

# Unitarian Universalist Church Newsletter

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The Newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Church, Surprise, AZ is published monthly except August.

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40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

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October 2018

## From The Minister's Desk

**O**n August 15, 2018, the Washington Post (and many others) ran a story about something Andrew Cuomo, the Democratic governor of New York, said in a speech. The



Washington Post article was entitled, "Andrew Cuomo says America 'was never that great,' drawing gasps." "We're not going to make America great again; it was never that great," Cuomo said, drawing audible gasps, apparently out of surprise, and some applause. "We have not reached greatness.

We will reach greatness when every American is fully engaged."

"Cuomo's office soon walked back the comments, assuring that Cuomo actually thinks America is currently great and contrasting that with Trump's slogan, which requires that America is not. 'Governor Cuomo disagrees with the president,' spokeswoman Dani Lever said. 'The governor believes America is great and that her full greatness will be fully realized when every man, woman, and child has full equality. America has not yet reached its maximum potential.' Cuomo's point was about women's equality. . . ."

"Cuomo's argument is one to which very few Americans appear to subscribe," the article said. "A May 2016 poll showed that, while 19 percent of people said America is as great as it has ever been, another 48 percent said it was still great but less so than before. Another 20 percent said it used to be great but isn't anymore. [Only s]even percent said this country has never been great. . . . [Y]ou can bet

this is hardly a message [the Democrats] want to carry into the home stretch of the 2018 midterms. And judging by the clarification from his office, not even Cuomo seems to be ready to make this his new slogan." [[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/08/15/andrew-cuomo-america-was-never-that-great/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.ee508c4d9c1a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/08/15/andrew-cuomo-america-was-never-that-great/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ee508c4d9c1a).]

On September 1, I listened to the heartfelt and moving tribute Meghan McCain gave at the memorial service in the National Cathedral for her father, the late, senior U.S. Senator from Arizona, John S. McCain III. Tears came to my eyes more than once as I heard her speak through her tears. But she said something in her eulogy that caught me up short. She said, to applause, "America doesn't need to be made great again. America was always great." I do not think we can honestly say that America was always great.

I understand that saying America "was never that great" is political poison. Most of us need to believe that America is and was great. We take it as a required token of love for our country. It is the word "never" in Cuomo's statement that I myself do not agree with. I think America has sometimes been great; whenever it has fought and sacrificed for the highest ideals of liberal democracy, increased justice and improved living conditions for all its citizens, and truly extended a helping hand to others in the world. And it is the word "always" in Meghan McCain's statement that I cannot agree with.

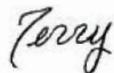
Even saying that America was not always great, as I do in this article, feels a little unsafe. But my question is why? Why can we not stand to tell and hear the truth about ourselves and our country? Acknowledging the historical truth about our

country does not mean we do not love it, any more than acknowledging the truth about ourselves and our families, including our flaws, means we do not love ourselves and them. Are our love for, and pride in, our country so shallow, so fragile, that we must ignore evidence to the contrary to convince ourselves that the United States of America was always great?

The United States undeniably stole land from Native Americans and labor from African slaves, as well as fundamental human rights from both, for much of our nation's history. We shamelessly enriched those of us who are white by doing so. Why can we not freely face and admit that those wrongs did not make us great? We were not great when we denied women and African-Americans the right to vote. We were not great when we sent Japanese-Americans to internment camps during World War II. The shame now lies not in admitting those wrongs, but in denying or ignoring them. I agree with a friend who said that the only good reason to keep reminding ourselves of our country's wrongs is to try to make amends for them and not repeat them in the future. We are not great now when we fail to acknowledge the racism, anti-blackness, and white supremacy that are rooted in slavery and continue today in our attitudes, conscious and subconscious, toward people of color – attitudes that cause us to fear and suspect them for their appearance alone, that fail to protect them at all or as fully as white people are protected, that punish and incarcerate them at demonstrably higher rates than white people. We are not great now when we continue to heap even more privilege on those already rich and fail to help those who are poor and disadvantaged.

