

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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45th Anniversary 1975 - 2020

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September 2020

From The Minister's Desk

I recently overheard a conversation between my brother-in-law, John, and his son, my nephew, J.P. I have been sheltering with them and my sister, Ronda, this summer at Ronda's and John's house in Iowa City, Iowa. The conversation I overheard concerned an unexpected problem John and J.P. had run into while working on a home construction project. I have witnessed many such construction projects because John and J.P. are accomplished do-it-yourselfers; a characteristic I admire but have never possessed. Whether it is replacing a shower, putting stone on the front of the house, repairing the deck or the plumbing, or replacing the flooring in their motor home, I have never seen them go very long without working on some sort of improvement project.

The particular conversation I overheard this time was typical of many I have heard over the years. A problem they had not anticipated develops. Sometimes the problem is something they might have foreseen and prevented and sometimes not. Sometimes it is a mistake they have made either in the design or the doing of the project. How the problem arises makes no difference. Time is not wasted in assigning blame. John and J.P. analyze what is wrong and decide together how they can fix it, and they approach every problem with the attitude that they can fix it. I have often heard them say, in the midst of some difficulty they had not planned for, words to the effect that "it will all work out." And it does, one way or another, because they keep working at it until they accomplish their goal to make something better.



After overhearing their conversation this time, it occurred to me that John and J.P. have developed not just a practical way of approaching home improvement projects, it is also a practical way of approaching improvement projects for ourselves and our world.

I first heard about *tikkun olam* when I read a book by Rabbi Michael Lerner. According to Wikipedia, "*Tikkun olam* (Hebrew: תְּקוּן עוֹלָם, literally 'repair of the world') is a concept in Judaism, often interpreted as aspiration to behave and act constructively and beneficially. . . . In the modern era . . . *tikkun olam* is the idea that Jews bear responsibility not only for their own moral, spiritual, and material welfare, but also for the welfare of society at large. For many contemporary pluralistic Rabbis, the term refers to 'Jewish social justice' or 'the establishment of Godly qualities throughout the world.'"

We do not have the luxury of ever living in a perfect world. Instead, we inhabit a world that, while often beautiful and awe-inspiring, is also broken. These days, the COVID-19 pandemic and the protesting voices declaring that black lives matter are just two examples that make us keenly aware that our world is broken in all sorts of ways.

Our job as spirit-filled, compassionate people, is not to create a perfect world without problems and pain and frustration, instead, our job is only to do what we can to improve life where we are. We need not waste time in assigning blame or throwing up our hands in despair. No, our task is to recognize and analyze what the problems we see around us are and to resolve to fix them. We are called to keep alive the hope that the world can be repaired, to believe that we have what it takes to help fix it, and then to do our work to make it all work out. We are not called

to be perfectionists, bystanders, or merely worriers, as if there is nothing we can do. What this broken world cries out for, what we can be, are spiritual do-it-yourselfers. Until we can gather again safely in person, I'll see you in our virtual church.

Yours in our faith,



Message from the President

Sherry Robinson, President

Normally a message at this time of year would be to welcome our Minister back, our returning members from their summer adventures and to celebrate the beginning of a new Church Year. It is,



indeed, the beginning of a New Church Year, but one that is very different than any of us had imagined. I thought we would be celebrating a return to our beloved sanctuary and to the activities we all enjoy. I imagined we would be preparing special events to honor the service of our retiring minister,

Terry Sims, and beginning the process of separating and transitioning. – all in person. I am deeply sorry that the beginning of this Church Year will not be as we expected.

There will be activities and services and opportunities for connectedness, but they will be done differently. We will continue to see Terry, as well as each other, and to attend church services and activities electronically. We will continue the Caring Circles, as well as the Women's Group, the Men's Group and the BUUK Group among other activities. I will continue to send out my reports from the Board. Some of our members are even now planning new activities to connect lives and fill calendars until it is safe to do these things together.

