

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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June 2020

40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

From The Minister's Desk

My column this month was prompted by an email message I received from a woman who was a friend of my parents. She wrote: "Financially we have been kicked in the knees. . . . This is normally our busiest season. We have been blessed with good health and [I] am so glad to hear about your family! . . . [We] wear a mask wherever we go, but that is no guarantee. I hear the virus has picked up again in places that have partially opened back up. I don't know what is happening to our country, Terry, but it worries me. I don't mind staying home, but most people do not like it. There could be rioting over lockdown. I sure hope not. They are now saying there could be a food shortage. Looks like America is going to start looking like all the underprivileged countries now. Gulp. As a Christian, I believe we could be looking at the end times. Nothing like this has ever happened before. What do you think? Stay safe, Terry."



Faced with the ongoing reality of the latest coronavirus pandemic, I think we have all felt something of the uncertainty, fear, and anxiety this woman expressed. I wanted to try to ease her concerns and my own if I could.

I was captivated by two of her comments. The first was the fear that the U.S. might now lose some of its privileges, even though other countries have lacked those privileges all along. That sentence also caused me to think how unevenly distributed the privileges in the U.S. are. The second comment that grabbed my attention was "Nothing like this has ever happened

before." I decided to do some research about past diseases that had devastating effects.

This is part of what I wrote in response to my parents' friend after doing some historical research. "I am so sorry to hear about the financial damage the coronavirus has inflicted on you! I wondered how much it would impact [your] business and you specifically. I am grateful for your health, as I am my own and our family's. We also wear masks in public, although the only times I've been outside my house in public recently are to make a weekly trip to the grocery store."

"It is a frightening time indeed. However, I think humanity has faced such dark times or worse in the past, too. Fear, anxiety, and sometimes panic, have accompanied epidemics throughout history. To name a few of the more dramatic or recent examples:

1. the Antonine Plague in the 2nd century A.D., which may have been smallpox, laid waste to the army and may have killed over 5 million people in the Roman Empire;
2. the Plague of Cyprian in the 3rd century A.D., named after St. Cyprian, a bishop of Carthage (a city in Tunisia) who described the epidemic as signaling the end of the world, which is estimated to have killed 5,000 people a day in Rome alone;
3. the Black Death, which may have wiped out as much as one-third to half the population of Europe from 1346 to 1353;
4. the American Plagues, including smallpox, brought by European explorers to the Americas in the 16th century, which wiped out as many as 90% of indigenous people by some estimations, and contributed to the collapse of the Inca and Aztec civilizations;

5. the Spanish Flu that infected an estimated 500 million people, one-third of the world's population at that time, and killed an estimated 50 million to 100 million people from 1918 to 1920;
6. Ebola;
7. Zika.”

“The fact is that we have never before been in a better situation than we are right now to understand and combat disease. I am so thankful for the scientists, healthcare workers, and those working in other essential services for all they are doing for the rest of us! So I have a large measure of hope that humanity will survive the coronavirus pandemic, too, even though, tragically, some of us as individuals have not and will not. One thing is for sure – we are all in this together in our interdependent world.”

“You are so right that my family and I are currently blessed in many ways, which I hope we will accept with humility and never-ceasing gratitude. I hope that you [] will be O.K., both with regard to your health and financially, and that we will soon see signs of sustained progress in our battle with this latest coronavirus outbreak.”

Hope is almost always powerful for me, especially when the world looks grim and the future looks darkest. I really do believe that our hope for an end to the current coronavirus pandemic is justified by historical precedent and by all the work that scientists and healthcare professionals across the planet are doing, as well as by what we ourselves can do by following what our scientists tell us to do. May we be the keepers of hope, doing all we can to save our own and others' physical, emotional, and spiritual lives in this uncertain, frightening time.

Yours in our faith

Terry



Message from the President

Sherry Robinson, President

I keep hearing about “getting back to normal,” or this is the “new normal?” I am concerned. Do we want to “Get back to normal?” Do we want “this” to be our “new normal?” Or do we want to go “forward to a different normal” - maybe even a better normal,

where we incorporate into our daily lives some of the lessons we have learned and actions we have demonstrated over the past 10 weeks. How will this experience influence how we go forward?

We are still not meeting in person, however, we are connecting and maybe in ways that will make us stronger. I was a seasonal member of UUC for several years before becoming a full time resident/member and I can attest to how much I missed connection with this community when I was gone. Because of our changing “normal” none of us will, any longer, have to miss that connection.

