

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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November 2020

From The Minister's Desk

I wrote in this column about the upcoming election. It is constantly on my mind, especially now. There I emphasized that we must place our faith for democracy in its institutions rather than in populism led by any authoritarian leader. As I write this, we are only 18 interminable days away from what I feel is the most important election in my lifetime. Today my concern is not just the dangers populism and authoritarianism pose to democracy and its institutions. No, my concern today is even more frightening and immediate: our country's increasing turn to political violence to obtain what some faction or other wants. Even more worrying to me is that I myself have begun to contemplate how expedient violence is.



"On September 22, President Donald Trump celebrated violence against journalists during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania[], mocking a reporter who was injured covering this summer's racial injustice demonstrations . . . "They'd grab one guy — I'm a reporter. I'm a reporter," Trump said, imitating the scene. "They threw him aside like he was a little bag of popcorn. Honestly, when you watch the crap that we've all had to take so long, when you see that — you don't want to do that — but when you see it, it's actually a beautiful sight." [<https://www.yahoo.com/huffpost/trump-violence-reporters-beautiful-sight-035125922.html>.]

Actor Scott Baio said this week, "It bothers me that people won't speak to me because I'm a Trump guy." He went on in an even less conciliatory and

more chilling tone: "If you're not hiring me because I'm a conservative, shame on you. If there's a civil war, then don't forget who has all the guns." After Donald Trump refused to commit to a peaceful transfer of power if he loses, this was the title of an article Ledyard King wrote for USA Today on October 7, "The country's lost its mind': Polls warning of civil war, violence shows deep partisan chasm over election". "56% of registered voters said they expect to see "an increase in violence as a result of the election." [[https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/10/07/both-sides-worry-doubts-election-integrity-could-spark-violence/5880965002/.](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/10/07/both-sides-worry-doubts-election-integrity-could-spark-violence/5880965002/)]

In a September 8 article for Yahoo News, Patrick Symmes wrote thoughtfully from Portland: "Political violence is easy to start, and nearly impossible to stop. A single incident isn't enough to launch a cycle of democratic decay, although the recent killings in Kenosha (rightist shoots leftists) and Portland (leftist shoots rightist) should have everyone in America concerned. With Election Day approaching, we are facing the possibility of months of politicized street violence unprecedented in our lifetime, and an eruption of false symmetries and polarized thinking that amplify individual incidents into narratives of victimhood.

"I've seen this before. As a correspondent in South America, Africa and the Middle East for two decades, I've watched democracy wrestle with violence and often lose. In other countries, street fighting and assassinations have been prime drivers in a wave of recent authoritarian transformations. . . .

"When I drove across America in June, interviewing Michigan "boogaloo bois" and Three Percent Militia members in Idaho, and everyone

from a North Dakota farmer to a Washington state politician, I heard the same thing over and over: America has decayed so far already that violence is justified, even desirable, as a tool to remake the country. . . .

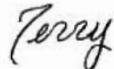
“The real danger is that majoritarian democracy depends as much on violence as it does on votes — violence either verbally implied or all too real. . . Violence creates the majority in countries [like the Philippines under Duterte] — it validates and intimidates, policing the line between disloyal and loyal, enforcing the rule of the latter. . . . More and more Americans seem to want to decide for themselves when violence is justified.” [Patrick Symmes, “What Portland and Kenosha say about the return of political violence in America,” Yahoo News, 9/8/2020, <https://news.yahoo.com/the-post-political-future-is-here-how-street-violence-from-kenosha-to-portland-threatens-american-democracy-223724628.html>.]

The most anyone can say for violence is that it can accomplish short-term goals that invariably take us away from the best humanity can be. Symmes’ article makes the point that the use of political violence threatens any democracy worth the name. But violence does more than that. It threatens human accomplishment of anything, the hope to rise above our worst instincts. It threatens civilization and always has. It threatens our souls’ hope for redemption; threatens our view that we are even worth saving.

I used to hope that we could find some way to bridge our incredibly deep political divisions and distrust. Now I find myself hoping for a more immediate goal – that citizens just will not kill each other because of those divisions and distrust.

