

# Unitarian Universalist Church Newsletter

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts, Surprise, AZ 85378-2581

Phone: 623.875.2550 // [www.uusurpriseaz.org](http://www.uusurpriseaz.org) // Email: [uucsaz2@gmail.com](mailto:uucsaz2@gmail.com)

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

**Minister:** Rev. Terry Sims

**Minister Emeritus:** Rev. Dr. Walt F. Wieder

**President:** Pat Lindgren



**Newsletter Editor:** Charlie Mannino

[uucsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uucsnewsletter@gmail.com)

**Printing:** Kathryn Pabich

May 2019

40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

## From The Minister's Desk

Sometime last Spring, I was playing doubles tennis at David Stoll's house with him and two other lawyers I formerly practiced with. After I got home from our match, I realized that I had left my sunglasses at Dave's house. So I texted Dave and



asked him if he could bring my sunglasses to the firm so that I could pick them up. Dave said "Sure." The next day, I stopped into the firm and went to the office they still kindly keep for me to use. On the desk were a pair of sunglasses, but they were in a nice case. I told Dave that maybe he'd grabbed the

wrong sunglasses because mine weren't in a case. Dave said, "Oh no, their yours. Sorry to confuse you. I had an extra case so I'm donating it to you. Dad always told me to leave things better than I found them."

I think that's great life advice: "Leave things better than you found them." And I hope all of us will do that with respect to this church.

As many know, I will be retiring either as of August 31, 2020, or August 31, 2021. I expect to decide which sometime before September, 2019. This is not an easy decision for me, mostly because I have never felt more called, challenged, or fulfilled than I have and do as the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise, Arizona. I will always care deeply about this church, the only one I ever expect to serve as a minister, and I very much want it to continue to thrive.

As we look toward the church's future without me, I believe it will continue its tradition of

dedicated, able lay leadership. Members who care about the church as much as I do will lead it into its bright next phase. Some of them are active now. Some we may not know of yet.

I have been talking with the Nominating Committee about my vision for leadership here. I think leaders emerge when they are needed. And leadership is something that can be nurtured and grow. What we are looking for first are people for whom Unitarian Universalism and this church are important; who want to support this church, grow with it, be active in its congregational life. The Nominating Committee initially is identifying leaders with these characteristics.

We all have different talents and gifts to bring to volunteer service. One may be terrific at being a host on Sunday morning, or helping to maintain our building and grounds, but not have as much interest or ability to serve in another capacity, for example as an officer or trustee. The lay preachers and worship leaders and musicians we have are wonderful, but not everyone is called to do that. What the church will need, especially during its transition to a new settled minister, are all of its lay leaders, with their different interests and abilities. So, after the Nominating Committee identifies congregational leaders in general, it will work to match interests and abilities with specific roles. If members are asked to serve, I hope and believe they will if they can. Although there will be some sadness on both sides when I leave, I also want you to be excited about your next minister, and we need not be anxious. There are extensive, great resources from the UUA available to the church as it looks toward this time of transition. Those include our Regional Congregational Life Staff and written materials like

the “Transitions Handbook”. We are starting early so that we will be well prepared.

There will be many opportunities to serve the church in the next couple of years especially, including on the Board, on current committees, on the search committee for the interim minister, and on the search committee for your next settled minister after that. Sometime next fall, probably by October, the Board and I are planning to ask all church members and friends to complete a new interest-and-service survey. The goal is to allow those members who are interested in serving the church in a particular way to express that to the Nominating Committee.

In this next year or two, I want to do all I can to broaden and strengthen our congregation’s leadership pool. I have no doubt that everyone will help the Nominating Committee and me do that. It is just one more reason that I am grateful and proud to be this church’s minister.

Yours in our faith,



## Something New for Announcements

*Rev. Terry Sims*

As announcements have multiplied during our busiest time at church (January through April), some of you have reminded me that most of us do not come to worship services to hear announcements, no matter how important they are. This church year, announcements have taken up as much as 13 minutes at the beginning of our worship service, which I do my best to keep to an hour. In such situations, to keep the service from running too long, I have made the decision to cut some planned portions of the service such as hymns, readings, and/or the sermon. Members have also pointed out that with some people still getting settled in the pews during the first few minutes, oral announcements at the beginning may not be heard or as effective.