This experience we thought might last three months, has now gone for 6 and may extend to 9. We have all been impacted, some more than others, and none of us are sure when it will end.

But while we wait -

The Board has begun work on planning a safe return for our members and friends to the building and our community. This will be difficult and will require your assistance and support, however,

I know you are all up to it. We are creating a "roadmap" that will provide a path for our return to the Sanctuary and the Social Hall. We will be asking for your input on how to do this in a way that will make you feel comfortable and safe. Once we have the roadmap to safely return, we will ask that we all abide by the guidelines we have established. We want our community involved in planning for a return to in-person activities, and we want them safe when we do return.

I personally want to thank all of you who have donated so generously to our community. The fact that you are thinking of others during this difficult time speaks volumes. Let's continue to support each other as we are doing, so we will come out a stronger and more unified community. Blessed Be.

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.

School Supplies Collected

Tom Reemtsma

July 18th was back to school day for UUC Surprise. A generous spirit by eight members contributed quite a bunch of goods for high school seniors returning for fall classes. The gifts were delivered to Homeless Youth Connection, our youth outreach partner in Avondale. School supplies are provided to more than 700 children working to finish high school under stressful conditions. Many graduates have gone on to higher education programs. Many thanks to our donors.



The Bruce Sorter Golden Rule Restricted Fund with the UU Church of Surprise

It is with Gratitude that we announce to our members that Dr. Bruce Sorter, a current and long-time friend of our Congregation, has signed an agreement to establish the *Bruce Sorter Golden Rule Restricted Fund* to be funded with annual gifts and a substantial bequest from his estate. We asked Bruce to give us a picture of his background and why he chose to give this very generous gift to our UU Congregation.



Dr. Bruce Sorter

I was born in Northern Ohio and grew up on a fruit farm where I worked until I was about to be drafted during the Korean War. I decided to join the Air Force and spent 14 years on active duty. I then went on to complete my education receiving a B.A. and Ph. D (in Community Development) from the University of Maryland and an M.C.P (Master in Community Planning) from Howard University.

I served in the Air Force Reserve and retired as a Lt. Colonel. While in the Air Force Reserve, I obtained a position as Director and Specialist of Educational Programs at the University of Maryland. For 20 years, I was a state specialist in Community Resource Development with the Maryland Cooperative Extension service. While there, I developed and contributed to many education programs on topics such as organizational development, citizen participation, program planning, team building, energy conservation, and crime prevention. Through my training of trainers, I facilitated the education of hundreds of thousands in the United States, Brazil and Poland. Over the years, I have received many state, national and international awards, appeared in Who's Who in Education, Who's Who in America, and Who's Who in the World. Additional awards include The Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award and The College of Education, University of Maryland, Outstanding Professional Award.

What does the GOLDEN RULE mean to me?

What it means to me is that it is the end of a long quest. I have gone to many churches over many

years. None of them seemed to meet my needs. I started my quest over 60 years ago by going to the family Methodist church. This was the church that my great-great grandfather helped build in Mayfield, Ohio. My parents decided that the Presbyterian Church was a few miles closer to home so that became the next church I attended.

Many years later after I joined the Air Force, I attended many churches but didn't find one that I really liked. So I dropped out of going to church for a while and enjoyed learning about World religions. Then one day, I read an article in Reader's digest about the Golden Rule and the golden thread that runs through all of the religions that I had learned about. I learned about the Unitarian Universalist church. I tried it and liked it.

Why do I want to give this gift to the UU Church?

There are many reasons I like the UU Church such as, the belief that Heaven is here on earth. I liked that one could come from another religion and be accepted. I liked the informality of the church. I enjoyed the acceptance of the church members. I especially liked that I could believe in God or not believe or believe God is a force or power understood through science. Thus, I realized that the Golden Rule can be a way to live.

