

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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February 2019

40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

From The Minister's Desk

I am intrigued by the development of artificial intelligence (AI). I am glad to be living at a time in human history when technological progress has made it possible for us to imagine and build thinking machines. Or maybe we should think of



AI's as thinking beings. Could they really achieve consciousness – the self-awareness we have? To what degree will future AI's be like us? Will they have a soul?

I recently ran across this long and engaging article online: "What would it mean for AI to have a soul?", Brandon

Ambrosino, June 18, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20180615-can-artificial-intelligence-have-a-soul-and-religion>. Ambrosino writes: "[S]ome futurists and tech experts predict a not-so-distant future in which AI, having achieved a certain indistinguishability from humans, will be truly intelligent. At that point, they claim, AI will experience the world in ways not too unlike the ways that we experience it – emotionally, intelligently, and spiritually."

As with most theological questions, asking whether AI will have a soul requires that we first examine ourselves, our own experience. Do we homo sapiens have souls? What do we mean by "soul"?

Ambrosino says: "Most Christians throughout the world believe they have a soul created by God, and that this soul is more important than their body and will outlive it, perhaps into eternity." "But this way of thinking about the soul, as a thing, 'has to go,' says Phillip Clayton at Claremont School of Theology He notes that while 'talk of the functions that were once ascribed to the soul is

valuable,' those functions can now be studied by scientists." "According to this perspective, 'the soul' is unnecessary to explain why humans function the way they do." "As a neuroscientist and psychologist, I have no use for the soul,' writes George Paxinos of the non-profit research institute Neuroscience Research Australia. 'On the contrary, all functions attributable to this kind of soul can be explained by the workings of the brain.'"

If Clayton is right that we should stop thinking about "soul" as a thing, we might start thinking of it as a verb rather than a noun. So "soul" would not be something we have, but something we do. And many of us believe there is something about us that is more than the functions of our brains, our cognition.

"Samuel Kimbriel [is the] editor of *The Resounding Soul: Reflections on the Metaphysics and Vivacity of the Human Person*. [He writes:] 'To say that a being has a soul is to say that it is not simply moved from outside, but is also capable of moving itself. . . . A being can move itself because it wants something and these wants make sense, they have structure.'"

Putting these ideas together, Ambrosino "formulate[s] a definition. To 'soul' [verb] is to understand that we share certain desires with our fellow humans; that it's in our best interests to work collectively to satisfy those desires in ways that promote the maximal amount of human flourishing; that there is a mysterious and unnamable source to these desires; and that this source is, in some way, luring us on collectively to fulfillment."

I like this new way of thinking about "soul" – (1) our collective work; (2) to meet the desires shared by everyone; (3) by maximizing everyone's ability to flourish and find fulfillment in life. Not a thing, but actions. Not installed in our physical bodies at birth, but developed in community throughout a

life. Again A. Powell Davies words come back to me: "Life is just a chance to grow a soul." I hope that as human technology advances, AI's will meet this definition of "soul" – becoming aware of themselves, pursuing their own desires, and working with humans to allow all beings, human and AI, to flourish and find fulfillment. I'll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,

President's Letter to Congregation

Pat Lindgren, President



We had our annual meeting on Friday, January 11th. It was wonderful with lots of participation by members. It was nice to have changes proposed to the bylaws and budget as presented by the board. Neither the board nor the finance

committee are perfect and I am glad when the congregation participates to assist them to get it right.

Two days later we had our first board meeting with the new members. It was exciting to see the new energy and viewpoints from Ruth Halpert, Patricia Balfour and Sherry Robinson. The board appointed Julian Rush as our Vice President for one year. We will elect his replacement for a one-year term at the next annual meeting. I think this is going to be a great year for our board and our church. Speaking of the board, this will be my last year as President, I am termed out. Please start thinking about who you want to be President next year. Do you want the job, do you know someone who would be a good President?