Coincidentally, a member has generously donated another large flat screen TV to the church. That is going to be mounted on the Social Hall wall to the right of the sanctuary doors as you look toward the pulpit from the Social Hall. The plan is to have the flat screen mounted on an arm that can be extended and will allow the TV to be swiveled

for use during gatherings by various groups in our Social Hall. As the solution to having most announcements made orally at the beginning of the worship service, we also intend to use the flat screen as an announcement board, beginning in September, 2019.

I wanted to let you know of this change now so that we all have an opportunity to prepare for it. It will be an adjustment, but the benefits of keeping our service dedicated only to worship will be worth it, and I believe it will be at least as effective as making announcements once orally at the beginning of services.

What this will mean is that, starting in September, 2019, people who have an event will need to prepare their written announcement and get to it to Kathryn, our church administrator, no later than Wednesday. That is the same as our current deadline for announcements that will continue to be emailed to the congregation. There will be no opportunities for last-minute additions later in the week because Kathryn will need to prepare the announcements for the flat screen at the same time. For events that involve the entire church, e.g. the Auction, Annual Meeting, or Generous Giving Campaign, I may occasionally decide to make an oral announcement before the worship service begins. However, I anticipate that will rarely happen. Again, if your event is not one of the rare ones I choose to announce orally, please understand that is not a reflection on the importance of your event, but instead only an attempt to reserve our weekly worship hour each week for that unique purpose. Thank you for your understanding and efforts to make this change work well.

### ***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.

## President's Letter to Congregation

*Pat Lindgren, President*



As some of our members know, we have been having problems the past few months with homeless people using and actually living on our church property. This causes problems for our staff who have to clean up the messes they leave behind. This also creates a conundrum for us as a welcoming congregation. Our church does not have the facilities or staff to house these people for even one night. There is, unfortunately, no homeless shelter in either Surprise or in the Northwest Valley. The closest shelter is in downtown Phoenix. The Salvation Army facility next to us is primarily an administrative unit and does not have the ability to help these people. Our Board has been discussing this with church staff and members and we have made some decisions about handling this problem. We have approved a proposal to add exterior lighting to discourage people from sleeping on our benches and using our grounds for a toilet. This lighting is designed so as to not shine in the windows of the surrounding houses and to highlight our church in an attractive manner.

In addition, we have been experiencing people wandering into our church when it is open during meetings and Sunday services. These are not people who come to our church to attend meetings or services. They wander in, then wander out and sometimes wander about the building. Sometimes, they stand out in front of the church and accost members as they come in. For the safety of our members and children, the Board has decided to start securing the front doors (and both side doors) after the meetings and services start. We will start this practice in May. This will happen about 5 to 10 minutes after the services start and we will have someone keep a watch and let in late members.

The Board does not make these decisions lightly and we acknowledge that our principles would like us to be open at all times to all people. However, we have a responsibility to the safety of our members, children and property.

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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)**

## Musings from the Loft!

*Debby Bullins, Music Director*



May brings the end of the choir season at UUC Surprise. I would like to take this time to thank each one of our choir members for a terrific year. There has been such musical growth in this group of choristers and I am grateful for that. They have stepped up to the challenge, working on their tone, blend and vowel sounds. I know that sounds easy but, believe me, it is not. They have a more unified sound than a year ago, and I am very proud of all their hard work and willingness to learn more difficult pieces.

Of course, I would also thank each of our pianists, Connie Jahrmarkt, Kent Trostel, Maggi Mahan, Ruth Swank and Julian Rush. With their vast talents, each of them bring a different style and perspective to enhance each service.

Please let each of these choir members and accompanists know how much you appreciate all that they do. Have a wonderful summer.

## SAWUURA Memorial Day Campout

**Friday – Monday, May 24-27, 2019**

*Curtiss Manker-Seale, [curtissimo@me.com](mailto:curtissimo@me.com)*

SAWUURA, our UU camp in the Sierra Ancha Mountains hosts a campout every Memorial Day and Labor Day, where UUs and their family and friends are invited to tent camp, share meals and kitchen duties, activities and worship. Relax and deepen your spiritual connection with nature, play, hike, bird/star watch, sing and s'mores around the campfire.

Fees are \$45 for adults and \$25 for children under 16 (or \$35 & \$25 for members).

Important: SAWUURA is located in wilderness near the town of Young, AZ. 2 miles down a rough dirt road. Also, our latrines are pit toilets/outhouses.

Please join us at [www.sawuura.org](http://www.sawuura.org).



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## The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

May starts the summer reading season here at Surprise UU. I will be setting the Library on 'self-serve' for the upcoming months. Of course, I am always available for contact via phone, text or email. I take with me what are called the Library 'shelf-list' cards as I travel in the summer so I may always help you with finding the right book for your interest or need.

