

Newsletter

June-July 2023

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

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



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TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transition Minister

The End Is Near! (So Is the Beginning)

There was a church located on a street just before a curve. Two ministers stood on the front lawn holding a sign for passing traffic that read "The End is Near! Turn around now before it's too late!" The car whizzed by and the driver yelled, "Leave us alone you religious nuts!" The car sped around the curve, and the clergy heard screeching tires and a big splash.

"Do you think," said one to the other, "we should just put up a sign that says 'Bridge Out' instead?"

For us now, the end is indeed near. But the bridge is not out—it lures us forward, inviting us to new beginnings.

It is a time of endings. Thank you for walking with me during our two-year journey. It's been an honor for me to serve. Thanks to our creative staff and energetic leadership who engineer all the behind-the-scenes challenges of congregational life. We have shared a relationship increasingly unique: a pastoral relationship. UUCS is a covenanted community. That means we pledge to care for each other honestly (engaging each other directly without gossip or ill will), graciously (with grace, a reminder from our Universalist heritage that we participate in a larger reality that holds us), and hopefully (so we look to the future with a sense of possibility).

Our pastoral relationship is ending, but that does not end our affection for each other. A friend and colleague, the late Rev. Suzanne Meyer, wisely said at the end of one ministry and I say to you, "The relationship we have shared is real and lasting. Our feelings for each other will not end when we part company. But after I say farewell, I must remain aloof from the business of this church." My last Sunday is June 11. My last day in the office is June 15. I remain on-call for emergencies until July 31, the end of our agreement. (I will be home in Dallas after June 15.)

It is a time of beginnings. I begin a new journey in retirement, or what some call *re-wirement*, charting a new path and purpose. UUCS steps into its future as well. You are a wise, faithful and talented congregation. Thank you for being the Church.

Now, we both speed ahead to our futures—mindful of curves in the road!
In our living Tradition,

SAM

Inside This Issue

Transitional Thoughts	1
President's Message	2
New Org Chart	3
Music Notes	3
Family Ministry	3
Questers	4
Monthly Book Report	4
Article II	4
HomeBase Partnership	5
Lead With Love	5
Membership	6
LifeLine Screening	6
Joy of Serendipity	7
Worship Schedule	8

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Welcome to Summer! We are in for several changes – some quite dramatic. Rev. Sam leaves us in the middle of June, our snowbirds are rapidly flying out of the area for cooler temperatures, and as it heats up, our congregation is decreasing in size. Never fear – those of us who remain during the “hot” period will be finding activities to keep us involved, connected, and maybe even amused.

We have offerings from Questers, and there may be more to come; 2 Covenant groups led by Lois Bartels and Liz Thomas, meeting bi-monthly; and new and interesting speakers for worship services. Sam has arranged speakers from around the area that are - for the most part - new to our congregation. In the planning stages, Rich and Sylvia Manalis, Emily Whitmore and I have been talking about holding a series of gatherings to learn and discuss ideas on combatting climate change. We would make these informational, educational, and social – and might even make them potlucks with everyone contributing something to munch on while we talk.

I will also be holding in-person and zoom meetings to talk more about the changing of our name. And on that subject – the changing of our name – we are not just talking about converting Church to Congregation. We have choices and can, if we wish, actually, change our name to reflect how we are changing. We are becoming a more diverse congregation, and we serve a much wider geographical location than we ever thought we would. Our membership has grown in size, and we have added a nursery for toddlers and their parents during the Worship Service. We are continuing to livestream in order to maintain a connection with members and friends who travel to cooler climates. And here, during these summer months, instead of reducing activities, we plan to expand them for those remaining in the area.

The Board recently passed a motion to continue the cleanup and improvement of our campus. This summer we will be replacing our irrigation system with a more efficient and effective one, providing water to only those plants requiring water and not to our desert plants that do well with no more than what mother nature provides. This will reduce our water usage, and the expense for replacement was not only acceptable but also surprising. Because the cost is greatly reduced from what we had estimated it to be, we will also be starting the interior painting of the building. We will be painting the offices, workroom, social hall, kitchen, library, multipurpose room and all bathrooms. (We will not be doing the Sanctuary.) Stay tuned for exactly when the painting will be happening.

