

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

From The Minister's Desk

As so many have noted, a crisis often brings out the best in us. I am glad that anything brings out our best. Many of us, I suspect most of us, want to be good, to do good in the world. But as the novel coronavirus pandemic has unfolded, I have again been wondering why we seem to need a crisis to be what many of us wish we were all the time.



In an article for the Harvard Business Review, Bill Taylor wrote: "During the course of her research, [Rebecca] Solnit analyzed the work of Charles E. Fritz, a giant of modern disaster studies, a field that emerged after World War II, and she was amazed by his views. Fritz's most "radical premise," she explained, "is that everyday life is already a disaster of sorts, one from which actual disaster liberates us," since it gives each of us the chance to express the best in ourselves. The "merging of individual and societal needs" during a disaster, Fritz argued, "provides a feeling of belonging and a sense of unity rarely achieved under normal circumstances." [Bill Taylor, "How Bad Times Bring Out the Best in People", Harvard Business Review, 03/20/2020, <https://hbr.org/2020/03/how-bad-times-bring-out-the-best-in-people>.] That was a perspective I had not heard before as to why virtue comes to the fore in crises. It makes sense to me and I like the idea of being liberated to be our best.

"The word crisis derives from the Greek verb "krino," meaning "I judge and choose." This concept suggests a choice or moment in which we have to face different perspectives and opportunities

(Omnis, 1900)." ["Why Crisis Can Bring Out the Best in Us", 7/31/2018, <https://exploringyourmind.com/why-crises-can-bring-out-the-best-in-us/>.]

It seems that an actual disaster can strip away the unimportant and give us clarity. The gem within us that is our center, our true self, our soul, is too encrusted and obscured most of the time by things that only seem important until our lives are threatened in some fundamental way.

Maybe we would not call our everyday lives "a disaster of sorts already." But even the most fortunate among us have ordinary anxieties, conflicts, difficulties, dissatisfactions, and disappointments. Maybe what brings out our best is as simple as displacing ordinary troubles with extraordinary ones. Perhaps that is what we need to see clearly what is really at stake and what calls forth our sense of true belonging and unity with our fellow Earth-dwellers.

Rutger Bregman cited several examples of the best of us in crisis that strengthen my faith in us, in humanity, in our ability to survive this crisis and flourish again, as we have many times before. He wrote, "Yes, panic can happen, and some people may start hoarding. But a British social psychologist notes that "we're much more likely to see prosocial behaviors across multiple types of disasters and extreme events". That truth echoes back across the ages. According to an eyewitness account, when the Titanic went down, there was "no indication of panic or hysteria; no cries of fear, and no running to and fro."

"When the Twin Towers burned on September 11, 2001, thousands of people patiently trudged down all those flights of stairs. And people would actually [say]: 'No, no, you first,' one of the survivors reminisced later. "I couldn't believe it, that at this point people would actually say, 'No, no, please take my place.' It was uncanny."

“Millions of Chinese people are encouraging each other to stand strong, using the expression “*jiayou*” (“don’t give up”). . . . Children in Italy are writing “*andrà tutto bene*” (“everything will be all right”) on streets and walls, while countless neighbors are helping each other. . . . Last week, an Italian journalist told the Guardian about what he had witnessed with his own eyes: “After a moment of panic in the population, there is now a new solidarity. In my community the drugstores bring groceries to people’s homes, and there is a group of volunteers that visit houses of people over 65.” . . . The words “*andrà tutto bene*” – everything will be all right – were first used by a few mothers from the province of Puglia, who posted the slogan on Facebook. From there, it spread across the country, going viral almost as fast as the pandemic. . . .” [Rutger Bregman, “Disasters and crises bring out the best in us”, 3/20/2020, <https://ideas.ted.com/disasters-and-crises-bring-out-the-best-in-us/>.] I suppose we could all wish that we were at our best all the time, so that it did not take a crisis to renew our faith in humanity. But let’s be grateful that if ordinary life does not inspire consistent greatness in us, at least we can give our best at the worst of times. I’ll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,



Pill Bottles to the Rescue

Darnell Kirksey

Nearly 70 percent of Americans take at least one prescription drug. That’s a lot of empty pill bottles, most of which end up in landfills. In developing countries, many people receive their pills wrapped in paper scraps. They have no protection from moisture or the elements. Please save pill bottles and when church starts up again, a box will be in the lobby for you to deposit the bottles. They must be washed clean with labels fully removed. I will see that they are collected and shipped to Mathew:25 Ministries. Thank you!