I think I understand what both Cuomo and Meghan McCain meant. And I don't think either of them would disagree with this statement: America has often been great in its aspirations. And it has sometimes fallen short of those aspirations in its actions. The ongoing challenge for our country, and for all of us, is never to stop working to make what we do match what we proclaim and hope for in our best moments. I'll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,



## President's Letter to Congregation

Pat Lindgren, President

At the beginning of September we had our In Gathering to welcome back our children and their parents and teachers. Lisa did a wonderful job



reviewing the curriculum for this year. The exciting part was that we had more people than we anticipated, more children and more parents. I hope this keeps up for the whole church year until next June.

At the September Board meeting, I reported the good news from our treasurer that as of September 7th we had survived our lean months of giving (June, July and August) with more collected than spent. It looks like we have a real chance to come out ahead or even this year. I am very excited to see that. We will send out the statement of income and expenses by email soon.

Every Sunday when I come to church I notice that we often do the same things over and over until they become rote. I would like to jolt us out of this rut about our affirmation. I hear the congregation reciting it in a monotone that sounds like reading from a telephone book. Next Sunday when you say the affirmation, really listen to the words and think about what they mean.

Love is the spirit of this church. I see this every Sunday. We gather in the Social hall before and after services to talk, to greet each other, sometimes to hug or shake hands, to console each other for losses and troubles, to celebrate our triumphs and joys and watch our children play.

And service is its law. You see this in our committees, in our Board, in the volunteer work we do in the office, in the kitchen, in the classrooms, in the building maintenance, in the ground's maintenance, in the work we do for the Social Justice Committee, the UU Service Committee and the United Nations Committee.

This is our great covenant: Our faith does not recite a creed of beliefs, but rather we have a covenant with each other.

To dwell together in peace. We covenant to dwell in peace with each other. Are we always at perfect agreement, no, but we try to resolve differences face to face and courteously.

To seek the truth in freedom. We allow each other to find the truth based on our own conscience. I am a Humanist, but I have friends here who are atheists, and Christians and Jewish and Wiccan. We are all free to seek our own truth.

And to help one another. We are very good at helping when members are ill or hospitalized or suffer losses or just need a friend. We send cards, write letters, make phone calls, give rides, run errands and just be friends. I would like to see us expand our ability to help in the future by setting up and funding a minister's discretionary fund to confidentially help members who have financial emergencies.

## Membership Update

*Chris Baker*

We are looking forward to cooler days, and the worst is behind us.

The number of visitors this summer was unexpectedly high and we managed to get some new members signed up.

The new members were John and Beth Bellinger, Heidi Studt, and Karl Huck, Shannon Thomas and Jorge Aguirre.

The Membership Committee is working on ways to enhance our interface with our visitors. The area between the social hall and Library will serve as a place where members and visitors can mingle with current members.

We are also making it easier for people to find us by wearing a green ribbon.

We hope this upward trend will continue!!

## Save The Dates - 11/9, 10 & 11/18

Circle Suppers are back. The first ones will be held on November 9, 10 and 11. Circle suppers are small potluck dinners held in our member's homes. They are a great way to get to know each other better. Also, delis and similar options make it easy for the non-culinary among us to participate.

Sign up in the Social Hall. Please list your contact information and any dietary restrictions. Questions can be directed to Susie Cole ([scole100@msn.com](mailto:scole100@msn.com) / 406.600.8857) or Nancy Flann ([515giles@hotmail.com](mailto:515giles@hotmail.com) / 623.583.4626).



## “Cakes for the Queen of Heaven”

*A UU Adult Education Course, Fall 2018*

In October, Bonnie Saunders will facilitate a four-week adult education course called “Cakes for the Queen of Heaven,” a woman-honoring journey into ancient earth-based spiritualities in Europe and the Middle East. Participants will explore questions, such as how did/does the gender of the deity in a society affect the status of women in that society?

Sign-up in the Social Hall for this course, in September if possible. People who cannot attend all of the sessions are welcome to come when they can. If you have questions or if you can't get to church to sign up yourself, contact Bonnie and she'll take care of it.

Schedule: the following four Monday at 1:00 p.m.