While all of this is going on – your newly appointed Ministerial Search Committee will be continuing our quest for a contract minister. We are registered with the UUA, have updated the information and are ready to go. We have also passed the word to other individuals who might be able to assist us. This process is much more open and flexible than the original search was, and if you have questions about it, please do not hesitate to ask one of the committee members (Brooke Gaunt, Steve Calkins, Emily Whitmore, Barry Linden, or me.) We will try to keep you updated as much as possible; however, since this search is more flexible, there may not be news every day or week.

Our Aesthetics team, with help from the Board, has made some changes in the hallway to the library. It is becoming an “Information Hallway” and will be the spot to post and find news about activities, events, Social Justice items, and volunteer opportunities for members, friends, and visitors. We have labeled areas and hope the arrangement will be of use to all of you. If you have an adventure, an activity or just information you feel would be of benefit to the congregation, please feel free to post it in the appropriate “spot.” And if you need assistance, let someone on the Board know. We want this to be useful and not a catch all. Check it out.

The Board and Rev. Sam have completed their creation of an Organizational Chart. Although it looks like the usual top-down model you see in business and for-profit organizations, please remember this is a shared Ministry – one that hopefully is balanced among the Board members, minister, committee chairs, and staff. Please check it out – we have included a link to it in this newsletter with additional details. (See Pg 3.)

My plans for the summer are to be here with you, continuing our search for a minister and continuing to improve the physical structure of our congregation and services. Join me in doing the work of the congregation. There are tasks to do, and there is room for all to be involved.

Blessings,

Sherry Robinson

NEW . . .UUCS Organizational Chart

The Board and Rev. Sam recently completed a current organizational chart for UUCS. It appears similar to org charts in businesses and non-profit organizations. This helps clarify relationships of leadership in the congregation—how the congregation “hangs together” to do the work of ministry. Our ministry is a shared ministry – one that hopefully is balanced among the Board members, minister, committee chairs and staff. **(Click here to access Org Chart—[UUCS Org Chart](#) .)**

The role of the Board and the Minister is to be supportive and responsible to each of their groups. The committees and programs, in return, are responsible and accountable to either the Minister or the Board. In the case of hired staff (Judy, Lisa and Maggi) the Minister is the head of staff and has supervision responsibility for these positions and their programs.

There are several areas that share responsibility and accountability, so both Board and Minister have a relationship with the committee or team. And since most of our leadership is volunteer, the overall structure is open and somewhat fluid, and the work is done in covenant with each other. This is a living document to change as the structure itself changes. We thought it might be helpful to see our structure as we move forward. Feedback and questions are welcome.

—Rev. Sam and Sherry



MUSIC NOTES

Maggi Mahan—Acting Director



...AND THE BEAT GOES ON

Yes, it is summer. And YES, there will still be music during our summer services. During the months of June, July, and August, pianists Linda King, Maggi Mahan, Ruth Swank and Christine Kyhn will continue to enhance our services with interesting and beautiful music. Several Sundays will also include vocal and/or instrumental soloists.

When September pops up on our calendars, our choir will return. Not sure if you want to join our choir? To help you make a positive decision, research has shown that singing in a choir:

- ◆ Improves breathing, posture, and muscle tension.
- ◆ Regulates the heart rate.
- ◆ Can work as an effective pain killer.
- ◆ Sustains a health immune system.
- ◆ Improves symptoms of chronic diseases, including Parkinson’s and dementia.
- ◆ Reduces stress levels and depression.
- ◆ Deepens a sense of togetherness, community, and belonging.

MOST IMPORTANTLY! SINGING IN A GROUP IS FUN!!



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director



Have a great summer, friends!

