

# Newsletter

April 2024

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

Pastor: Karen Richter

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Walt F. Wieder

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Terry Sims

President: Brooke Gaunt



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## KAREN'S CORNER

### *Reflections on a Work-From-Home Day*

I'm working from home today. We got word this morning from the plumbing company that our sewer pipe dig is more complicated than we anticipated. At breakfast, I looked at my Facebook memories from 2020 and they were filled with dark and wry pandemic humor. As you receive this edition of the newsletter, Easter, that ancient season of rebirth and renewal, will be upon us.

How are these things related? Our current pivot after a facility emergency called on skills we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes technology that enables us to worship remotely, of course, but we also gained skills of flexibility and resourcefulness, patience and good humor. I'm tempted, in that humorous spirit, to adopt a terrible Terminator impression: *"We'll be BACK."*

I'm asking us to FLIP the way we approach normal and abnormal. The current state of the world - genocide and environmental degradation, entrenched incarceration culture, hoarding and poverty side-by-side - these "normal" things are emergencies. A pipe that needs repair. A kitchen out of order for an unknown period. Canceled or modified events. These things are not normal, but neither are they emergencies.

I have such hope for our near and long-term future. The name change voting is underway! A new project is in the works for spiritual formation opportunities in partnership with other UU congregations. The Golden Rule Committee is meeting. General Assembly, with changes to the UUA constitution on the agenda, is coming soon.

Stay tuned! Stay connected! Stay the course! We are in this together.

PS: As I've been in conversation with you all, several folks have said something like, "I guess this isn't really what you signed up for!" Au contraire, my friends! Being in community through the ups and downs of life together, doing ministry in partnership, listening to your stories, offering hope... this is EXACTLY what I signed up for, and my gratitude continues.

*Your Pastor, Karen Richter*

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



### Finding Abundance in a Trying Time

If life gives you lemons, make lemonade. If life gives you sewage, make fertilizer!

I am writing this a little more than a week after our sewage emergency. We are in a state of flux and basically taking things day by day. By the time you are reading this, I am hoping that many, if not most, things will be back to “normal”. This emergency has brought into even sharper focus for me, the resilience and strength of our community.

Whether in the initial minutes of the sewer back-up or days later, members of the UUCS community and the board have stepped up, taken charge, and moved us forward. We are capable of hard things! I want to reassure you all that things will return to a sense of normalcy and that nothing that has recently happened is going to break us mentally, spiritually, or financially. I am filled with gratitude that we are a community of abundance! We have an abundance of talented, caring, and hard-working people here at UUCS! And despite how we might sometimes fret over our budget and expenses, we have an abundant endowment to assist us in trying times. Pastor Karen’s sermon on March 17 focused on the scarcity lies and how we need to move into a mindset of abundance. As theological professor Walter Brueggemann says, “We can live according to an ethic whereby we are not driven, controlled, anxious, frantic or greedy, precisely because we are sufficiently at home and at peace to care about others as we have been cared for.” The Golden Rule in action! So as we navigate this unexpected event, let’s focus on our abundance and be filled with gratitude!

*Brooke Gaunt*



### MUSIC NOTES

**Luke Stikeleather— Music Director**

Hello UUCS! I look forward to my first Arizona spring this month, though I imagine it will already feel like summer to me! I would first like to thank everyone involved in the planning and execution of our March 10th concert, a piano recital performance by Rosemary Schroeder. I'd like to thank the choir, and the music committee for assisting with advertising, publicity, ticket sales, and for ushering the recital. It takes a village to put together an event such as this one, and I appreciate everyone who rose to the occasion. I would like to send a special thank you to Mary Anne Poggenburg, who planned much of the logistical work, and delegated duties to our volunteers. This event could not have happened without you.

There is some exciting music to look forward to in our weekly services this month! As the choir and I get comfortable working together, they will continue to sing more often, and perhaps more complex music! Expect to see congregational musicians more often. Barry and I will play some fun springtime music to

brighten up your Sunday mornings.

As always, I am looking for more musicians in the congregation. I would love to have instrumentalists playing occasionally for services. If you're interested, please email me ([music@uusurprise.org](mailto:music@uusurprise.org)) or approach me after a service! Happy spring!



### This Year’s UU Passover Seder Canceled!!!



Because of the sewer issue that occurred at UUCS in early March, the Committee and I are saddened to announce that we will not be able to hold the Seder this year. Although, the plumbing issues are mainly resolved, the kitchen is still

undergoing some major restoration and updating as a result of this incident.

Perhaps we will be able to celebrate a fall holiday that is equally joyous, Chanukah. Stay tuned ....

Suzi Walling—Committee Chair

**MONTHLY BOOK  
REPORT**  
**John Benfield—  
Librarian**



**OUR LIBRARY . . .  
A NEW LOOK**

Have you visited our library lately? It has a new, fresh, open and welcoming feeling thanks to the vision of John Benfield, UUCS Librarian.