- 10/1: Prehistoric Goddesses of the Paleolithic and the Neolithic
- 10/8: Goddesses in Ancient Civilizations: Sumeria, Minoa, Pre-Classical Greece
- 10/15: From Goddess to God in Babylonia, Egypt, and Classical Greece
- 10/22: Goddess Traditions in Judaism and Christianity

## Racism and Civil Rights

*Bonnie Saunders*

How far have we progressed in decreasing racism and improving the civil rights of minorities? In November-early December, starting on 11/12 (we're skipping 11/5 because of the election the next day), Bonnie Saunders will facilitate a four-week adult education course called “*Racism and Civil Rights*.” Sign up in the Social Hall for this course in October if possible. People who cannot attend all of the sessions are welcome to come when they can. If you have questions or if you can't get to church to sign up, contact Bonnie and she'll take care of it.

Schedule: the following four Monday's at 1:00 p.m.

- 11/12: Slavery and Its Impact on the U.S. (1619-1865)
- 11/19: Reconstruction (1865-1877)  
Post-Reconstruction and Jim Crow (1877-1954)
- 11/26: The Civil Rights Movement and the Backlash (1954-2008)
- 12/3: The Status of Racism and Civil Rights (2008-Today) - What Can We Do?

## RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

Welcome back everyone! It was nice to see all of our families and friends as well as some new faces at this year's Ingathering. Our buffet table was overflowing with delicious food. Then, our first week of classes began immediately following breakfast.



Our children's religious education classes are volunteer-run and although our parent's commit to teaching and assisting in each of our classrooms, we are still in great need of additional help. Assistants help with projects, classroom control, stories and discussion. There is no prep for this position and the commitment

would be 3-6 times over the course of the year. Please contact Lisa Lawrence a.s.a.p. at [uucslisal@gmail.com](mailto:uucslisal@gmail.com) for more details.

As for curriculum, all of our classes this year will be focusing on what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, the seven principles and our 6 UU sources. Then, next March, Grades K & Up will be combined for a Disability Awareness Class. This program is designed to educate students about different disabilities, both visible and invisible. Hands-on activities will help students learn what it means to live with a disability and encourage empathy and acceptance.

Do we have any high schoolers? If so, I have options for you. If we can get at least 3 interested participants we can run a program. Perhaps you might like to be a volunteer assistant once and awhile in one of our classrooms. Or, you are welcome to listen to the sermon with your folks. Please come and see me!

New this year is an attendance incentive for the children. Due to a gift from a generous benefactor, we will be awarding the top 2 attendance holders with a scholarship to either kid's camp or family camp at Camp De Benneville Pines next summer. We have \$1,000 to share between the two. That's pretty good incentive! I will be taking attendance to keep track each week and be posting more details in the upcoming months.

Not only are we providing this scholarship as incentive to see our children's bright, shiny and smiling faces as many Sunday's as possible, but also as an opportunity to reflect where church and RE falls within each family's priorities. We are also hoping that the

children will benefit from continued spiritual growth and enrichment in a nurturing setting where they have the opportunity to meet and bond with other UU children from the entire Pacific Southwest District.

For those of you who don't already know, Camp De Benneville Pines is located in the San Bernardino National Forest 90 miles east of Los Angeles. At an elevation of 6,800 feet, the camp is surrounded by a forest of towering pines, cedars and oaks. More information can be found at: <http://www.uucamp.org/>

If you would like to make a donation towards this scholarship program, either now or in the future, please contact children's RE director, Lisa Lawrence, or Reverend Terry Sims.

## BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle has moved to the SECOND Tuesday evening 6:30-8:30 pm in the Choir Room. Please join us whether you've finished the book or haven't yet started it. For more information, contact Julie Wambach [azwambach@icloud.com](mailto:azwambach@icloud.com).

October 9, 2018, 6:30-8:30 pm, Choir Room: "*We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy*" by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Includes essays Coates first published in the Atlantic, as well as eight new ones. He covers the Obama presidency, as well as exploring the backlash that led to the election of Trump, who he calls "America's First White President."

November 13, 2018, 6:30-8:30 pm, Choir Room: "*Hissing Cousins: The Untold Story of Eleanor Roosevelt and Alice Roosevelt Longworth*" by Marc Peyser and Tom Dwyer. (also sold with subtitle "*The Lifelong Rivalry of Eleanor Roosevelt and Alice Roosevelt Longworth*")

The first cousins - one a daughter of a US President and the other a First Lady - grew up together and later each influenced American politics with quite different political views. A double biography.

