

# 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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## From The Minister's Desk

I recently saw a group photograph of a number of young schoolchildren somewhere in the United States. What I noticed particularly was their diversity. There were Asian-American kids, Native American kids, African-American kids, Latin American kids, Caucasian American kids. All American kids. I had no way of knowing from the photo, of course, any differences beyond the obvious ones of skin color, facial structure, and hair. But I imagined that there were poor kids and rich kids and middle-class kids. Healthy kids and chronically sick kids. Kids who would later become gay, or straight, or bisexual, or transgender, and those who would reject sexual labels. Kids raised in Muslim homes, Jewish homes, atheist homes, humanist homes, Christian homes, Buddhist homes . . . or no homes. Kids of differing intellectual abilities, physical abilities, and talents. Kids born on third base and kids with at least two strikes already against them.

To me, the photo represented the American ideal expressed in the motto of the United States, *E pluribus unum*, out of many, one. Unity in diversity. The picture encouraged me, let me feel hopeful. And then my worries about the current state of our society shadowed the ideal image.

If we are to work toward accomplishing our American motto, I think our best chance of success is to start with children. Children learn what they experience and what they are taught. Which brings me to wonder about the learning environments we provide for them.

In the small town I grew up in, I think there was a Roman Catholic parochial school. But every child I knew went to public school. Although there were many other kinds of differences, there was almost no racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural diversity among us. Part of our homogeneity included what I at least believed were shared civic values, useful guides to living successfully with each other in our school and in larger communities.

How can we make one out of many? How can we build a cohesive society without giving up our many different identities or imposing them on others? This is the age-old dilemma of human civilizations, all the more pronounced in our increasingly diverse and intermeshed modern world.

I think I understand something of the desire to teach children one's own cultural and religious heritage. I imagine that is what has prompted what I see as the continuing splintering of American education. It seems to me that the trend began with private schools for the wealthy and parochial schools for the religious – Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. But insularity has proliferated with evangelical Christian schools, charter schools, home schools. I sense a fear that one's own values will be lost if they are not inculcated in the young in protected, homogeneous learning environments. There seems to be a lack of trust that there are values we can hold and teach in common while embracing diversity. But both are what I want children to learn: shared civic values we can agree on within the context of our own and other people's different experiences.

Diversity without any anchor in identity can be disorienting. But remaining anchored only in what one already knows prevents us from moving, from learning anything new. I don't think we learn

about differences from sameness. We learn sameness from sameness, differences from differences. We need both. Universal, public education, at least as I idealize it, can offer both. Diversity does not preclude values we can agree on. Without values we can share, I am afraid that what is now splintered, whether our education system or our entire society, will shatter.

I believe our Seven UU Principles are values on which everyone can agree. I do not offer them as partisan ideals, quite the contrary, because they come as close as anything I know to universal values that are widely shared. I've never met anyone who disagreed with them in principle. Affirmation of each individual's worth and dignity. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Acceptance of each other. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. The right of conscience and use of the democratic process. Peace, liberty, and justice for all. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence. If there are better values we can all agree on, I'm happy to listen and learn. In the meantime, I will continue to affirm and promote the UU Principles as values children should learn and adults should use to determine public policy. I'll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,



## President's Letter to Congregation

*Pat Lindgren, President*



You may have noticed that I have not been in church as often as usual lately. I was down for a month with pneumonia. I am over that now and am working on regaining my strength and stamina. I learned a lesson in this, don't complain to someone until you hear what they are going through. I talked to my favorite cousin and told her about the pneumonia and she told me that she has been diagnosed with lung cancer that has spread to her liver. I will be sure to talk to her more often in the next several months while she is undergoing immunotherapy.

We are now in our slow period of the year when many of our friends are away in cooler climates. While we miss them, we must work hard to carry

on (just not do that hard work outside where the temperature is 100+).

I read a wonderfully written article about the Unitarian Universalist church in the HuffPost website. The title is "I'm A Feminist Theologian And A Mom. I Don't Know What To Do About Church For My Kid." by Rachel Meyer. Here is some of what she wrote:

"Here's the thing: I don't believe in original sin, or the pathological shame and guilt that comes with it. I don't believe in hell or that bodily desire gets us there. I don't believe that God is gendered, or in the kind of sexist and homophobic theology that shuts out LGBTQIA+ folks. I don't believe in substitutionary atonement or white supremacy. I don't believe that nationalism should have anything to do with religion. And I definitely don't believe in the kind of white evangelicalism that elected Donald Trump. ...BUT — and it's a big but — I still want my kid to grow up with an appreciation for high-church liturgy, for the holy space of grace that is a cathedral. I want him to know the selfless service of church ladies setting out homemade casseroles and Jell-O salads in the fellowship hall after baptisms and funerals. I want him to learn that Jesus — like Buddha and Muhammad — was a radical prophet who taught us how to live gently, wholeheartedly, out of love above all else, and to let that understanding cultivate a passion for social justice."