My quest is now over, and I am able to give back in my retirement years. Bob Walling and I shared a common friend in Maryland, and he and Suzi among others, helped me understand how a fund could be established now with annual donations and a larger bequest as part of my estate. **The purpose of this fund is to promote The Golden Rule as a way to live.**

Income from the Fund will be used to financially support teaching the Golden Rule principles and practices within our UUC Congregation and Religious Education program. A committee will be formed for determining what projects should be funded to best promote The Golden Rule. Examples of how funds might be used include UU camp scholarships or prizes for member children who have best exemplified practicing the Golden Rule for the year. Another choice might be one or more sermons at least once a year on the Golden Rule to explain how Golden Rule principles relate to UU's Seven Principles.

Bob, with his investment and financial planning background at Vanguard, has the knowledge to help me and can help others at UUC who may wish to explore current and planned giving opportunities with UUC as a beneficiary.

Musings from the Loft...

Debby Bullins, Music Director



To say the least, 2020 has been an interesting year; a debilitating pandemic, an administration that is a threat to our democracy and the energizing Black Lives Matter movement working to bring justice and equality to all people. Working with our

summer speakers has been inspiring, energizing and a lot of fun as we blended their visions with some insightful music. I hope you have enjoyed the music selected for our virtual services.

I would like to tell you about one organization we have shared whose music is so inspiring. *Playing For Change* is a movement created to inspire and connect the world through music. *PFC* is dedicated to building music and art schools for children around the world and creating hope and inspiration for the future of our planet. The idea for this project came from a common belief that music has the power to break down boundaries and overcome distances between people. Born in 2002 as a shared vision between co-founders, Mark Johnson and Whitney Kroenke, *PFC* hit the streets of America with a mobile recording studio and cameras in search of inspiration and the heartbeat of the people.

In 2005, Mark Johnson was walking in Santa Monica, California, when he heard the voice of Roger Ridley singing "Stand By Me." Roger had so much soul and conviction in his voice, and Mark approached him about performing "Stand By Me" as a 'Song Around the World'. Roger agreed, and when Mark returned with recording equipment and cameras he asked Roger, "With a voice like yours, why are you singing on the streets?" Roger replied, "Man, I'm in the Joy business, I come out to be with the people." Since that day *Playing For Change* has traveled the world recording and filming musicians, creating 'Songs Around the World', building a global family who come from many different countries and cultures, yet through music, they speak the same language.

No matter who you are or where you come from, we are all united through music.

I'll let Roger Ridley sing us out... Peace and Joy,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us-TVg40ExM>

The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

The start of Fall season usually brings the fresh list of new book purchases for your UU Library. As we are not in use of the Church, we are holding off on additions until our reopening is announced. However, as always, if you know of a book you feel would make a good addition to the Library, let me know by email (balzerfreespirit@gmail.com). There are many great books out there; we should add what we can to our Church collection for all.

In the meantime, below is a list of books to keep our minds working on issues of our shared faith. They should be available for loan from your local public library system or online download to your e-reader.

"Roadside Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange and the Substance of Faith," by Timothy Beal. In Spirit says it is "Part travel narrative, part religious study, and part search for the divine madness that is faith, *Roadside Religion* takes the reader on a tour of the strange and often wondrous ways people have tried to give outward form to their inner religious experiences. Religion is most interesting--and most revealing--Beal shows us, where it's least expected."

"Poems to Live by in Uncertain Times," by Joan Murray. This is a wonderful collection of poems for spiritual practice in this time of health and political worries. "Rediscover words: There's nothing like beautiful writing to restore your sense of wonder in the world." From *Self* magazine. The author is Poet-in-Residence at the New York State Writers Institute at the University at Albany. She has written several other prize winning books.

"Finding Faith in the Face of Doubt," subtitled 'A Guide for Contemporary Seekers', by Joseph S. Willis. This is a thoughtful and thought-provoking book from an interdenominational minister. Quoted from the online review: "It reflects the author's gentleness and his commitment to truth. This book will help earnest seekers find interconnectedness and a glimpse of "Ultimate Reality." I highly recommend it." He plainly discusses real and mystical issues.