What we need right now are people who can de-escalate conflict, who are opposed in inviolable principle to the use of political violence to achieve even what they want. We need healers, not more people to take guns to protests with the intent of using them to shoot people with whom they disagree. This is not to set myself apart as if I had never been tempted to violence. But my Unitarian Universalist faith and principles tell me that violence is never the way to anything worth having in the long run. As always, we can be the people we’ve been waiting for. I’ll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,



Message from the President

Sherry Robinson, President

Greetings: Fall is here and so are the cooler temperatures. We are slowly winning the battle with the Covid-19 here in Arizona; however not enough to return to in-person Worship Services just yet. The Board and Rev. Sims have discussed possibilities and timelines but nothing definite.



This is a time when we all need to be aware and cautious about not letting down our guard. The temperature makes it easy to want to be outside visiting, going places, and doing things with others. We can do all that, but with care, a mask and being socially distant.

I just said goodbye to my favorite niece, Barb, and her husband, Ralph. It was the first visit in two+ years since Covid - 19 landed on our doorsteps. We had a wonderful time, and it was good to be off the grid for a few days. We shared some of the sights in and around Phoenix. We visited the Grand Canyon – weather was perfect, and no crowds. We checked out the Desert Botanical Gardens and had dinner at Gertrude’s – socially distant seating and limited service but great food and weather. We went to the Heard Museum and spent 4+ hours wandering through their exhibits and artifacts. I was so proud of the way each place we visited adhered to CDC guidelines – everywhere masks were required as well as social distancing. The service was wonderful, even with limited contact, and people were friendly. Sometimes it helps to look at our circumstances through different eyes, and Barb and Ralph allowed us to do just that.

It looks now like our Annual Meeting may be in Zoom Webinar format. There is a chance, if numbers go down and members feel comfortable with in-person meetings, we may meet in-person and virtually. We will have more definitive information when December rolls around. Our learning curve continues in its upward direction. We will not have our normal dinner with the meeting, and that will be missed; however, we will catch up when Covid is under control. For now - mark your calendars - Friday, January 8th.

There is a lot of information in the President’s Report to the Board this month. Check it out on

the Website. Hopefully by the time you receive this, we will have online donation capability and a new section on Stewardship, including an online pledge form which can be filled in and returned electronically to the Church.

Things are changing, and your Board continues to move these changes in a positive direction. Jump in - be a part of the change. Until next time – Stay safe and Stay connected.

BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle meets SECOND Tuesday evening 6:30-8:30pm on Zoom. Please join us whether you've finished the book or haven't yet started it. For more information, contact Julie Wambach azwambach@icloud.com.

November 10, 2020. "*The Weight of Ink*" by Rachel Kadish.

Historical Fiction. "Set in London of the 1660s and of the early twenty-first century, "The Weight of Ink" is the interwoven tale of two women of remarkable intellect: Ester Velasquez, an emigrant from Amsterdam who is permitted to scribe for a blind rabbi, just before the plague hits the city; and Helen Watt, an ailing historian with a love of Jewish history." (Amazon) *Winner Of A National Jewish Book Award, A Usa Today Bestseller.*

December 8, 2020. "*Nomadland: surviving America in the Twenty-First Century*" by Jessica Bruder.

"Nomadland tells a revelatory tale of the dark underbelly of the American economy—one which foreshadows the precarious future that may await many more of us. At the same time, it celebrates the exceptional resilience and creativity of these Americans who have given up ordinary rootedness to survive, but have not given up hope." (Rebecca Solnit, Barnes Noble) The inspiration for the 2020 Golden Lion award-winning film starring Frances McDormand.

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

The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

Well dear readers, here we continue to be in covid times and unable to access our UU Surprise Library. I hope you have been able to develop a way to obtain your reading material through online downloads from sale web sites or free lending from your local library system.

Last month I listed eight books you may enjoy reading. I hope we may add them to our library when we reopen. Below are two more books on my wish list, and the start of my reviews on this year's 10 great new reads:

"Full Dissidence: Notes from an Uneven Playing Field," by Howard Bryant.