Many thanks to those who attended and helped to support the Family Ministry Department over the past year. We had another wonderful season filled with enriching and spiritual activities. Some of our highlights were: getting to know our new friends from West Valley UU, Trunk-or-Treat, our annual holiday party and play, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, the White Tanks Cook-out, Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt and Parent’s Night Out/Kid’s Night In.

Although our last day of formal classes was Sunday, May 21st, we will still be providing supervised childcare for children ages 3 and up throughout the summer during our “Share Your Passion” Summer Program. You can find our program schedule on FaceBook to check the dates of the wonderful offerings that congregation members will be sharing with the children. During the summer children will go directly into the classroom as A Story for All Ages will not resume until fall.

Over the summer, I will be preparing curriculum for next year and getting ready to present a full year of O.W.L. sexuality workshops. We will be holding a workshop for 7th-10th graders in the Fall and a workshop for 4th-6th graders in the Spring. **7th-10th grade PARENTS, please**

save the date for a mandatory parent orientation on Saturday, August 19th, from 4:00-6:30 p.m.

To stay updated on summer happenings, please continue to read the church's weekly email blasts and check my UUC Surprise Family FB page at <https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily/posts/> for updates.



We knew summer was coming, but it took our first 100 degree day to make it official. Your Questers Committee has one reason to be enthusiastic about summer's arrival . . . our summer offerings for those of us who will be here at least part of the time in June, July, August and early September.



All are invited to come in out of the summer heat for **"Read Me a Story" on June 21, A Play Date with Juliet: Improvisation for Everyone on July 11, Searching for the Fountain of Health on August 19** and to close out the summer, a **Comfort Food Potluck on September 9**. In addition, the **Women's group** will continue to meet during the summer on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. You can get all the summer details and signup at the Questers Table on Sunday mornings or by going to uusurpriseaz.org/questers/offerings.

And there is still room for additional summer offerings. If you have an idea, add it to the Summer Offering Ideas sheet at the Questers table or email julietgus@msn.com.



MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer



It's the time of year, dear faithful readers, to dig into our UU library's great summer reading offerings. What makes a book great summer reading? The one you enjoy on these long warm summer days and evenings. Staying cool while delving deep into terrific ideas. To help you, I am reposting the library search information so you may have it on hand when you explore our books. Further below are three more of our great books you may wish to enjoy over our newsletter break.

First, 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.

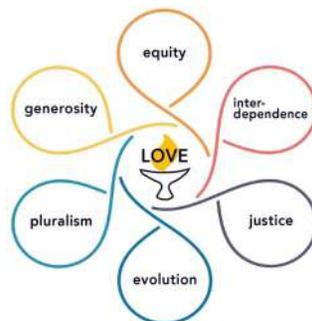
Next and more specific—if you wish a particular book or subject of books you can easily use the '*Card Catalogue*' drawers/box. Proceed to the check-out desk. There you will find a drawer with all our books filed alphabetically by **Author**. Next there is also a drawer with all our books filed alphabetically by **Title**. And finally, 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!*

"Trusting Change", subtitled 'Finding Our Way Through Personal and Global Transformation', author Karen Hearing, number 305.4HER. "The author invites readers on the cusp of great change--which is all of us today--to explore the new possibilities emerging in our times." In a self-help manner, the book explores the psychology of change and our own self-actualization. A terrific 4-Star Amazon book.

"Some of My Friends Are...", Subtitled 'The Daunting Challenges and Untapped Benefits of Cross-Racial Friendships', author Deborah Plummer, number 305.8PLU-GR. "An insightful look at how cross-racial friendships work and fail within American society." This is a 5-Star must read Amazon book. You may find it in the Golden Rule section of our library.

"Upstream", by Mary Oliver, number 811.54OLI. This donated book adds to our collection of terrific Mary Oliver essays and poetry suitable for meditations. "The New York Times bestselling collection of essays from beloved poet Mary Oliver, also named one of O, The Oprah Magazine's Ten Best Books of the Year". A wonderful Amazon 4.5-Star book. While you are there, take a look at our other Mary Oliver books as well.