On Saturday, March 2nd, we will be spending "An Evening on the Red Carpet" at our annual auction. Please start planning your dinners, parties, brunches and other activities for sale at the auction. Also please think about gift certificates, quality items and services you can contribute to the auction. This is our big fun and fund-raising evening at the church.

The board got an update from Graham Taylor on the progress of the improvements on the sound in the Sanctuary. In February (or March) we will have a sound audit from a professional who is a friend of Graham's. We hope that will result in a plan we need for the changes so that we can put up the 7 Principle

Banners that will be paid for out of the auction proceeds from last year.

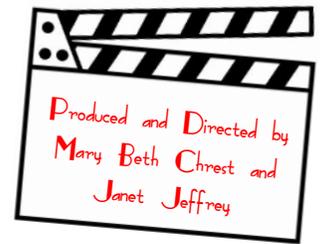
I am looking forward to an exciting and busy year in 2019. We are gaining new members, getting our finances in order, and we continue to be a light of progressive faith in the northwest Phoenix area.

Lights, Camera, Auction!

Saturday, March 2nd

Join us for an evening of fun, entertainment, lively conversation, good food, and an opportunity to support the church. We will spend the evening on the red carpet at a premiere event. Come and socialize with established and new stars.

The evening begins with your entrance on the red carpet to review numerous choices of fine goods to bid on during the Silent Auction, while sipping on beverages and enjoying hors d'oeuvres.



Dinners, trips, games, family fun, and other selections of activities will be open for bids in the live Auction. The Dessert Dash will be held as in the last few auction events. As dinner and dessert are finished, volunteers will be ready to finalize your purchases.

The evening's schedule is:

- 3:30 pm Silent Auction
- 5:00 pm Live Auction
- 6:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Dessert Dash
- 7:30 pm Finalizing Purchases

Ticket sales begin Sunday, February 3rd

Dinner - \$15.00

Children's Menu - \$7.00

To volunteer or donate items, please contact Mary Beth Chrest at mbchrest@gmail.com or 503-317-1182 (cell), or Janet Jeffrey at jjeffrey@yorku.ca or 623-972-5920 or 416-602-5928 (cell)

Auction Forms Available On-Line

In addition to having both live and silent auction forms available at church and the front office, they will also be available on-line at our web site.

Go to www.uusurpriseaz.org, select *Resources* then select *Forms*. Fill out the form, make a copy for submission then click the *Clear Form* button when finished or to fill out another form.

Musings from the Loft!

Debby Bullins, Music Director

Inspiration, passion, character, love, compassion...these are some of my reactions to Chance Bogart and his work at Homeless Youth Connection. After learning about his passion last



year, I was so pleased that he returned to us on January 20 to engage and inspire us to help with his life's work.

A few weeks ago, I was watching the CBS program, *On The Road*, with Steve Hartman. He told a story of "character" and how you can find "character" in the most unexpected places.

This story is from New Haven, Connecticut. "Many homeless people are haunted by drug addiction, mental illness or a criminal past. Indeed, Elmer Alvarez knows those demons all too well. But he said just because a person is without a home, it doesn't mean they're void of character.

For example, the day he found a check for \$10,000, he said the first thing that came to mind was, "I got to look for this person." He said it never crossed his mind to try and get it cashed." He had been clean for three years and had decided to turn his life around. "The money belonged to real estate broker, Roberta Hoskie. Upon meeting Elmer, she had this response. "I expected to find a guy all nice, clean shaven and in a blue suit," she said. Instead she got Elmer, who shattered the stereotypes and cried when Roberta offered him a reward.

This all happened about a year ago. But the best part of the story is what has happened since. She helped him find an apartment and paid his rent for seven months until he was back on his feet. She also put him through real estate school, and together, they're now working on a little real estate project. It won't make them a dime, but it could be very rewarding.