Think about it - we now have a virtual Sunday Services, open to all members; the BUUK Group will continue to meet virtually during the summer for the first time; the Women's Group can choose to meet virtually through the summer; and the Board can continue to conduct Church Business virtually during the summer if they choose. We could even have Virtual Coffee Hour following Sunday Services if we choose. These activities and more can now be done without being together physically.

Because connecting virtually has become a reality, we have the opportunity for staying connected to all of our members where ever they may be: our snowbirds, those who travel extensively or those who are unable to participate physically. We can now encourage members to become involved in year round activities and all because we have learned to connect. Imagine being in Washington, Minnesota or Canada and being able to participate in activities here in Surprise. We would have a “Different Normal” – We would become *not only a welcoming community but a connected one*, and location would not matter.

Terry mentioned in his letter “a silver lining” in this crisis; I believe establishing a path to ongoing connections with all members is my silver lining. It took a major crisis to make this happen. As we move carefully back into the world, can we bring our “different normal” with us and continue to connect in all ways possible with our beloved community - virtual as well as physical? May it be so.



Musings from the Loft...

Debby Bullins, Music Director

Summer is upon us, bringing new life to my neighborhood. During this time of quarantine and social distancing, I find I am enjoying my outdoor space more, my alone time more, and remembering what is truly important in my life. I have been following a new group of baby quail and bunnies in my yard, watching the hummingbirds flit from flower to flower, listening to music instead of the news and singing for myself which is something I have not done in several years. I spoke with a dear friend who shared that they are finding themselves more creative and inspired during this time. They are prepping and cooking daily with their partner instead of rushing out the door to an event or rehearsal.



My days are filled with planning music to use in worship service that will enhance the sermons, searching the net for music videos, recording music with Rev. Terry, coordinating with our musicians who are working on recording videos for service and lots and lots of Zoom meetings.

The one thing I miss is being in physical contact with people, giving and receiving hugs and smiles. I miss being with my musician friends, choir members and seeing each of you. I hope you are all well, continuing social distancing, listening to the scientists and doctors and staying home. My hope is that by doing these practices, we can return to each other healthy, happy and ready to sing like never before.

I leave you with a quarantine parody by my favorite tenor from Phoenix Chorale, J. J. Rafferty. Turn up the volume and sing along...

<https://www.facebook.com/phoenixchorale/videos/233614608080654/>

Sending virtual hugs and smiles! Debby

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

RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE



Before we move into summer programming I want to take a moment to thank the RE children, families and supporters. Your time, presence and love are what make this program thrive. Our system of rotating parent and congregational involvement

continue to keep this program running smoothly. For now, it's time to say goodbye to Dr. Seuss, TED Talks, Thich Nhat Hanh and Todd Parr. Their teachings have helped to form our faith, exemplify our principles, enrich our spirits, and bring our community together. My only regret is how our in-person classes got cut short this past March. In lieu of the shut-down, I believe we have all done the best that we can to keep educating and keep in touch. I would hate to lose that.

Although our traditional RE classes are on hiatus until at least September, I invite you all to check in frequently to <https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily/posts/> for weekly activities and updates. I want to know how families are keeping busy over the summer and encourage you to submit photos and share to uucslisal@gmail.com. There will be stories, activity ideas, puzzles as well as some fun, family-faith formation challenges. Whether in-person, or virtually, we are planning our Ingathering for September 6th.

Pill Bottle Project News

Darnell Kirksey

In an effort to keep plastic out of landfills and help medical clinics in third world countries, I've asked people to save their used pill bottles - labels removed and bottles washed. The idea was to bring them to church, deposit them in a big box, and then I would ship them to the Mathew: 25 Group. This group works with clinics where there are no containers for people to take their pills home.

Since we won't be meeting at church for awhile, I'm going to set up some collection dates for me to pick up your saved bottles in the church parking lot. Please see weekly church Announcements for these times. Also, some of the bottles are hard to clean. If it's too daunting just save the ones that are easy to clean.

The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

This month I am providing a list of great reading on the subject of Prayer from our UU Library. Between this list and last month's list, you should be able to find some great reading to download from your local library system or from a pay service for your e-reader.

"How to Pray without being Religious: finding your own spiritual path." by Janell Moon. This is a comprehensive book on sources of prayer, divided into four thoughtful parts: "Prayers of Wonder" (coming into the present, attention, gratitude), "Prayers of Possibility" (asking for help, healing, clarifying beliefs), "Prayers for Living Your Dreams" (imagination, creating a vision) and "Tipping the Balance" (prayer for others, for love of country and the world, and for the earth).

