

Newsletter

August 2023

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Walt F. Wieder

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Terry Sims

President: Sherry Robinson



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WELCOME OUR NEW PASTOR . . . KAREN RICHTER

We have great news! Pastor Karen Richter will be joining us on September 1 and giving her first sermon on September 10.

Karen was raised in South Carolina and received a bachelor's degree in political science from Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She began her career as Director for Community Building for United Way in Daytona Beach, Florida. After working in academia for several years, she left the workforce to take care of her children. Returning to employment in 2010, Karen began working at Shadow Rock United Church of Christ here in Phoenix as the Director of Spiritual Formation.

Although not a UU, she has been active with UUJAZ for several years and is passionate about social justice. She has been involved with the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program since 2017 and is currently a regional trainer at all levels and a facilitator, as well. We are so excited to welcome Pastor Karen. She is equally excited and enthusiastic about being with us.

Brooke Gaunt

Vice-president UUCS Board of Directors

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



A little bird told me my articles in the newsletter are too long. For those who agree – my apologies. My goal has been to keep you informed; but maybe they are correct, and too much information gets ignored. So, this month I am trying something new.

What has happened since the June/July Newsletter:

1. An inspection of the HVAC system identified that we needed to replace the 2-ton unit on the Southwest corner of the building. Work was done July 7th and the bill has been paid.
2. Painting of the interior walls of the building began July 5th and was completed July 15th and included an update for the restrooms off the Social Hall.

3. Estimates were collected for carpeting in the social hall and office areas.
4. Our first Summer Circle Suppers were Friday, July 14 with good participation.
5. Our Transition Journey ended, and Rev. Schaal's time with us is over. Sam was a knowledgeable and supportive guide on our journey and left us with services and activities we will strive to make tradition, such as Covenant Groups, Flower Communion, the New UU's Class, etc.
6. Most importantly, the alternative Ministerial Search Team was successful in finding the perfect Contract Minister to fill our pulpit. See more about Karen Richter in the lead article.

What to look forward to in August/September:

1. Our second Summer Circle Supper will take place on August 12th.
2. In the planning stages is a CLIMATE CRISIS workshop and Worship Service the week of August 20th.
3. As you saw in the lead article, our new pastor Karen Richter, begins September 1 and will be in the pulpit for the first time on September 10th – Ingathering Sunday.

Stay involved and stay cool.

Sherry Robinson



Partnership

Update

Pillow Drive – So far we've been able to deliver 46 new, regular size pillows to HomeBase. They are excited and grateful for our efforts! The drive will continue in August, and the long-term goal is 100 pillows to meet the need HomeBase expects over the next 12 months.

Kitchen – HomeBase staff is still working on getting their kitchen licensed and certified. When that happens, probably in the last quarter of the year, we'll be able to discuss ways our congregation might be able to assist with preparing and serving food onsite.

Thanks to all who have been helping with these projects, and thanks for your patience as we wait to learn about other ways we might be of service to these young people.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Dave King, 402-720-2551.



NEXT CIRCLE SUPPER—AUG. 12

When a small group gets together over a meal, connections are made. Circle Suppers are that kind of opportunity.

Sign up for the August Circle Supper in the Social Hall.

MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer



Welcome to the dog days of summer dear faithful readers. I hope you are by now enjoying the newly painted sections of our UU building, including your Library. Please enjoy the bright-

ened up space as you browse or search for the next special read. To help you on your way, below are three books for your consideration. Each book is from a different section of the collection. While you are there, look around for other related books you may enjoy in addition.

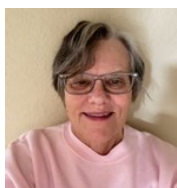
“Falling Into the Sky, A Meditation Anthology”, by A & A Janamachi, editors, number 242JAN. “This UUA Meditation Manual is a collection of remarkable writings from Unitarian Universalist ministers and lay people. These meditations offer vivid vistas of imagination and reflection.” Quoted from the 4.6 Star Amazon review. “Enjoyable reading to help achieve a peaceful mind. Will read it again and again. Just what I was looking for,” an Amazon reader quote for this terrific volume of writings.

“Growing a Beloved Community: Twelve Hallmarks of a Healthy Congregation”, by Tom Owen-Towle, number 289.13OWE. “This small book wonderfully illustrates the BIG picture of the UU church. It is well written and enjoyable to read. There are many inspiring quotes

throughout. I especially appreciated the ones from Martin Luther King and the one about "Why Organized Religion?" If you are thinking about getting more involved in a UU church (or any group which you would like to see become more of a beloved community), then read this book." This wonderful quote is from an Amazon reader of this 4.3 Star book.