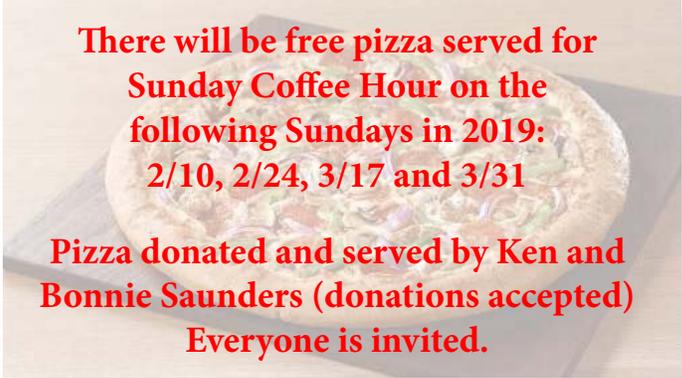
In the next year, they plan to build a transitional house for homeless teenagers and young adults that will provide all kinds of services that Elmer said are crucial. "I know what it is to be homeless. Nobody deserves to live like that," he said.

Roberta could not agree more. "Because I remember what it felt like to be in that shelter," she said. Before she built her multi-million dollar

company, Roberta was also homeless — a teenage mom who worked her way out of poverty and is now offering Elmer a chance to make his dream come true as well. Eventually, he'll serve as an adviser at the transitional house.

A lost check led to a man of profound "character" with a purpose."

If we use our talents, show our compassion, show our love, share our passion, find our purpose, we too can make a difference. Our Elmer is out there waiting for us to connect.



There will be free pizza served for Sunday Coffee Hour on the following Sundays in 2019: 2/10, 2/24, 3/17 and 3/31

Pizza donated and served by Ken and Bonnie Saunders (donations accepted) Everyone is invited.

Circle Suppers

Last chance.....if you haven't participated in the circle suppers, we are scheduling one more set for the last weekend in March. (March 29,30 and 31). Circle suppers are a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and get to know those folks you never really get to talk to during Coffee Hour. So come and enjoy some good food and interesting conversation. The hosts provide the drinks and appetizers. Guests will be assigned main dish, salad or dessert. OR get creative and host one with fine dining as Jim Dobbins and Sharon Forbes did at the Colonade in January. Maybe you offer brunch on your yacht, lunch in your limo, or a backyard BBQ... use your imagination.

Anyway, sign up in the social hall and indicate your date preference if you have one. If you have questions, feel free to call Susie Cole 406.600.8857 or Nancy Flann 623.583.4636

Please have information for the Newsletter submitted by Noon on the 15th of each month to the Editor, Charlie Mannino at uucsnewsletter@gmail.com

The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

This month we wrap up reviews of the newly purchased and gently used donated books that are now included in our Library collection. Through February all of this year's additions continue to be separately displayed on the round table in the Library for ease of location. As always, please let me know if I may be of help locating books in your interest area.

“Awakening Loving Kindness,” by Pema Chodron, number 294.3CHO. “Do you want to be a more compassionate person, confident and unafraid to love yourself and the world around you unconditionally, but aren't sure how? We often look far and wide for guidance to become better people, as though the answers were somewhere out there. But Pema suggests the best is in fact your very own life. Her teachings focus on how to see the events of our lives as the perfect material for learning to love ourselves and our world playfully and wholeheartedly, to live in our skin fearlessly, without aggression, harshness, or shame.” In Spirit Bookstore review.

“A Guide for Parents of Troubled Teens,” subtitled *Working with a Child Psychiatrist*, by Dr. Sylvia A Dygert Manalis, number 191.1MAN. “In this unique book, you will find stories about children with emotional and behavior problems, stories that come to life. For example, meet Ellen in the essay *The Whirling Girl*. Ellen cannot sit still or focus well. As Dr. Manalis speaks to Ellen and her parents, it becomes clear how the diagnosis and plan of treatment evolves.” Amazon 5 star review. This UU Surprise author is a physician and child psychiatrist who has worked for over 40 years with children and their families in many settings.