Here is a link to the full article:

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/best-church-for-kids-progressive-parent\\_n\\_5cddcaa8e4b00e035b8cd4e7](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/best-church-for-kids-progressive-parent_n_5cddcaa8e4b00e035b8cd4e7)

I think you will enjoy reading the entire article.

See you in church.



## 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 Sharon Beard (623-826-3365), Joan Carlson (623-537-9449) 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*.

## See You In September!!

Debby Bullins, Music Director



Whew! It's July and the summer is almost half over. The choir is on break for the summer but worship is not without wonderful and diverse music. We hope you are enjoying our talented accompanists Connie Jahrmarkt, Kent Trostel, Maggi Mahan, Ruth Swank, Julian

Rush and Cathy Mannino for providing a standard of musical performance that we have come to appreciate. Please let them know how much you appreciate what they do.

Summer is planning season (not a surprise to most of you) when I search music websites for beautiful and thoughtful choir anthems and hymns with messages that coordinate and enhance each sermon.

With that in mind, I would encourage anyone who is interested, to join our growing ensemble. We have welcoming seats available and would love to have you. We rehearse before service on Sundays from 9:00 – 10:00. We have one monthly rehearsal on a Thursday each month to work on the choir anthems. Please join us at our first rehearsal on Thursday, September 12, from 1:30 – 3:30. The only requirement is a love of music and the desire to sing.

The end of July, I will be attending the AUUMM Conference in Denver, CO. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other UU Choir & Music Directors around the country to exchange ideas, music and to benefit from some fabulous clinicians, including composer, Mark Miller, who will be sharing his inspirational music with us. Just a warning, I hope to come back energized with new music and ideas to continue our musical journey. I thank the congregation for this professional opportunity.

*Turn up the music and enjoy the rest of your summer!*

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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)**

## RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

### RE Children Make Donation to Community

For the last two RE seasons, our children have been collecting offerings in the classroom to learn about stewardship and philanthropy. As for service learning, this past year our children and families have been volunteering at the Dysart Community Center's Mobile Food Pantry. The food is supplied by St. Mary's and many of the recipient families have children that attend Surprise Elementary School. This brings us full circle, as it represents other community organizations which the church supports.



After several discussions with the children, they have decided to use the offerings to make a donation to the community cause that they have come to know over this past year, the Dysart Community Center's mobile Food Pantry. Last week I spoke to their executive director and shared the idea of donating a utility wagon for them to raffle off to the food bank participants as I had noticed that many families are often without means to carry the food home and struggle. The executive director liked the idea. So I am pleased to announce that the children will be able to make a donation of one utility wagon! Lisa Lawrence, Director of Religious Education, [uucslisal@gmail.com](mailto:uucslisal@gmail.com)



### Ode to Summer

By Frozenmelon

“Summer is important, it gives you a break  
No more tests or quizzes to take  
Summer gives you time to relax and play  
I wish it would never go away.

Fly a kite, go fishing, there is lots to do  
There's many possibilities, try some too  
Going on water slides and playing till noon  
Then, eating snow cones and ice cream with spoons.

In the summer, I stay up late; the day goes by so fast  
Waking up when I want to is always a blast  
Going on vacation, to places that are so cool  
No school, no homework, it really rules!”

## 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. 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.

## The Gift of Relationship and Reading

*Juliet Gustavson*

Thinking about your volunteering options for fall through spring? If reading one-on-one with a small group of 1st and second graders for an hour once or twice a week sounds intriguing, joining our UUC-Surprise group of Surprise Elementary School Reading Buddies might be right up your alley. Your time will be an invaluable gift. The relationships...also priceless. To learn more call Juliet Gustavson at (602-527-5308) or email ([julietgus@msn.com](mailto:julietgus@msn.com)).



## Tax Free Donations to UU from IRA. 403(b), or 401(k)

*Bob Walling*

This is one time it pays to be old (over 70 ½). Want to make a tax free donation to UUC and other 501(c)3 charities? You can through an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) as long as you are older than 70 ½. Your donation can replace in whole or part your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) or be in excess of it up to \$100,000 annually.