*Enjoy a blessed summer day
shared with a terrific UU book!*



The UUA Article II Study: What is it and what does it have to do with ME?

Board VP, Brooke Gaunt, will lead a discussion about the Article II Study Commis-

sion Report, which makes proposals for changes to the UU Principles and Sources. Some questions that will be answered: Why is the UUA doing this? What is the process and who is involved? What are the proposals? What happens next? The report can be found at www.uua.org/a2sc-report. Contact Brooke at 602-332-3973 or bagaunt37@gmail.com to sign up. There will be a session via zoom on Wednesday, June 7th from 6pm to 7pm and an in-person session on Monday, June 19th from 12:00pm to 1:00pm in the Social Hall.



April saw a major fund raiser for HomeBase Partnership, our congregation’s support for homeless 18-26-year-olds, down the road from our UU in Surprise. And WOW did you come through. Sunday, April 19, Share-the-Plate netted \$900.

With that money, Jeff London, one of HomeBase Partnership Committee members, was able to purchase the items for 50 hygiene kits. His committee packed up and delivered them for new residents of HomeBase Surprise. Sharon Beard and her committee asked that you donate nonperishable breakfast food. It took several trips to HomeBase to deliver the food.

In May, a dozen of our members earned nearly another \$900 delivering flowers for a local flower shop. All this money goes into a HomeBase Partnership fund to be used later.

When the staff at HomeBase Surprise lets us know they have future needs, the congregation will be notified. At this point, we can proudly say we are ready to support HomeBase Surprise.

During the summer, Dave King will take over for Rick Wambach as the congregation’s Coordinator of HomeBase Partnership. Contact Dave if you have questions.

LEAD WITH LOVE A NEW NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Emily Whitmore



History and meaning: Daniel Quasar, who identifies as queer and nonbinary, designed this flag. The white, pink, and light blue reflect the colors of the transgender flag, while the brown and black stripes represent people of

color and those lost to AIDS. “When the Pride flag was recreated in the last year to include both black/brown stripes, as well as the trans stripes included this year, I wanted to see if there could be more emphasis in the design of the flag to give it more meaning,” Quasar explained on his [Kickstarter](#).

Source: <https://www.pride.com/pride/queer-flags>

Terminology and Definitions

LGBTQIA+: An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more.

Queer: A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.

Non-binary: An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

Source: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

What can you do to help make UUCS a more radically welcoming place?

Use words that encompass all genders rather than only two. For example, “people of all genders” instead of “women and men”; “children” instead of “boys and girls”; “siblings” instead of “brothers and sisters.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/ways>



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**.

MEMBERSHIP



Many Members and Friends have taken flight to cooler climes. Though some can do volunteer jobs remotely, that leaves the day-to-day work of the church to those who remain in the valley year-round.

Sunday morning volunteers are needed now. Please sign up to Greet (sign the sheet located on the Welcome Desk) or Usher (speak to an usher and they'll get you connected) on a summer Sunday. Help in the kitchen during Social Hour is also appreciated. Volunteers can also spend time in the church office doing light office work and answering the phone.

Volunteerism is the fuel that our beloved community runs on. Look and see where your gifts might fit in. Here's a list of volunteer committees and teams that are served by members and friends. Thank you all!

Aesthetics
Board of Trustees
Buildings and Grounds
Family Ministry
Fundraising
Group Facilitators (Men's,
Women's, BUUK, Hiking)
Lay Pastoral

Library
Membership
Memorial Garden
Music
Newsletter
Nominating
Office/admin support
Questers

Social Justice
Sound/Technology
Stewardship
Sunday Support (Greeters, Ushers,
Hospitality/Social)
Worship Services Team

To learn more contact Libby Christianson, Membership Committee Chair, at maestro25@comcast.net
Our congregation thrives when we are united in service to our congregation and each other.