“Emergent Strategy,” by Adrienne Maree Brown, number 303.4BRO. The author is a social justice facilitator. “Emergent Strategy is radical self-help, society-help, and planet-help designed to shape the futures we want to live. Change is constant. Rather than steel ourselves against change, this book invites us to feel, map, assess, and learn from the swirling patterns around us in order to better understand and influence them as they happen,” in Spirit Bookstore review. On Amazon, this book is reviewed as ‘remarkable’ and ‘essential’, ‘necessary, vital and timely’. 84% of Amazon readers gave this important book a 5 star review.

Have a great month with a top-notch UU read!

RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE



Now that winter break is over and we have our families back from traveling, specific age-range classes have continued. Here's a summary of what they are up to:

January is Teddy Bear Month in our preschool room. Along with their favorite stuffed animal or bear, children are introduced to potentially scary concepts like being lost or sick in a gentle non-threatening way through role-play.

Our K-4th class is finishing up their “Love Will Guide Us” curriculum from UUA's Tapestry of Faith database. The children continue to become familiar with the UU Sources through lessons focused on love. In simplified language our Sources are as follows:

- The sense of wonder we all share.
- The women and men of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.
- The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.
- Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves.
- The use of reason and the discoveries of science.
- The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.
- Our seventh Source: Examples of faithful belief and action from our Unitarian and Universalist heritage.

The 5th-8th grade class has continued their “Signs of Our Faith” curriculum. “Through the concept of “ritual,” the children discover evidence of their faith in everyday actions and are encouraged to ritualize or form into habit such traits as caring, welcoming, and making fair group decisions.”

Coming up on Saturday, February 2nd from 8:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m. there will be an RE Family Service Project at the Dysart Community Center. This is a great, kid-friendly (ages 5 & up) opportunity for families to engage together in a community service project. St. Mary's Food Bank makes bulk food deliveries to the Dysart Community Center where the food is then sorted into more manageable packages and distributed to food bank participants. The event is outdoors and under shade. Please join us! Please R.S.V.P. by January 25th to uucslisal@gmail.com as I will need to give the food bank coordinator a head count.

BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle meets SECOND Tuesday evening 6:30-8:30pm 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.

February 12, 2019 - "*The Last Days of Night*" by Graham Moore

BUUK Circle's first venture outside nonfiction, this historical fiction is about the legal and scientific clash between Edison and Westinghouse over the future of electricity. Tesla is also part of it. The Washington Post called it "A model of superior historical fiction," and it received 4.6 stars out of 5 from 1,000 readers.

March 12, 2019 - "*The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century*" by Kirk Wallace Johnson.

The true story of a young American musician who steals rare bird feathers from The British Museum of Natural History. We know the thief was a champion of the Victorian art of salmon fly-tying, but there is much more. "The gripping story of a bizarre and shocking crime, and one man's relentless pursuit of justice, *The Feather Thief* is also a fascinating exploration of obsession, and man's destructive instinct to harvest the beauty of nature."

April 9, 2019 - "*Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World - and Why Things are Better Than You Think*" by Hans Rosling, Anna Rosling Ronnlund and Ola Rosling.

Offers ten instincts that interfere with our getting correct answers to important questions and our being systematically just plain wrong.

"One of the most important books I've ever read - an indispensable guide to thinking clearly about the world." - Bill Gates

"*Factfulness* by Hans Rosling, an outstanding international public health expert, is a hopeful book about the potential for human progress when we work off facts rather than our inherent biases." - Former U.S. President Barack Obama

Great Decisions 2019: U.S. Foreign Policy Discussion Series

Bonnie Saunders

The Middle East is still in turmoil. The U.S. and China are near a trade war. The U.S. has announced it will get out of another treaty. If you want to learn more about what is happening in U.S. foreign policy, join Bonnie Saunders in a discussion of eight of the hottest topics in U.S. foreign policy in 2019. Bonnie will have the briefing book for \$20 in January. See her at church or e-mail her at BonnieSaun@aol.com to get a book and sign up for the discussions.

