



Report from the President:

Returning: I hope this message finds you keeping safe and staying well. With all of the turmoil surrounding us, it feels strange to talk about normal things; however, since we are not yet meeting in person, I want you to know your UU Community is staying strong and preparing for a return to a hopefully new and better normal. I spoke with Rev Sims (Terry) just this week and he reports that his plan is to return to Surprise on September 11 and be “in the Pulpit” on the 13th for his first Service of the Church Year. We had both hoped it would be in person but that is not going to happen for a while yet. Our numbers here in Arizona are not low enough to allow for a comfortable return to in person Services. We are examining other options and have had several suggestions from members on how to bring us together.

Your Board is also working on the “road map to returning”, a path for being safe and yet connected. Last week I sent a request to the Caring Circle Leaders asking them to survey their groups to gather information on the kinds of things that would make you- our members – feel comfortable returning to the building. I have received numerous suggestions and thoughts on how this can be done.

If you are not a member of a Caring Circle and have not had the opportunity to share your ideas, please feel free to send me your thoughts and ideas on remaining socially distance and yet be together. We will, of course, follow CDC guidelines as well as those provided by our National Office and we will not “rush” into returning until we feel confident we can provide a path you feel most comfortable using. Our online Sunday Services will continue until we are able to return and we are also looking to continue Services on line in order to allow options for our members..

Leaving: If you read the Announcements from Kathryn last week, you know we are losing Ken and Bonnie Saunders to Ventura ,CA. I can't say I blame them given the weather here and the weather and the ocean there. Bonnie and Ken will be sorely missed as they have been active members of our community for many years. Among other things, Ken was our “go to guy” for building issues before Lois took up the reins and he also worked the sound booth many years for Sunday Services . Bonnie has served on Committees, and the Board as well as being our Adult Education Chair and teaching many classes during her tenure here. She was also deeply involved in the League of Women Voters. I met Bonnie when I signed up for my first Great Decisions Class and will miss her insight and her intelligence as we move forward this next year. The Saunders are hoping to move by the end of October - a Zoom Party perhaps?.

We wish them a safe journey to, and good health in their new home.

A Special Thanks and New Opportunities: In the September newsletter, an article described a very special gift given to us by Dr. Bruce Sorter, a long time friend and supporter of our Congregation, Dr Sorter, with the assistance of Bob Walling, has established the Bruce Sorter Golden Rule Restricted Fund that will be funded with annual gifts and a substantial bequest from his estate. The purpose of this fund is to promote The Golden Rule as a way of life, and income from the Fund will be available to members/staff to be used for teaching Golden Rule principles and practices in our Congregation and Religious Education program.

A committee will be formed to review and determine what activities would be funded to best promote The Golden Rule. Examples for use of these funds may include but are not limited to - special sermons on the Golden Rule as it relates to our principals, Classes, programs, workshops for adults and/or children that address the Golden Rule and our Principals; UU Camp Scholarships, special awards for children who demonstrate the Golden Rule throughout the year.. We will have opportunities for new activities – so long as the activity meets the requirements set forth in the Fund. This is an awesome gift. to our congregation and one that can benefit all members. We are truly blessed to have Bruce as a friend of our congregation.

Please join me in expressing our sincere thanks to Dr. Bruce Sorter for his generosity to and caring for our UU Congregation.

Update on Board and Committee Activities:

The Board: The By-Laws Task Force is continuing to review and update our By-Laws for Board and then Congregational approval. We are hoping for this task to be completed before the end of 2020. Designing and implementing the policies and procedures to support the By-Laws will follow.

We have also been invited to partner with UUJAZ to present a candidate's Townhall on Homelessness – September 22 via ZOOM. . Tom Reemtsma, Chair of our Social Justice Committee and Patricia Balfour are working with Janine Gelsing to round up co-sponsors in this community to work with us and to gather questions to be answered by the candidates specifically on homelessness.in LD 22 – our area of Surprise and Sun City West.. Stay tuned and watch for specific details on the event.

Investment and Stewardship: Members of the Investment Committee chaired by Bob Wallings have completed their Committee Charter, which identifies tasks and responsibilities of the committee. They have now moved on to creating an Investment Policy for our Congregation that fits our needs as well as our UU Values.

Suzi Wallings is building a strong stewardship team who are already hard at work developing a strategy for the 2021 Pledge Campaign. Suzi has developed a number of documents for supporting their approach in a logical and well-defined manner. Her group is developing and gathering statistics and data that will serve us well in future planning.



By the way while we are talking about it – we still have 4 months of this year to maintain our budget. Please continue to give as you have been – we sincerely appreciate your generosity in these times. And stay tuned we may have some exciting news for you on donating through our Web site.

New Committee Opportunities: We are in need of building membership on our Committees as we begin a new Church Year. With the possibility of staying virtual for a while yet, it seems a good time to think about what we need to do as a Congregation when we are finally back together. Our procedures and our behavior will be modified and yet we don't want to lose our identity as a welcoming community. The Board can do a lot but we are at a point now where we need your energy and involvement - and I don't know a better way to do that than to ask you to join in some new or rejuvenated activities.

Adult Education: As I mentioned earlier we are losing our Adult Education Leader in October – Bonnie has served this community well and been an asset we will all miss; however, we cannot expect her to lead the Adult Ed program from Ventura. (And besides we all know she will be involved up to other ears in the UU Church .probably the first week she is there) So we need a new Chair for the Adult Education Committee and members to support the Chair and create and implement ideas and activities around Adult Education.(Faith based, religious or otherwise)

Membership: We have CO-Chairs for the Membership Committee, Judy Reynolds and Claudia Yaeger Smith, whom I know would love to have help on welcoming visitors – (possible prospective members) as well as supporting and including new members in ongoing activities.

Social Justice: Tom Reemtsma – I know – would love to have additional members to assist on the Social Justice Committee _and with all that is going on around us – there are a variety of opportunities to do something on anti- racism, white supremacy, homelessness, inequality in education, justice and employment... and on.

Affiliated Groups: We have some great Caring Circles, do we want to continue them as they are and expand for use in spreading information (like the old telephone tree) or perhaps change them into other kinds of groups. – covenant, affinity, discovery? We have our Men's group and our Women's group but that does not mean we can't start others. We could start discussion groups on politics, gardening, different types of books, travel, sport, and groups on faith or what it means to be a UU. And the nice thing is all of this can be done on Zoom.

These are just a few of the possibilities open to you. I will cover others in my next message, With our talents, our expertise and our commitment we can do most anything we set our minds to doing.. If you are interested, just contact me or the Chair of the Committee you are interested in – no expertise needed just interest, energy and enthusiasm. Let's reinvent how we do our work of bringing liberal religious teachings into our community. by promoting some part of every one of our UU Principals.

Yours in Faith, Friendship and a Sustainable Future

Sherry Robinson

9/1/2020