Always, and especially until we meet again, I wish you a blessed day shared with a deeply meaningful read! Namaste.

RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

Come on and Zoom!

By Newton Wayland

*Come on and Zoom, Zoom, Zooma-Zoom!
Come on and Zooma, Zooma, Zooma-Zoom!
Everybody Zoom, Zoom, Zooma-Zoom!*

*We're all plugged into one world now! So let's talk!
We wanna hear from YOU!*

Come on, give it a try!

And if you like what you see, turn off your TV and DO IT!



These lyrics were written for a children's television program that ran from 1972-1978 called ZOOM. The program was an educational show designed and performed by kids and meant to give the children who performed it, and watched it, a voice. Largely unscripted, "they presented various activities

such as games, plays, poems, recipes, jokes, songs, movies, science experiments, and informal chats on subjects such as hospitals, prejudice, etc., all suggested by viewer contributions." Wikipedia

I can remember being a frequent ZOOMER. As soon as the show started I would jump off my avocado and gold striped couch and start dancing to its action-inspiring theme song. That's why, these days, whenever I hear the word or use the zoom video conferencing program, I get transported back in time to my childhood.

Prophetic? Hardly. Relevant? Yes. Here's why: not only will classes be virtual for at least the first half of the RE season, but the program we will all be plugged into is ZOOM. Much like the T.V. show, whichever curriculum my families help me choose this year, I plan to use the same elements the show did to empower my kids and give them a voice. Basically, there will be a lot less "Blah, blah, blah..." from me and more DOING from the kids.

This year I am exploring curriculum choice, attendance strategies and best delivery format according to age with my parents before releasing program specifics. RE will be holding a Parent's Exploratory Planning Meeting by ZOOM on August 16th (post publication deadline) to discuss the above. I will then be able to plan and post program logistics for a mid-September start.

Generous Giving as a Goal

Times are uncertain – that is fact. We know, however, the value of our UUC community remains a constant. Even as you sift through worries over the virus, your income, families and personal savings, please know how vital your pledge is toward maintaining our congregation's work and service to you and to the community. We are grateful for the continued financial support from our UUC members. You are letting your pledge be a way to believe in the future. **THANK YOU**

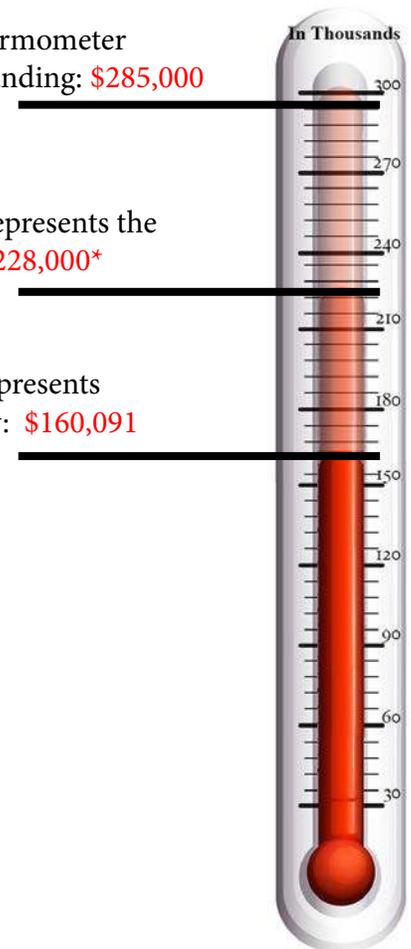
The thermometer is comparing Pledge Income to Full Funding for our Congregation and pledges are only 1 of 5 resources for our support.