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**Please have information for the Newsletter submitted by Noon on the 15th of each month to the Editor, Charlie Mannino at [uucsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uucsnewsletter@gmail.com)**

## The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

Welcome back UUs to the fall season opening activities in your Library! I will be returning the first Sunday in October to welcome you to our great Library space. In order to help you get started on your fall reading plans, below I am beginning reviews of the new books on order. Expect to find the books on our shelves in about a month. An announcement will be released in the weekly e-blast. Thank you for your patronage, and please stop in on Sunday I'd love to visit with you!

***“Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy,”*** by Mark Morrison-Reed, number 289.1MOR. The author is the preeminent scholar of black Unitarian Universalist history. He presents this long-awaited chronicle and analysis of the events of the Empowerment Controversy, which rocked Unitarian Universalism in the late sixties and continues to reverberate. The author synthesizes decades of research and extensive interviews to present a nuanced and suspense-filled drama about Unitarian Universalism's great crisis of faith. Description excerpted from Google review.

***“Love Like Thunder,”*** by Jesse Reynolds, number 242REY. The author, a vibrant new poetic voice, invites us into an intimate relationship with nature, God, and love itself. The author weeps in the desert at night, and meditates on heart emojis. Her lyric poetry flows like water between genders, between body and spirit, and between earth and sky. Description excerpted from the In Spirit review. This is the 2018 In Spirit meditation volume.

***“Braving the Wilderness,”*** subtitled: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone, by Brene Brown, number 305.8BRO. This is a timely and important new book that challenges everything we think we know about cultivating true belonging in our communities, organizations, and culture. The author offers us the clarity and courage we need to find our way back to ourselves and to each other. And that path cuts right through the wilderness. This book is a New York Times Number One Best Seller, a Random House publication. Description excerpted from the In Spirit review.

*Have a blessed day shared with a great read  
from your UU Surprise Library!*

## Musings from the Loft!

Debby Bullins, Music Director



Fall is upon us, which in Arizona means we hope for 90 degree temperatures, and the choir is in full swing, bringing their special talents to worship. We would like to extend a special invitation to all who love music to join us in the loft. No previous experience required!

We rehearse on Sunday mornings before service from 9:00 – 10:00 am. Please talk to me if you would like to give us a try.

There will be many opportunities this year to experience different styles of music. Rehearsals will begin this month for our Lessons and Carols service on December 9. The choir will be preparing some exciting new anthems for this lively service.

We will continue our monthly Hymn Sing beginning Sunday, October 8 at 10:10 am. Rise a little early and follow the sounds of laughter and song to the sanctuary ... you'll be in the right place. Remember to bring suggestions for your favorite hymns and maybe one you would like to learn.

We will also be creating a choir to accompany the RE Christmas pageant on December 16. Please see me if you are interested.

*Make music everyday...sing fearlessly!!*

## Email Address Changes

Key email address changes have recently been made. It is very important that you add the following information to your church directory.

The new UU office email is  
[uucsaz2@gmail.com](mailto:uucsaz2@gmail.com)

Debby Bullins, Music Director,  
[uucsmusic@gmail.com](mailto:uucsmusic@gmail.com)

Lisa Lawrence, RE Director,  
[uucslisal@gmail.com](mailto:uucslisal@gmail.com)

Charlie Mannino, Newsletter Editor,  
[uucsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uucsnewsletter@gmail.com)

also add Cathy Mannino, Webmaster  
[www.uusurprizeaz.org](http://www.uusurprizeaz.org)

## Volunteers at Work

Ken Saunders

With four bulbs out in the Social Hall, it was time to get out our BIG stepladder, and with Don Helms at the top and Michael Piper holding the supports, the bulbs got changed in short order! B&P Committee can always use more helpers- contact Lois Bartels!



## Are you an activist for Reproductive Justice?

Are you interested in organizing further on this issue? Valley UU is forming a Reproductive Justice working group, and we are considering expanding to a UUJAZ Reproductive Justice Action Team. Email [office@uujaz.org](mailto:office@uujaz.org) to join in this work and connect!