"Real Change: Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves and the World," by Sharon Salzberg.

As other terrific books come to my attention, I will continue to list them for you in this column. Have one you wish to recommend? Please let me know! balzerfreespirit@gmail.com Now a start on a couple of reviews:

"Gideon's Promise," subtitled 'A Public Defender Movement to Transform Criminal Justice', by Jonathan Rapping. Combining wisdom drawn from over a dozen years as a public defender and cutting-edge research in the fields of organizational and cultural psychology, the author proposes a radical cultural shift to a "fiercely client-based ethos" driven by values-based recruitment training, awakening defenders to their role in upholding an unjust status quo and a renewed pride in the essential role of moral lawyering in a democratic society. – In Spirit Books and a 5-star Amazon reviewed book. Published August 2020.

"Rectify," subtitled "The Power of Restorative Justice after Wrongful Conviction", by Lara Bazelon. The author focuses on Thomas Haynesworth, a teenager arrested for multiple rapes in Virginia, and Janet Burke, a rape victim who mistakenly ID'ed him. It took over two decades before he was exonerated. Bazelon demonstrates even when the physical shackles are left behind, invisible ones can be profoundly more difficult to unlock. A powerful argument for restorative justice in wrongful conviction cases as part of criminal justice reform and community healing. – In Spirit Books and a 4.5 Star Amazon reviewed book. Published September 2019.

I wish all our faithful readers a peaceful uplifting day with a great new book!

Musings from the Loft...

Debby Bullins, Music Director

I am anxious to see all of you in person and share what 2020 has brought to each of us. In trying to make sense of this extraordinary year, I have turned to some extraordinary people for insight and guidance.



Music and poetry are such an integral part of how I express myself and deal with world events that I began to revisit some of my favorite composers and poets this summer. One of these is the great American poet, Langston Hughes, who was the leading light in the

Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Hughes was also among the first to use jazz rhythms and dialect to depict the life of urban Black people in his work. He was known as the first jazz poet performing his work, “The Weary Blues” with a jazz combo as his accompanists. Through his poetry, novels, plays, essays, and children’s books, he promoted equality, condemned racism and injustice, and celebrated African American culture, humor, and spirituality.

In 1936, he published one of his most celebrated poems, “Let America Be America Again”, which examined the unrealized hopes and dreams of not only African Americans but other economically disadvantaged peoples, expressing a sense of hope that the American Dream would one day arrive. This piece is still relevant today. Here is the link to the entire poem:

<https://allpoetry.com/Let-America-Be-America-Again>

The other poem which still rings true today is “I Dream a World”.

<https://allpoetry.com/I-Dream-A-World>

The choir has sung this choral piece by Dr. Andre Thomas several times. In this work, the narrator dreams of a world where no racial boundaries are apparent and we all live in harmony and freedom. The reality is that racial prejudice in society, interferes with such a dream. As you read this poem, notice how the powerful words “greed”, “avarice” and “wretchedness” describe the author’s feelings about the country.

In the words of another great American leader, Rep. John Lewis: “Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

Make music (and poetry) a part of every day!

Virtual Co-Pilot Needed

Looking for some way to contribute to your Congregation? Our Minister, Rev. Sims, is looking for a “copilot,” someone with the skills and the knowledge to assist him in broadcasting our Virtual Worship Services live each Sunday. When we return to in person services, we will need someone to work with Rev. Sims broadcasting and recording Sunday Services. We need a person or a team of people to handle the technical aspects of broadcasting and recording services, including training in the use of a broadcast camera, our existing sound system, and internet connection and monitoring.

Do we have any one in our membership who is able to assist us with this task? Or does anyone in our membership know of someone who could support Rev. Sims in this work? If you are interested in helping or know someone who could - please contact Sherry Robinson at sarrobinson@msn.com or Rev. Sims at terrysimsuu@gmail.com. This is all so new to many of us. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

UU Social Justice

submitted by Tom Reemtsma



Ray Mahoney and Tom Reemtsma were out on Bell Road one day in the shade. What were they doing? UU the Vote!