**Our Pledging Goal is \$228,000 (pledges only)*

The top of the thermometer represents Full Funding: **\$285,000**

The second line represents the Pledging Goal: **\$228,000***

The lowest line represents where we are now: **\$160,091**



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

Get to Know the Board

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

Patricia Balfour - Trustee.

I was born and raised by my loving, Scottish parents (Archie & Elizabeth), in a small New England town about 45 miles from Boston. It was rural, I was free to roam, there was a good mixture of neighborhood kids, and I was happy (most of the time). My parents encouraged higher education. My sister and I got the message loud and clear. She got married, and I went on to get my nursing degree before buying a one-way ticket to Hawaii. The tropics were a culture shock. The smells, the landscape, the beautiful mixture of people and the food. I just loved it. I was there for 3 years before returning to the East Coast. At that point, I had a husband, Jay, and we eventually had two daughters. We lived in Tuckahoe, NY, and these early years were spend enjoying and raising my daughters. We then moved to Pittsburgh, PA. Life got a bit more interesting meeting the obligations of an executive's wife. It was here that I seriously joined a UU congregation and started on my journey. My 13 year marriage ended when in Pittsburgh, and I continued life there as a single parent. I eventually decided it was time to return to my roots in New England since my parents



were aging and my sister lived there. I was 45 years old and knew I seriously had to get a “real” job. This is when I went back to school to bring me up to date with all the sophisticated advancements that had been going on in medicine while I was being wife and mother. I had trepidations, but once I got rolling it was hard, but fine. I was hired at Mt Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, MA, which is one of Harvard's teaching facilities. I slowly established my capabilities over the next 20 years. When I retired, I was the Nurse Coordinator of the Hoffman Breast Center.

Both my daughters eventually went on to marry when they were about 30 years old. Much to my delight they both presented me with grandsons, four to be exact!! They are now young men, and I'm nuts about them. It doesn't look promising, but maybe I'll be a Great Grammy!!

Just before retiring, I married my second husband, Neil. We had known each other since we were teens. We always felt our relationship was sprinkled with a bit of magic. It seemed so special. We were together 4 years and sadly, Neil died within the first year of our moving to Sun City West. Thank goodness for the loving members of the UU Church in Surprise they truly saved my soul.

As I write this, I also realize how very much I miss your faces. I miss singing in the choir, and I miss being physically present. I truly miss church..... Perhaps soon.

Visit our web site for current information

www.uusurpriseaz.org



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.

Sunshine Services will loan equipment to people who live in Sun City (623-974-2561) 9980 Sante Fe Drive, Sun City.

Birthday Greetings

Would you like a few extra birthday greetings this year?

If so, send your birthdate (year optional) to

Lisa Lawrence at uucslisal@gmail.com.

She and the RE children will be sending out

birthday wishes as a safe,

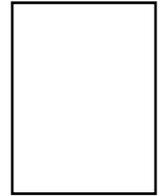
socially-distanced service project this year.

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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 September 2020

The Theme for this month is Worth and Dignity

9/6 - Pat Lindgren.....My Best Friends

It started when I was 13. I fell in love with reading. Books have been my best friends and my life saver since.

9/13 - Rev. Terry Sims..... The First Principle – You Can’t Be Serious!

Affirming and promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person, our First Principle, is not settled, not easy, not unquestionable, not inevitable. It’s the “every person” part that hangs us up. In this service we will ask ourselves whether we actually believe our First Principle and if we do, whether we can practice it toward everyone, including those we dislike the most.

9/20 - Rev. Terry Sims The Other Side of Worth and Dignity

I spend a lot of time thinking and talking about all the positive aspects of affirming and promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Today I want to consider what happens when we do not practice our First Principle. Because I believe that, too, can reinforce our commitment to it.

9/27 - Rev. Christine Dance.....Thus Do We Covenant

Unitarian Universalism is a “Covenantal Tradition.” What does that mean? What are we covenanting to do together? Why does it matter? We will talk about how important covenantal relationships are anytime, but particularly now when we’re in a pandemic.