You can now settle down in a comfortable chair to browse through a book or books you might want to sign out. Our library is a little jewel jam-packed with resources to encourage your spiritual growth and free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Stop by to discover what beckons from the shelves or just to catch your breath for a few restful moments.



**FAMILY MINISTRY**  
**Director—Lisa Lawrence**

Spring is here!

During the month of April, our elementary curriculum will explore the concept of “interdependence”. The UUA’s proposed new Article II values and inspirations statement for Interdependence is as follows: “Interdependence: We honor the interdependent web of all existence. With reverence for the great web of life and with humility, we acknowledge our place in it. We covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation. We will create and nurture sustainable relationships of care and respect, mutuality and justice. We will work to repair harm and damaged relationships.”

Although there are many types of interdependent relationships, several of our sessions will have us delve into nature, which is my favorite subject. Here’s what our month will look like:

- Session One: Interdependence - What is it?
- Session Two: The Web of Community - How We Nurture It, and It Nurtures Us
- Session Three: Caring for the Web of Creation

Session Four: How the Web of Creation Cares for Us  
The March session of the “Our Whole Lives” 7th-10th grade workshop was canceled due to the calamitous event that took place at the church. Since we are so close to finishing, a second session will be added in April. Meanwhile, the rest of our middle and high school youth will be continuing to examine the ethics of various “Twilight Zone” episodes.

As always, to find out more about our Family Ministry Program, please visit the Family FB page at: [UUC Surprise Family Page](#) .



Like just about everything that happens here in our faith community, Questers Adult Enrichment would not exist except for the members and friends who volunteer to lead/facilitate/teach our offerings, as well as those who sign up to participate.



Sometimes an offering springs from a book that a leader wants to share, sometimes from a particular interest, sometimes from a curriculum that a leader has found, or life experience This is your invitation to consider what you might have to share with us. And if you’re not sure, we’d love to explore the endless possibilities for offerings that affirm and support our living out the principles that ground us as Unitarian Universalists. You can always come to the Questers table on Sunday mornings or contact any of our Questers Committee members – Carol Calkins (carolpcalkins@gmail.com), Juliet Gustavson (julietgus@msn.com), Sharon Moore (leadmoore@gmail.com), Jeff London (jvlondon@aol.com).

There’s one more thing . . . Would you take a moment to let us know what subjects you’d like to see in the Questers lineup? Because we exist for your enrichment, your thoughts are the planning fodder we need. Please email one of us or visit us at the Questers Table and become part of this joint venture.

**KNOWLEDGE CAN LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING &  
CHANGE.**

**Microaggressions w/ Dr. Lynnette Brouwer, Thurs-**

day, April 4, 5:30-7:30pm— When we understand why we sometimes unintentionally hurt people in ways that deny their inherent worth and dignity, we can change. Lynnette Brouwer offers us a chance to learn about microaggressions and what we can do.



**Annual Auction and Dinner on April 6, 2024 CANCELLED . . . BUT  
being replaced by a Live AUCTION on April 7<sup>th</sup> after service in the sanctuary.**

As you may have heard, the planned dinner/auction event for April 7<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled because we do not have a working kitchen or the usual space in the Social Hall. But we wanted an alternative given donations received to date and interest in the event.

**Therefore, we are holding a LIVE AUCTION on April 7<sup>th</sup> instead.**

This is a **no-cost community event**. Please join us for sandwiches on the patio after service. Then pick up your free bidding paddle on your way into the sanctuary for the auction. If you are not able to join us on April 7<sup>th</sup>, please consider donating what you might have spent at the event via [uusurpriseaz.org](https://uusurpriseaz.org) (click on donation button, then auction option). Every donation is much appreciated.

We are still looking for auction items:

- ◆ gift baskets (with a theme perhaps)
- ◆ services (such as dog walking, drive to the airport or UUCS, coverage for your home when you are away, computer work)
- ◆ events (such as a lunch, dinner, tea, game night, cards, pool party, an evening of bridge or murder mystery).
- ◆ cooking/baking to order (your specialty for an event – timing arranged with purchase).

If you have not already, you can complete an auction item form in the Social Hall on March 31<sup>st</sup> or contact Janet Jeffrey ([Auction Items](#)) to receive a form via email.

NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS - Bring to UUCS on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

PERISHABLE ITEMS – Bring on April 7<sup>th</sup> by 10:00am.

A big thank you to those who volunteered to help with the original Auction plan but are not part of the revised event: the bakers, food prep, and those who were managing decor and room set up.

You can look forward to our next dinner/auction in February 2025.

**MEMORIES  
SOCIAL JUSTICE  
PEORIA NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE  
&  
FAMILY MINISTRY WHITE TANKS PICNIC**



## Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

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### April Worship Theme: Gift of Interdependence



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



April 7	<b>Pastor Karen Richter</b>
April 14	<b>Darren Reale</b>
April 21	<b>Pastor Karen Richter</b>
April 28	<b>Pastor Karen Richter</b>
March 31	<b>Pastor Karen Richter</b>