Contact Darnell Kirksey with any questions.

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

Message from the President

Sherry Robinson, President

It is day 30 of Social Distancing and we are going to get through this. I have been outside the community where I live twice and so far nothing, yet everything, has changed. We have learned to communicate in different ways; text, phone, zoom and email; to buy groceries, order meals and purchase supplies online. We are told often to wash our hands and to wear gloves and masks when we go among others. We’ve discovered that toilet paper is a luxury, hand sanitizer is the new hand lotion and the people still working for us are mostly those who make little more than minimum wage. Maybe the most difficult thing we have had to accept is that we (UU’s) can’t be together right now.



I miss interacting with friends and members; however, I do feel blessed – I am healthy, live in a warm climate, have food, shelter and a partner to annoy as well as amuse me. I know this “being socially distant” will end for me, but when asked “Are you okay?” I think about what it must be like for those who live in these exact conditions all the time; I hope, as a result of our experience, we will remember that others, although not by choice, will be continuing to live as we are now.

Terry, Kathryn, Deb and Lisa have continued to be care takers of our faith - providing services in creative ways: Terry, by providing online worship services each week, Deb, by planning musical programs for services now and into the summer, Lisa, by supporting the RE connection with families and children; and Kathryn, by keeping the church operational and at the same time making numerous calls to check on members. Your Board even braved the ‘Zoom experience’ to hold their April meeting online to do Church Business.

In addition, Terry has begun a weekly update letter. We have created Caring Circles, and for weekly announcements, we have begun asking members to share their Social Distancing experiences - all to maintain connections.

To provide these services, we need to have a balanced cash flow. Currently we are behind in

pledging units, and without Sunday collections our income is below where we expected to be at this time. If you have not submitted your Pledge yet, we ask that you do so soon, so that we will have a better idea of our financial status when this is over. Perhaps by the next newsletter, it will be closer to being over.



RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

The end of the RE season looks a little bit different this year since we haven't, physically, been meeting together. But, children's RE has



been alive and well at <https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily/> with traditional lessons, Kid ZUUM meetings and regular correspondences since the first week of the church shutdown. Anyone is welcome to "Like" and "Follow" the UUC Surprise

Family Facebook page to find out what the kiddos, families, and I have been up to.

The last formal day of lessons will be May 17th. Also on May 17th, we will be thanking and honoring our teachers with a special teacher recognition ceremony during the morning video service and announcing this year's Summer Camp Scholarship winners. Winners will be recognized for their outstanding Sunday morning attendance and awarded an I.O.U. scholarship to be fulfilled when camps are up and running again over the next year. Beginning May 24th, we go into summer mode.

While the church is closed that means that I will be posting weekly games, stories and crafts with a 7 Principles-theme on the Facebook page. Should church open and resume services sometime during the summer, then childcare will be provided in the preschool room for children ages 2 and up, or if children wish to sit through service with their families in the sanctuary, they are welcome to do that as well.

Here's to seeing you on the downward slope of that curve!



Musings from the Loft...

Debby Bullins, Music Director

What a month this has been. Oddly enough, I have found that I am busier than I thought I would be, that tasks take longer to complete and a bit



disjointed. I think that feeling is because I have had to do things very differently than I have in the past. To accomplish what I need to do, I have broadened my skills using web portals, live streaming, revolutionary applications to help with my job. Rev. Terry and I have been

working hard to bring some music back to our services in new and challenging ways. There are copyright and licensing challenges to deal with and the fact that "social distancing" will keep live music away from service for a while longer saddens me. Know that we are here for you, working hard to bring meaningful services each week.