LIFELINE SCREENING COMING TO UUCS—TUESDAY, JUNE 27

LifeLine Screening, the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings, will offer affordable (\$161), non-invasive and painless health screenings at UUCS on Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

A package of four screenings to identify risk for stroke, heart disease and other chronic conditions will be offered:

Carotid Artery Screening (Plaque)

An ultrasound is performed to screen the carotid arteries (a pair of blood vessels in the neck that deliver blood to your brain) for buildup of fatty plaque. This buildup, called atherosclerosis, is one of the leading causes of stroke.

Peripheral Arterial Disease Screening

An Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test is performed using blood pressure cuffs on the arms and legs. It is important to screen for PAD because it increases the risk of coronary artery disease, heart attack, or stroke.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

An ultrasound is performed to screen the abdominal aorta for the presence of an enlargement or aneurysm. AAA can lead to a ruptured aortic artery, which is a serious medical emergency.

Atrial Fibrillation

A 6-lead electrocardiogram (EKG) is performed by placing sensors on the arms and legs to screen for Atrial Fibrillation. AFib can lead to blood clots, stroke, and heart failure, and other heart-related complications.²

These 4 vital screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. Register by calling toll free 1-844-591-7160, text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607 or online at <https://lisa.social/HC> .

THE JOY OF SERENDIPITY

Backstory of my photo DRAGONFLY MATING WHEEL which won Honorable Mention in a recent photography competition
(PSA worldwide)

Rich Manalis



DRAGONFLY MATING WHEEL

This past summer Syl and I were visiting my brother-in-law and his wife in Afton, New York, when we drove to a nearby swamp not far from this small village. We had visited this beautiful swamp about three years ago when we were taking a drive in the countryside near Afton. At that time, we met Rick, a retired English professor turned naturalist, who lives in the area and who is often at the swamp taking photographs. Quite to my surprise, we met Rick again at the swamp. He introduced me to the nearby dragonflies and bullfrogs; the bullfrogs' eyes were just peeping above the surface of the water. I took lots of pictures. Then about a half hour later, Rick, who was about 20 yards from me along the swamp shore, motioned and told me that there was a pair of dragonflies joined together, mating in the air. The pair then flew into a shrub. I knew that this was a momentary opportunity so I had to act quickly. I adjusted my camera and immediately took several pictures.

Later, at home, my excitement about the photo shoot at the swamp was still very real, and this excitement only increased after I finished editing my best image. I normally create photographic art for my own personal enrichment and enjoyment, and, therefore, have not entered photography competitions since I joined the photo club at Sun City Grand.

However, this particular photo was so special that I decided to enter it in a competition sponsored by the Photographic Society of America (PSA) and Grand Photos. My photo was among six photos that were sent to the next higher level (i.e., from local to worldwide) within the PSA for further judging. And it won Honorable Mention.

So here it is for you to see! SERENDIPITY can be defined as one taking advantage of a chance opportunity. My photo of the MATING WHEEL, which is a male dragonfly and a female dragonfly joined together in the manner shown in the photograph, is a clear example of that! Of course, I am very grateful to Rick for pointing out the flying dragonfly MATING WHEEL to me. In addition to the exquisite naturalness of the image, sharp detail abounds: the female grasping the male's red abdomen; the male's forelimbs grasping the flower for support; the almost human-like head of the female as she holds onto the male; the transparent wings of the dragonflies. Enjoy!

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

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Surprise, AZ 85378

Ph: 623-875-2550

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June-July Worship



Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.

In-Person and Livestream



June 4 & 11	Rev. Samuel Schaal UUCS Transition Minister
June 18 & 25	Dr. Albert Celozza Executive Director AZ Interfaith Movement, Phoenix
July 2	Amy St. Peter UUCS
July 9	Emrys Staton UU Chaplain
July 16	Juliet Gustavson UUCS
July 23	Janine Gelsinger Co-Executive Director Partnerships + Programming, UUJAZ
July 30	Rabbi Dana Kaplan Temple Beth Shalom of the West Valley

