Amy St. Peter



NEW MEMBERS...NEW MEMBERS!

Abundance continues in Membership at UUCS! We welcomed 24 new members at the New Member Recognition Sunday on April 2 and two later in April. We are grateful for the energy they bring to us. Look for slides in the Social Hall on Sunday mornings with pictures and a bit of information about new members. *Be sure to reach out and meet them. Invite them to participate with you in an event or activity!*

Amelia Davis
Peter Royers
Hank and Susan Gupton
Mandy and Morgan Oviatt
Rose and Dennis Kleidon
John M. Benfield
Caryn Key

Lauren and Doug DeVany
Sharon and David Moore
Sandra D. Mahoney and Barry Linden
Elizabeth (Liz) and Jon Hanan
Barbara Hughes
Merry Shanahan

Maryke and Eric DesChamps
Mary Lynne Shroyer
Brenda Diane Nelson
Darren Joseph Reale
Sierra Gabriella Ros

"SHARE YOUR PASSION"



Our congregation holds a wealth of talent and wisdom. Help me unlock this hidden treasure, by sharing your talent or hobby with our children one Sunday in the "Share Your Passion" summer program. Teaching experience is not necessary, just passion and willingness.



The "Share Your Passion" summer program is intended to foster an intergenerational community spirit by the sharing of our gifts with youth. Each week, a different teacher (one of our talented church members) will share their passion/hobby/skill/talent/job with the children in the form of a lesson, demonstration, activity, or exercise. I will be available to help you design your presentation and two assistants will be present during class to help manage the classroom.



Past presentations have included, but are not limited to: Making Music with Friends, Belly Dancing, What Makes a Bird a Bird, S.C.U.B.A., Making Pickles, Zumba, Yoga, Meditation, Jet Pilots, What Makes a Refugee, Sailing- a Life at Sea, Art, American Sign Language and How Do Clocks Work.



Do you have an interesting experience, talent, skill, passion or job that you'd like to share? Please send your interest and ideas to: Director of Family Ministry, Lisa Lawrence, at:

familyministry@uusurpriseaz.org



UUCS APRIL MEMORIES



EASTER EGG HUNT



2023 AUCTION

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.

May Worship Theme: *The Path of Creativity*



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*