(I wonder if "social distancing" will be a new addition to Webster's Dictionary? Hmmm...)

Solitude, for me, was welcome at first but by now, I miss seeing people. I miss working with the choir. I miss the laughter and hugs from all of you. Mostly, I miss being with family. My husband and I have worked together in our business for over 44 years now, so being together daily is the norm. Plans to visit grandchildren and be a part of their busy lives are on hold. Weekly phone calls will have to do for now. I found a short quote by Maya Angelou that says,

"Families are held together by choice. Members are alike and unlike, yet there is comfort in the sameness and excitement in the differences. When we respect and relish both conditions, we can call ourselves Family."

Sadly, we have recently lost many musicians, Ellis Marsalis, Bucky Pizzarelli, John Prine and Bill Withers to name a few. Stand up and dance... Let's let Bill sing us out!

Lean On Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOZ-MySzAac>

Lovely Day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEeaS6fuUoA>

The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

Reading at this time of COVID19 is a challenge for faithful library patrons. Since we can not visit, browse and select a book from the UU Library shelves, I am reprinting here the list of new books added to our collection in the Fall of 2018, the year before current new books. I am providing this reminder list as you may want to download a good read from your local library system or purchase through an online service, both for your e-reader.

“Braving the Wilderness,” by Brene Brown. This #1 NY Times Best Seller discusses cultivating true belonging and the courage to stand alone.

“Emergent Strategy,” by Adrienne Maree Brown. The book covers the topic of shaping change in changing worlds.

“How Lovely the Ruins,” is a terrific edited book by Annie Chagnot. It is filled with inspirational poems and words for difficult times.

“White Fragility,” by Robin Diangelo is another NY Times Best Seller. It is a groundbreaking discussion on racism and social justice.

“Love Like Thunder,” by Jesse Reynolds. This is a brand new published collection of profound poetry and meditation for today’s lives.

“Start Where You Are,” by Meera Lee Patel. The author presents an interactive journal for self-exploration. A great new addition to our Library.

“Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy,” by Mark Morrison-Reed, is a chronicle of a recent difficult period (some say ongoing) in UU. A must read for all UUs in understanding how we come to be where we are today.

“The Heritage,” by Howard Bryant. A most relative and important book for today: Black athletes, America and patriotism. A latest social justice great.

“In Later Years,” by Bruce Marshall. This is another fresh release and discusses the topic of meaning and spirituality in aging.

“The Trials of Nina McCall,” by Scott Stern. An unbelievable buried history of the U.S. Government’s ‘American Plan’, the imprisonment of

so-called promiscuous women in the 1910s – 1950s and beyond.

“Awakening Loving Kindness,” by Pema Chodron is a latest beautiful book of inspirations and encouragements for cultivating kindness.

May your day be improved and enlightened with a good UU read!

Smart Sole

Submitted by Joan Carlson

What is the Smart Sole? It’s a shoe insert that contains a smart phone. It is water resistant and can be trimmed so you can adjust the size to fit your shoe. You will have to remove the insert that comes with the shoe and substitute the Smart Sole in its place. The Smart Sole uses GPS and 2 G cellular technology. The device for adults costs \$299.00. There are tracking devices available for children too. The tracking service for adults costs \$25-29 dollars per month depending on what payment plan you use. Paying for 3 months at a time is the cheapest.

How it works: Every 5 minutes GPS Smart Sole uses cellular connectivity to send its location updates to the GTX Corp Monitoring System. The location data is charted on a map that caregivers can access instantly through your online account or the Smart Locator app. The monitoring System sends out alerts via email and a text message with a link to the last known location.