Get to Know the Board

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

David King - Trustee

I was born in 1946 and grew up in eastern Nebraska. My family was Presbyterian, and as a young man I enjoyed reading and playing baseball. I was the oldest of three children and grew up close to my grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Watching civil rights protests and school integration on television news, left strong impressions that would last a lifetime.



Janet and I met at Hastings College, where I majored in Education. While there, a professor of English had a profound impact on my life which helped me find direction and purpose. We married after our sophomore year, and Janet understood that I had a burning desire to move from Nebraska to somewhere near a large, important city. We moved to Michigan in 1968, where we lived in and near Detroit for 32 years. I was a teacher and administrator in the Grosse Pointe Public School System during that time, and Janet worked as a nurse at St. Johns Hospital. Experiencing the complexities of racial unrest and urban strife of the time were experiences I remember. Our children graduated from high school there and went on to live in Arizona, DC, and California.

In 2000 we decided to retire early and move back to Nebraska where Janet had always wanted to live. We spent the next eleven years in Fremont, Nebraska. I worked for the Boys and Girls Home of Iowa and Nebraska, during most of those years, and we were both active in the Methodist Church. Golf occupied much of my free time.

In late 2011 we moved to Arizona to escape winter and live closer to family. We discovered the northwest side of Phoenix and settled in Vistancia. It was here that I found that I could revisit my love of baseball through the senior softball leagues that are available. The discovery of the UUC has aided my search for life's answers. Janet and I are enjoying our retirement in Arizona and our two dogs, Maddy and Bear, are a continuing joy in our lives. I have much to be grateful for.

RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

Getting the classes up and running this season has really been a carefully planned process. Like so many others, virtual teaching isn't anything I've had experience with before. Over the summer I spoke with other UU DRE'S to share and compare notes, find out what's the best format for teaching virtually, and most importantly, who had children attending regularly. The answer wasn't pre-recorded videos or



uploaded lessons to watch at leisure (ha ha), the answer was live-streamed classes! However, making that happen was going to take a team. So, the next step was appealing to parents to make sure their kiddos were awake and present for class, perhaps the hardest step of all!

All of that happened a month ago, and I'm happy to say that classes are going well. I have regular attendance, the classes are fun, and this experience has forced me to grow and adapt. After all, holding the children's attention over Zoom isn't easy, so I've really had to ramp-up my lessons and be creative.

My preschool class is going well. We have been busy exploring the 1st principle, talking about feelings, reading fun stories and making crafts. Zoom is still somewhat of a challenge for our youngest members, so in addition to Zoom, I found a booklist that lists children's picture books by UU principle and some additional resources to send families to use, if they wish. The older class (2nd grade and up) just finished a unit on sports and the life lessons they can teach us in relation to the 7 principles. All classes have been highly interactive, and we end every lesson with a game related to the theme. So far the kids have been quizzed on guest speakers, had a scavenger hunt, played "Would You Rather..." and a combination of 20 questions, and Mystery Bag. I know we'll head back to the classrooms eventually, but for now, this is fun.

One other event that we're going to try via Zoom is our annual holiday play. This year we bring to you "Herschel and the Hanukkah Goblins" by Eric Kimmel. Be sure to mark your calendars for Dec. 6th. More to come!

This Congregation Matters to Us!

2020 UUCS Pledges & Donations Update

submitted by Suzi Walling

Dear Members and Friends,

As we move towards the end of this year, we want to bring you up to date on the status of our 2020 Annual Stewardship Giving Campaign as of October 14, 2020.