Discussions will begin at 7:00 p.m. on the following Mondays:

1. Refugees and Global Migration.....2/4
2. The Middle East: Regional Disorder.....2/11
3. Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future?.....2/18
4. The Rise of Populism in Europe2/25
5. Decoding U.S.-China Trade3/4
6. Cyber Conflict and Geopolitics.....3/11
7. The U.S. and Mexico: Partnership Tested.....3/18
8. State of the State Department and Diplomacy...3/25

UU Endowment Fund

Naming the Endowment Fund of the Church as a beneficiary of your estate or a specific asset, such as an IRA or life insurance plan, provides a simple way to begin your legacy now by providing for our church work in the future. If your circumstances change, you can alter your plans at any time.

For further information call:
Brooks Marshall at 623-362-1195.

We Are Here To Be Of Assistance!

Lay Pastoral Care Committee

If you, your family or another member of our congregation are experiencing illness, hardship, isolation or are in need of support, please contact Lenore Gaudin (623-933-0186) or the church office (623-875-2550) or speak with any of the committee members on Sunday at church. We wear a second name tag that says *Lay Pastoral Care*.



Visit our web site for current information www.uusurpriseaz.org

Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise

A Progressive, Inclusive Faith Community

WELCOME



WhaleCoast Alaska 2019



WOW! Four Unitarian Universalist Fellowships in Alaska invite you to our awe-inspiring, 26th annual Alaska tour program.

Tour #1: National Park Tour, June 8-18, 2019 -- \$3,258

Tour #2: All-Alaska Tour, July 5-17, 2019 – \$3,887

Where: From the coastal waters to the sunny Interior, from wilderness to modern cities. We experience the best of Alaska: Fairbanks, Denali Park, Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka, Seward

- See:**
- Wildlife: whales, seals, bears, moose, caribou, & more.
 - Glaciers, islands, fjords, and mountain ranges.
 - Native American artists and dancers.
 - Alaska's finest museums.
 - Spectacular travel by train, plane, and boat.

Stay: Real Alaska! UU homestays, meals, & dinner parties with Alaska UUs who treat you like friends.

Director: Dave Frey, longtime Fairbanks UU

More information: www.WhaleCoastAK.org

Email: dfrey@WhaleCoastAK.org

Telephone: 907-322-4966

Save \$\$\$ - \$100/person discount for group of 8

Hurry! Each tour sells out when 40 guests register

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 623-222-1500. 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 one 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 six months. This applies to people living in Surprise.

Northwest Valley Connections - 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.

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

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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.

Sermon Titles For February 2019

The Theme for his month is "Surrender/Letting Go"

2/3 – Rev. Terry Sims The Art of Letting Go

There are all kinds of things to let go of. But how can we tell what is worth keeping and what is not? Before I let go, I would like to know that there is something more important to be gained than what letting go will cost.

2/10 – Rev. Terry Sims.....Surrendering Control

Surrender seems directly opposed to control. And we value control so much that it is not surprising that "surrender" holds such negative connotations. Maybe what we surrender from is only the illusion of our control, and what we surrender to is reality.

2/17 – Rev. Terry Sims..... Trust and Letting Go

Letting go of what we care about, surrendering to someone or something, is difficult in many cases. I don't believe we can let go or surrender without trust in something larger than ourselves. Which is what makes developing our ability to trust a spiritual practice.

2/24 – Juliet GustavsonLife - The Grand Improvisation Part I

"Let's face it: Life is something we all make up as we go along. No matter how carefully we formulate a "script," it is bound to change when we interact with people with scripts of their own." (Patricia Ryan Madson – Improv Wisdom)