Here are reviews of three recently donated books to help get you started:

**"Adam, Eve, and the Serpent,"** subtitled 'Sex and Politics in Early Christianity', by Elaine Pagels, number 241.66PAG. "Deepens our view of early Christianity while casting a disturbing light on the evolution of attitudes passed down to us. How did the early Christians come to believe that sex was inherently sinful? When did Adam's fall become synonymous with the fall of humanity? In this provocative masterpiece the author re-creates the controversies that racked the early church as it confronted sexuality, freedom, and sin as told in the story of Genesis." 4.5 on Amazon.

**"Unifying Truths of the World Religions,"** subtitled 'Practical Principles for Living and Loving in Peace', by David Lundberg, number 290LUN. "An exquisite collection of over 800 quotations from sacred texts organized in an easy to understand way. This groundbreaking and exhaustively researched book convincingly demonstrates it is the principles every major faith holds in common that have the power and promise to bring us together instead of driving us apart. It is an indispensable guide to living a more fulfilling life." 4 star on Amazon review.

**"Kitchen Table Wisdom,"** subtitled 'Stories that Heal', by Rachel Naomi Remen, number 610.92REM. "This book addresses the spiritual issues of suffering, meaning, love, faith, and miracles. Despite the awesome powers of technology, many of us still do not live very well," says the author. This remarkable collection of true stories draws on the concept of 'kitchen table wisdom', the tradition of shared experience showing us life in all its power and mystery. It reminds us the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives." 4.5 Amazon stars.

Have a great day shared with a new UU book!

## RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE



There are several more events coming up this May before we end classes for the season. On May 5th we will honor our teachers for their service and we will announce the Camp DeBenville Pines Scholarship recipients. We will have a short ceremony for the top two attendance holders in the social

hall immediately following service. Hot dogs and lemonade will be served in honor of camp. All are welcome to participate.

This contest has really helped our Sunday morning attendance and I know that our winners are going to have a wonderfully enriching experience at camp. I am hoping that we will be able to offer this scholarship contest again next year. 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.

Although May 19th is the last day of classes, childcare will be provided throughout the summer in the preschool room for children ages 2 and up. If children wish to sit through service with their families in the sanctuary, they are welcome to do that as well.

*Have a great summer!*

## 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*.

## BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle meets 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). May is our last meeting before summer and we will continue in October.

May 14, 2019 - "**Born on Third Base: A One Percent Makes the Case for Tackling Inequality, Bringing Wealth Home, and Committing to the Common Good**" by Chuck Collins.

Born on Third Base is a term used for those born with a silver spoon in their mouth, but who arrogantly maintain they are self-made. In his early twenties, the author of this book gave away

his inheritance and has devoted his working life to writing and teaching about inequality.

Collins asks, "Can we suspend both class wars long enough to consider a new way forward? Is it really good for anyone that most of society's wealth is pooling at the very top of the wealth ladder? Does anyone, including the one percent, really want to live in a society plagued by economic apartheid?"

October 15, 2019 - "**The Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging**" by Sebastian Junger.

Junger points to the levels of depression and loneliness among us today brought on by the difficulty in finding a group we can call our own. "Combining history, psychology, and anthropology, TRIBE explores what we can learn from tribal societies about loyalty, belonging, and the eternal human quest for meaning."



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WELCOME

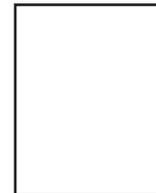


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First Class Mail

## 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 May 2019

*The Theme for his month is "Mystery/Transcendence"*

**5/5 – Rev. Terry Sims ..... Unsolved Mysteries**

There is no question that there is satisfaction in finding answers. But an even more enduring satisfaction may come with living in and appreciating an ongoing mystery we cannot solve. Knowing, it turns out, is not what I want most. What I want most is the experience of awe.

**5/12 – Rev. Terry Sims.....Touching the Transcendent**

I don't have that many earth-shattering insights. Not like some great scientists, artists, and spiritual leaders seem to. But every once in a while, I have the feeling of touching what transcends my everyday existence. I think that might be enough.

**5/19 – Rev. Terry Sims..... Transcending Ego to Live in Mystery**

A sense of oneself is, we are told, essential to our healthy development as an individual. But I think that is not the end of our journey, only its beginning. Because I also sense a lure toward a mystery beyond the boundary between what is only me and what is everything.

**5/26 – Rev. Dr. Walter F. Wieder ..... Theology in a Pluralistic World**