"Simply Pray: a modern spiritual practice to deepen your life." by Erik W. Wikstrom. The author is a UU minister. He offers fresh answers to the age-old question "why pray?" building from the shared prayer forms of many faiths. Also, he includes practical suggestions for composing prayers. Wikstrom identifies and defines four major types of prayer that are practiced by all the world's major religions. There are also helpful tips on how to make prayer a part of your daily routine.

"The Little Book of Wholeness and Prayer: an eight-week meditation guide" by Kimberly Beyer-Nelson. This self-guided program introduces the rich tradition of daily prayer practice. Six exercises for each week invite readers to participate actively in a daily 'dance between one's self and God' by using the senses, memory, emotion and imagination in combination with the discipline of intentional daily routine. If you are new to prayer, this is a helpful guide to get you into a nice routine.

"The Unitarian Universalist Christian: prayers for today." by Herbert F. Vetter, editor. A terrific book for UU Christians written by this eminent UU pastor, sadly, recently passed. Vetter was "a true intellectual, a student of philosophy, science and literature, a man who wrestled with the complexity of the human condition. In his early years he was a conscientious objector." serving prison time for his stance. He wrote in full understanding of the Christian way, offering comfort and hope.

May you find peace in good UU reading during this turbulent time.

Get to Know the Board

This article is another in a series introducing our 2020 board members.

Chris Baker - Trustee

My fondest memories are the ones in my early childhood in Argentina. After my father died when I was 5 years old, my mother and I went to live with my grandparents in a small mill town. It was difficult because they were Finnish, and it was hard to communicate.

After I graduated from high school., I attended Northeastern University in Boston and earned an MBA degree.

I worked for 31 years in high tech. During that time, I worked for Digital Equipment and several start-ups on the West Coast.

I worked as a Mergers and Acquisition Manager at Intuit. I had the pleasure of working with tech companies around the world helping them assimilate into their new work environments.



BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle is now meeting on Zoom and we plan to continue during the summer. The time is SECOND Tuesday evening 6:30-8:30pm (Arizona Time). We welcome you to join us whether you've finished the book or haven't yet started it. For more information about how to be added to our list, learn about upcoming books, and get on Zoom, contact Julie Wambach azwambach@icloud.com.

June 9, 2020: **"The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew: Three Women Search for Understanding"**

Three mothers representing different religions decide to meet so they can learn about one another's religion. They learn not only specifics of other religions, but how to face their own prejudices and acquire respect for others. "Pioneering, timely, deeply thoughtful, and full of hope."



You've Got To Be Carefully Taught!

Don Marine, Sun City West

The following is a draft of a "letter to the editor" I submitted to the Arizona Republic. It was not selected.

It happened in Georgia...this time. Unfortunately, it could happen anywhere in the U.S. of A.

A white father and son chased, assaulted and murdered a black jogger in a residential neighborhood.

It brings to mind the lyrics of a signature song and signature theme of the musical, "South Pacific."

*"You've got to be taught to hate and fear,
You've got to be taught from year to year,
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear,
You've got to be carefully taught."*

*"You've got to be taught to be afraid,
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
Or people whose skin is a different shade,
You've got to be carefully taught."*

*"You've got to be taught before it's too late,
Before you are 6 or 7 or 8,
To hate all the people your relatives hate,
You've got to be carefully taught,"*

Sadly, the boy from Georgia listened well to his parent and followed his lead.

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:
Bob Walling at 602-573-5942.

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/gpssmartsole/>

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.

Visit our web site for current information

www.uusurpriseaz.org

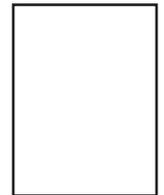
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First Class Mail

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 June 2020

6/7 - Amy St. Peter..... Drawing Faith

Altars and canvases, ministers and muses, drawing and faith share common synergies. Explore how we draw our faith and how our faith draws us in to experience beautiful connections within and among us.

6/14 - Rev. Dr. Cathy Corbin Mannino..... The Sacred Heart of an Asian Goddess

Love in the time of corona shows all of us our need to keep holding the world in our hearts and respond to this crisis with all the divine feminine power of a goddess; men included.

6/21 - Emrys Staton..... A Father is Born, and Re-born

Join in this service to celebrate both Father's Day and the summer solstice, where Emrys Staton will explore the recent birth of his son, and also the birth of a new identity as father. Looking to the Buddhist concept of re-incarnation, we will explore how our own identities and experiences are constantly being re-born during our lifetimes.

6/28 - Worship at General Assembly

Come experience the largest annual worship gathering of UU's in the comfort of our own homes! The worship service will include a collection for the Tomaquag Museum, an indigenous museum featuring an extensive collection and archive of Southern New England tribal communities.