This product is recommended for patients with dementia, veterans and athletes with traumatic brain injury, or children with autism or developmental disabilities who tend to wander away and get lost. You don’t need a prescription for this product to purchase it but you may need it, if you want to get reimbursed by your insurance company, Medicare or a government disability agency. For more information go to (<https://gpssmartsole.com>)

Also FYI: Youngtown Community Fund will loan medical equipment to people in Surprise, Peoria, Youngtown, and El Mirage. Phone number (623-977-4661) 11215 AW Nevada Avenue. Equipment is loaned out for 4 months without charge. Youngtown, AZ. 9:00- 12:00 Monday- Saturday.

Helping Hands will loan equipment to people who live in Sun City West Phone: (623-975-5449) 146 W RH Johnson Blvd. Sun City West, AZ 85375.

Helping Homeless Youth Connection During This Difficult Time, HYC Needs Us!

We received this message from Jeanette Cruz at HYC:

“During this time of uncertainty, Homeless Youth Connection is dedicated to doing our very best to continue to serve youth experiencing homelessness and we can use assistance. Our emergency pantries are nearly empty and our needs have grown significantly. We really need help from our community with in kind donations that can be ordered online and delivered – it’s a way to do something to help others in need and still keep safe.

HYC staff is working remotely and available via cell phone and email. Currently, the physical office is closed. Operations continue with some modifications. Critical needs our students are experiencing is quickly exceeding our budgeted resources. Currently, the best way to assist HYC is with a financial donation or making an in-kind donation that can be ordered online and shipped

directly to HYC. You can do so at smile.amazon.com and search for Homeless Youth Connection under “Find a List or Registry,” or dollardays.com/wishlist and search for Homeless Youth Connection.

Critical needs listed on our online shopping resources

- \$25 Gift cards for Fry’s, Safeway and Walmart
- Liquid laundry detergent
- Body Lotion
- Toothpaste
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Hand Sanitizer
- Clorox Wipes

Our UU Plan?

1. Use the online links to order needed items for direct delivery to HYC
2. Send a monetary donation to HYC at 9950 West Van Buren, Suite 114, Avondale, AZ 85323. If you choose this option, please indicate that you are a member of Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise.



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**Unitarian
Universalist Church
of Surprise**

A Progressive, Inclusive Faith Community

WELCOME



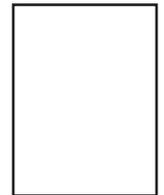
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First Class Mail

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.*

Sermon Titles For May 2020

The Theme for this month is Good/Evil

- 5/3 - Rev. Terry Sims..... Searching for Clarity about Good and Evil**
What do we mean when we say something is good, or, probably more to the point, evil? Is it only actions that should be described with those adjectives, or are people both or neither? Can we square our answer to that question with our First UU Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person? We will tackle those hard questions and more in this service.
- 5/10- Bill Chartrand, Ph.D..... Just “Semantics?”**
Language is not a neutral medium of communication. Words are not balls we toss back and forth. They are symbolic representations of our personal experience of reality. Our past experiences and cultural conditioning determine the meanings and interpretations we make as we encode and decode messages. All communication results in at least partial misunderstanding.
- 5/17 - Rev. Terry Sims..... Credit and Blame for the Way Things Are**
Who bears responsibility for the state of the world? It is tempting to personify both good and evil. But our tendency to do so may only distract us from realities about the randomness of the universe and our own responsibility.
- 5/24 – Rev. Terry Sims..... Living in a Mixed Reality**
It seems that life would be simpler and greatly improved if we could just seek out what is good and avoid what is bad. But, as most of us know, life has never been simple like that. And that means that we need a spiritual understanding of, and way to cope with, a complex life filled with both joy and suffering.
- 5/31 – Rev. Dr. Cathy Corbin Mannino Does Evil Exist?**
An age-old question that has yet to be answered. The Christian Bible says “the whole world is under the control of the evil one”, and it also says “do not resist an evil person.” That can be confusing. How might a humanist, atheist, agnostic or scientist, define evil?