Nora McGinnis, Admin Assistant  
Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network

## UUJAZ Weekend!

The Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network (UUJAZ) will again honor our congregation by holding its annual Issues and Action Day Forum at UUCS on Saturday, October 27, 2018. The next day, Sunday, October 28, the Executive Director for UUJAZ (and, we say proudly, our former intern), the Rev. Lisa McDaniel-Hutchings, will bring us an inspiring message on what we at UUCS can do to further the cause of social justice in our community and our world. The worship service will be followed by an informal discussion of what UUJAZ is doing for and with all of the Arizona UU congregations this year. The Board has designated October 28 as a "Share the Plate" Sunday, with all plate offerings not designated as part of pledges to UUCS to be donated to UUJAZ. Please come to all of the UUJAZ activities to be inspired to action on behalf of justice and to respond generously to support UUJAZ in its important work on behalf of all of us!



## Transportation Resources:

### **Valley Metro Dial a Ride - 602-716-2100**

To use *Valley Metro Dial a Ride* you must be 65 or over or ADA certified. The ride costs \$4.00 each way to the doctor or grocery store. To check on eligibility for this program call 602-716-2100. Valley Metro also provides a program called Ride Choice. People who qualify for this program pay only \$3.00 for a one way trip costing up to \$21.00. You must be 65 or over or ADA qualified. To enroll call Valley Metro at 602-716-2100.

### **Benevilla in Surprise - 623-584-4999**

This non-profit agency provides free food shopping services for shut ins. You provide a grocery list over the phone, and they will shop for you free of charge. You only pay for the groceries. They also provide transportation for medical appointments, a friendly visitor service who will visit or call, and a handy person who will do minor repairs like change a light bulb; a wonderful service for people in need. *This service is free of charge if you notify them at least 12 days in advance.*

### **Peoria Dial-A-Ride - 623-773-7435**

\$3.00 ADA \$2.00, needs 1 day advance notice. **Note:** As of January 1, 2017 Dial a Ride is not available unless you are ADA certified. To get ADA certification you have to be declared disabled for at least 6 months. This applies to people living in Surprise.

### **Northwest Valley Connect - 623-282-9300**

NVC helps connect seniors and people with disabilities with available public, private and volunteer transportation resources based on their individual needs. Personalized assistance and support is available by contacting our Call - Click - Connect center at (623) 282-9300. Area transportation resources are also listed on our website at [NorthwestValleyConnect.org](http://NorthwestValleyConnect.org).

**West Valley Connections - 623-282-9300** Call for information regarding services available.



**Visit our web site for  
current information**  
[www.uusurpriseaz.org](http://www.uusurpriseaz.org)

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise

A Progressive, Inclusive Faith Community

WELCOME

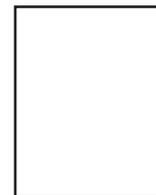


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First Class Mail

## 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.*

**Join us for Sunday service at 10:30 am**

*If you are not a member but would like to receive church announcements by email, please send your email address and full name to [uucsaz2@gmail.com](mailto:uucsaz2@gmail.com).*

## Sermon Titles For October 2018

*The Theme for his month is "Formation"*

**10/7 - Rev. Terry Sims..... Forming Humanity**

Creation stories do their best to tell us how the wide universe and humanity came to be. But science and all our other activities are still forming humanity in our continuing evolution. Collectively, are human beings a blight or a blessing?

**10/14 - Rev. Terry Sims .....Becoming Someone Every Day**

As individuals, it is the experiences, the process of life that forms us. The sobering, perhaps terrifying truth is that we become someone with every moment, every event, every choice. And within that truth also lies our hope.

**10/21 - Rev. Terry Sims ..... Spirit InFormation**

What do we really know? And how does that information form us, shape our lives? I have long believed that traditional religions do not adequately answer the deep, spiritual questions. It is time for a new approach.

**10/28 - Rev. Lisa McDaniel-Hutchings ..... Relationship . . . Making It Real**

*"The truth is this: If there is no justice, there will be no peace...If we cannot bring justice into the small circle of our own individual lives, we cannot hope to bring justice to the world."* How might we build relationships that bring justice to our localities and our state?