"Breathe: A Letter to My Sons", by Imani Perry, number 306.85PER GR. "This book is deeply cathartic and resonant for parents attempting to raise their children with intention and integrity. Perry shows deep compassion for both parents and children while incisively underlining the realities of raising Black boys in a country that will inherently betray them. It is a book filled with love and insight for difficult times." "Breathe is what it is, a letter from a mother to her sons, but it is more than that. It's a meditation on child-rearing, world-building, fire-starting, and peace-building." Two Amazon reviews that say it all about this deeply profound book. 4.6 Stars. This book is located in our Golden Rule Collection.

*Have a blessed day shared with
a terrific UU Library read!*



MUSIC NOTES



Maggi Mahan—Acting Director

**OUR UUCS CHOIR IS A FAMILY OF PEOPLE
WHO LOVE TO SING.**

IF YOU LOVE MUSIC AND SINGING IN THE CAR/
SHOWER/KARAOKE, PLEASE JOIN US. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO BE A SOLOIST OR TO KNOW HOW TO READ MUSIC.

Although Transition and Transformation start with the same syllable, they end in significantly different places. Thus it is with the UUCS Music Program.

In 2022 we began transitioning from no Sunday choir, to fairly traditional Sunday choir, to rather unpredictable ways of doing music on Sundays. That formed the foundation for what is currently happening within our solidly built walls on a Sunday morning.

Now we are heading toward transformation. I like to think that we have helped move those solid walls to a place of solid groundwork so we may transform our sense of sacred, inspirational, serendipitous music into

ways of singing and dancing that raise the rafters and break down the walls. Such energetic embrace of rhythm and song can be an impetus for enthusiastic transformation.

And so it is that we come to August. Here is what the Music Committee and I want you to know about August music--- and beyond:

Linda King and Christine Kyhn will be our pianists this month.

Bob Walling, Patricia Balfour, and Darren Reale will be our soloists this month.

The choir schedule will be published in September.

The first choir rehearsal of the fall will be Sunday morning, September 10th at 9:00

The first Sunday the choir will sing an anthem will be Sept 17.

Nico Barberan is currently scheduled to bring his music to us October 1. We hope to welcome him four times between October and the end of December.

There is more! But, we hope to save some goodies for further announcements.



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director



Hola amigos. Saludos desde Antigua, Guatemala! The city of Antigua is surrounded by volcanoes and is located in the lush, green mountains of Southern Guatemala. Coffee, avocado and chocolate country! I am here visiting family and renewing my spirit before the start of the upcoming R.E. season, which begins on September 10th.

Back at UUC Surprise, children have been having an eclectic summer of enrichment in the "Share Your Passion" summer program. Guest teachers have talked about travel, making change, desert plants, quilting and have even been visited by a modern-day bard!

I'd like to remind parents who are interested in having their youth attend the "7th-10th grade: Our Whole Lives sexuality education workshop", that the mandatory parent orientation is coming up on Saturday, August 19th, from 4:00-6:30 p.m. For registration and additional information please visit the Children's Programs tab on the church website:

www.uusurpriseaz.org

And, as always, please visit the UUC Surprise Family Page on FB for more up-to-date information about the Family Ministry program.

I look forward to seeing you all on Sunday, September 10th, for our annual Welcome Back Breakfast!



This summer has been an experiment for the Questers Committee, because we decided it was time to see what would happen if we didn't take the summer off and instead gave people the chance to participate in a few offerings. The verdict is in. Summer offerings have been a success and a welcome addition for those of us remaining in the Valley of the Sun over the summer months. The last two are scheduled for August 19 and September 9.

On **Saturday, August 19, from 10:00-11:30am** how about **Searching for the Fountain of Health** in a workshop with Libby Christianson? Life spans are increasing, but do you want to live to be 100 no matter what? Health issues can make life spans challenging, so with increasing life spans we also need increasing health spans. That's what participants will explore after watching a video, "Searching for the Fountain of Health" with Dr. Ken Dychtwald, founder of Age Wave, the nation's foremost thought leader on issues relating to an aging population. Sign up at the Sunday Questers table or by emailing Jeff London (jvlondon@yahoo.com).

And how about enjoying 90 minutes of those "extra years" at a **Comfort Food Eats & Treats** tasting on **September 9 from 4:30-6:00pm**? Even healthy life spans need moments of culinary indulgence. Participants will bring a favorite comfort food for all to taste and share why this particular item is one of their go-to's. Sign up at the Sunday Questers table or by emailing Carol Calkins (carolpcalkins@gmail.com).

The fall lineup for Questers offerings is taking shape. Stay tuned by visiting the UUCS website Questers page.



Updates from Stewardship Committee

Seeking new members for this Committee. The purpose of the Stewardship Committee is to design, prepare and implement the annual pledge campaign and to support and assist with other fundraising activities throughout the calendar year. We raise a large portion of the funds that support the congregation for paying personnel, taking care of the building, and sponsoring activities and events. Please consider joining us as we plan for the next year. To discuss or offer to help, contact Janet Jeffrey at uucsazstewardship@gmail.com.