Don't have an IRA, but have a 403(b), 401(k) or other Tax Sheltered Annuity that you are taking RMDs from? You may be able to roll the gift amount into an IRA and make the Charitable QCD gift. Confused or have questions, call or talk to Bob Walling at 623.573.5942 (Bob is a former Certified Financial Planner™ and makes all of his UUC and other charitable gifts through this strategy.)

## Sermon Titles For July 2019

**7/7 – Emrys Staton.....Humility and Love: The Powerful Lessons from Harm Reduction and Needle Exchanges**  
Hospital Chaplain Emrys Staton will explore a UU view of a growing movement among drug users and those who aim to help: harm reduction. By defying the prevailing wisdom about addiction, harm reduction advocates are tapping into the core of our common humanity to try and heal our deepest wounds.

**7/14 – Pat Lindgren ..... Optimist, Pessimist or Realist - Which Describes You Best?**  
Is the glass half full? Is the gas half empty? Is the glass too big for its contents?

**7/21 – Rev. Dr. Cathy Corbin-Mannino.....Mysterioso Pizzicato**  
*“I do believe in an everyday sort of magic-the inexplicable connectedness we sometimes experience with places, people works of art and the like; the eerie appropriateness of moments of synchronicity; the whispered voice, the hidden presence when we think we’re alone.” - Charles de Lint*

**7/28 – Juliet Gustavson ..... Called To Believe or To Be**  
What holds us together? Not a creed but a covenant to affirm and promote 7 Principles... or what we are called to be.



## Sermon Titles For August 2019

**8/4 – Amy St. Peter..... Pouring from Empty Cups**  
It’s been said we can’t pour from empty cups. How do we fill our cups? We will explore insights on this, particularly through the lens of nature and spirituality.

**8/11 – Amy St. Peter ..... Cultivating Courage**  
During tumultuous times and blurred lines, how do we define courage? How do we inspire courage in others and cultivate it within ourselves? We will delve into the catalysts for courage and the demands our spiritual places upon us to be courageous.

**8/18 – Rev. Dr. Cathy Corbin-Mannino.....Magnum Mysterium**  
*“Love is an essence that defies analysis as does life itself...It is that which IS and cannot be explained.”*  
Ernest Holmes

**8/25 – Dr. Bonnie Saunders..... African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920**  
As a historian, I have given sermons on white women who were ardent suffragists. I have recently learned about black women who were instrumental in helping all women to get the vote. This sermon will deal with several of these interesting women and what they did for the cause of women’s suffrage.

# The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

Summer in the Valley has sure blossomed with some hot days this year. This might signal some indoor, where it's cooler, reading time. And maybe some different types of reading as well to change it up a bit. This month I am reviewing three books from our Literature section. They should provide some inspiring insights and fresh contemplation topics. I hope you find yours to enjoy in one of these or another in our UU Literature 800 section.

***“Cries of the Spirit,”*** by Marilyn Sewell, Editor, number 810.80SEW. This book holds over 300 writings on women's spirituality. “The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell is an accomplished Unitarian Universalist minister (1st UU of Portland Oregon), and a respected writer, leader, activist, and speaker. The book is brimming over with the inspirational words and thoughts of some of our finest writers. It is a beautiful sourcebook of poetry and prose in praise of life and all that it entails. ‘Cries’ has contributions by Maya Angelou, Julia Alvarez, Margaret Atwood, Hildegard of Bingen, Erica Jong, Marge Piercy, Alice Walker, and many others.” A 4.3star Amazon reviewed book.

***“Great Quotations on Religious Freedom,”*** by Albert Menendez and Edd Doerr, Editors, number 808.88MEN. “This outstanding collection of memorable quotations on religious freedom, the most comprehensive ever assembled, covers many centuries of thought and a wide array of sources. On every page you will discover thoughtful, wise, and sometimes impassioned statements by all manner of men and women on a subject that has moved the consciences of generations from past to present. A special feature of this compilation is the inclusion of quotes from major religious liberty judicial decisions from 1872 to present.” A superb book.

***“Beyond Absence,”*** subtitled ‘A Treasury of Poems, Quotations and Readings on Death and Remembrance,’ by Ed Searl, Editor, number 808.81SEA. “Finding the right words at a time of loss can be frustrating. An experienced UU minister, the author has been aiding people through this difficult passage for more than a quarter of a century. Here, he has collected powerful and inspiring writings, both religious and secular, from across the ages and around the world, to help anyone struggling with life's final transition.” This is a 5star Amazon book on finding the right words, and finding peace and solace.

Have a great day with a terrific volume of Literature from your UU Library!

## 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](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



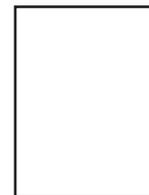
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First Class Mail

## ***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 July and August  
are on page 5.**