Campaign Goal - \$198,500

Pledges.....	158,361
Donations.....	<u>31,915</u>
Total	\$190,276

Percent of Goal - 95.6%

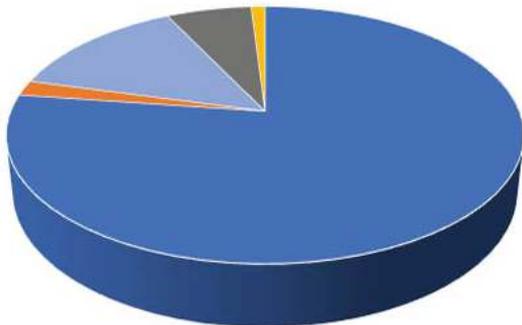
Some Clarification:

Pledges are written financial commitments made by completing a Financial Pledge Commitment Form.

Donations are financial gifts given without making a pledge commitment.

Pledging Households.....	70
Non-Pledging Households	51
Total Number of Gifts	121

Donations to Date: Proportion by Category



■ Pledged ■ Above Pledges ■ Unpledged Donations ■ Legacy Gifts ■ Cash

- Pledged donations = donations to date towards pledges for 2020
- Above Pledges = donations above pledged amount for 2020
- Unpledged = donations that were not pledged (no pledge made for 2020)
- Legacy Gifts = donations for 2020 from member who have died or from their families
- Cash = contributions to offertory when services held in person.

Our 2020 UUCS Budget: **\$298,146**

Our Generous Giving Campaign Goal: **\$198,500**

Amount of Donations Raised YTD: **\$190,276**



Ways to Give For Campaign 2020

- To give online click the following: <https://uusurpriseaz.org/get-involved/#donate>.
- To request a printed copy of the Financial Pledge Commitment Form, call Kathryn at the UUCS office at 623.875.2250 or email her at uucsaz2@gmail.com.
- If you plan to give by automatic withdrawal from your checking account, complete the ACH form located on the website or request this form from the UUCS Treasure at uucsaztreas@gmail.com.
- Please remember to update your status as a Member or Friend by checking off the correct box when you complete the pledge form.

Giving Strengthens Community

We are grateful to all of you who have provided support for this, our beloved community, at this challenging time. If you have not yet completed your pledge or made a donation this year, we urge you to do so, in whatever amount you feel comfortable giving.

Yours in Friendship and Faith,
The UUCS Stewardship Team ... Claudia, Don,
Janet, Mary Anne, Sherry, Steve, Suzi & Terry



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://gpsmartsole.com/gpsmartsole/>

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.

Have you named our church in your will?

A simple codicil added to an existing will can provide for continuance of our liberal church ideals.

For info call: Bob Walling at 602-573-5942



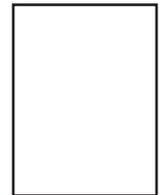
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First Class Mail

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 November 2020

The Theme for this month is Spirituality

- 11/1 - Rev. Terry Sims.....Living Intelligently with Our Emotions**
Daniel Goleman, author of the book Emotional Intelligence, says: "If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far." This sermon will explore how understanding our emotions can help us come closer to living the lives we are longing to live.
- 11/8 - Rev. Terry Sims.....The Faces of Spirituality**
What do we mean when we use the word "spirituality"? There are many definitions, of course. Maybe the reason we fail to agree on what we mean is the same reason we can never adequately tell others about whom and what we love; we know the feeling, but it wears a different face for each of us.
- 11/15 - Emrys Staton.....Riddle Me This...**
Can a joke lead to spiritual enlightenment? Many spiritual leaders and teachers rely on clever riddles, koans, and short stories to help us break out of rigid thought patterns and gain insightful breakthroughs. We will explore some of these ancient teachings and some modern ones. Until then, you can contemplate the famous Zen koan, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"
- 11/22 - Rev. Terry SimsSpirituality as Constant Thankfulness**
Holidays have a way of focusing us on something that could be with us throughout the year, but often is not. As we approach Thanksgiving, we will look at how the spiritual qualities of awareness and appreciation might stay with us not only this week, but throughout our lives.
- 11/29 - Rev. Terry SimsComing Home to the Place that Never Leaves Us**
Having an abiding sense of what fills our spirits seems to come naturally to children. But adults seem to have to make time to rediscover it. When we do, it can feel that we are returning to a place we know, that feels like the only home we ever had or will ever need.