We have been busy planning fundraising events and the Pledge Campaign for 2024. These events will appear in the online calendar at <https://uusurpriseaz.org/calendar-events/> and in the order of service, as well as in weekly announcements.

There will be three ice cream social events after Sunday service on August 20th, September 17th, and October 8th; please join us for ice cream and conversation and contribute to the donation basket.

The next evening of fun and entertainment will be the Karaoke Night on September 23rd hosted by KJ "Bopping Bob" Walling. If you wish to "strut your stuff" (sing) you will have the opportunity to select songs to sing with background music and lyrics. Anyone interested in helping with the event (set-up or clean-up), please contact Caryn Key at 623.229.6393.

The Pledge Drive for 2024 will be from October 15 to November 19th to ensure our Board of Trustees knows what funding they can expect from the congregation in 2024. The theme will be *Stewardship. A Communion of Hearts, Souls and Goals*. Please consider completing the pledge form that you will receive in October. It is our donations that fund our spiritual home.

We thank you for your generosity.

Your Stewardship Committee

ST. MARY'S FOOD BANK – WATER DRIVE

As temperatures have soared this summer, many need help to stay hydrated, and water is key. We will be collecting life-saving water 7/30 through 8/14 for St. Mary's Food Bank. Water can be placed in the Social Hall to the left of the Home-base box. If you can't bring water, a donation of \$25 can provide 100 bottles of water.





MEMBERSHIP

Our membership continues to grow! **Please welcome Patrick**

Rose as a new member of UUCS.

Our current numbers in membership are 139 Members who have signed the membership book and contributed to our congregation and 19 Friends who have not signed the membership book and have contributed to our congregation. What's the difference you ask? Members who have signed the membership book can vote in congregational meetings and chair committees.

There are many ways to become a part of the UUCS community. As a visitor we invite you to get to know us by coming to a Quester's class, a Circle Supper or various events held at UUCS. In the fall look for New UU Classes as a great path to membership.

The Membership Committee looks forward to building a relationship with our new pastor Karen Richter.

We are happy to answer your questions about UUCS or Unitarian Universalism. Contact Libby Christianson at maestro25@comcast.net.

Thank you.

Membership Committee

Lee and Mary Jane Askern, Carol Calkins, Ray Mahoney and Judy Reynolds



OUR JUDY GILMORE

If you've come into the UUCS office on Mondays through Fridays between 9:00am and 1:00pm, you may have met Judy Gilmore, our Congregational Administrator, but most of us don't really know her or much about her.

Someone as important as Judy is to

the life of our faith community should be known as more than the person who answers the phone and prints the Sunday Orders of Service. Therefore, what follows in two parts are some details to make Judy three dimensional for us.

Judy was a small-town girl for the first half of her life. Born in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, she was the middle child book-ended by 2 brothers, one of whom, Ricky, died in a tragic car-bicycle accident when he was 9 and she was 14. Judy was with Ricky when the accident happened on a summer day perfect for a bike ride. To this day she has no memory of what happened directly after Ricky was hit by the car and remains extremely

cautious about riding a bike.

Her family eventually moved to Juneau, Wisconsin, where she attended Lutheran schools from 4th grade through 8th grade. She excelled in memory work and spelling and wishes that was still true today. In high school she especially liked the business courses, like typing and shorthand...geography and math...not so much.

Young, and in retrospect she would say foolish, Judy married right out of high school. A positive product of that marriage was her daughter, Michelle. But in a short time she was a single mother and poor. She moved back to Beaver Dam and got herself a bicycle for transportation and a job in the shoe factory, so that she could provide for her daughter and herself. Eventually she remarried and gave birth to a second daughter, Rachel. After 31 years that marriage ended on friendly terms. Rachel was grown by this time and had two sons. When she moved to Arizona, Judy decided just seeing her grandsons occasionally was not the grandmother experience she wanted. So that small town girl picked up and moved to Sun City.

Just 3 years later, Rachel and her grandsons moved out of Arizona, but Judy had fallen in love with the desert and life here. She says, "I feel like I should have been born here."

(More about Judy Gilmore in the September newsletter, including how she became our Congregational Administrator, some things that have surprised her about that choice, her favorite pastimes and foods.)

7TH-10TH GRADE OWL (OUR WHOLE LIVES)
SEXUALITY EDUCATION WORKSHOP
COMING THIS FALL TO UUCS!
Save the Dates...
8/19 Mandatory Parent Orientation
4:00-6:30 p.m.
Student Class Dates:
3rd Sunday of the month, from 10:00-5:00
with an hour lunch break.
9/17, 10/15, 11/19, 12/17, 1/21
Registration Fee: \$75

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

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August Worship



**Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.
In-Person and Livestream**

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| August 6 | Guest Speaker: Brooke Gaunt |
| August 13 | Guest Speaker: Lynn Melby |
| August 20 | Guest Speaker: Emily Whitmore |
| August 27 | Guest Speaker: Larry Lorenzen |

