

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

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April 2019

From The Minister's Desk

I wonder whether I would prefer to live in a universe of moral absolutes. In that fantasy world, I can imagine that always knowing what was right might not make it any easier always to do it, but at least one would know where one



stood. On the other hand, moral relativism allows for adjustments that I might welcome.

In the sermons on last month's theme of "truth", I said that I acknowledge the postmodern view that there are no absolute truths, only relative ones that are always shaded

by different perspectives. More and more, I find myself captivated by the idea that moral truths shift depending on the position one occupies in the moral dilemma.

Let me illustrate by giving a real-world, mundane example. As a shareholder/owner in my former law firm, I helped decide salaries and bonuses for our firm administrator, secretaries, and non-shareholder lawyers. I started out on the other side, the "labor" side rather than the owner side. I always felt tension between labor and management on such issues.

What fascinated me about observing that process from both sides was that whether a bonus was deemed fair or generous usually depended, not surprisingly, on what one's perspective was. My own view of what was right changed when my position changed. Employees tended to judge fairness and generosity by what they assumed was the relative

wealth of the owners and what the owners could give without really "feeling it." Owners tended to base employee bonuses not on their own net worth, what they received as owners, or what they could give away without really "feeling it," but on what they guessed would be significant in light of employees' lower income and net worth.

Generosity and fairness arise outside the financial realm, too. In personal relationships, I doubt that there is an objective reality. If I want to do something and you want to do something else, assuming neither choice is wrong of itself, there is no right or wrong, only conflicting preferences. What makes our choice right or wrong is how we treat the other person in the relationship. Ideally, each person in the relationship would decide that the right thing for them to do would be what the other wanted. I don't think I know any relationships that work that way all the time.

But it seems to me that in trying to live an ethical life, the only corrective to narrow self-interest is to try to see and understand other points of view, to put ourselves in others' positions, and hope they will do the same for us. That lodestar of trying to see other perspectives runs throughout our UU Principles: the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice equity, and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another; a free and responsible search for truth and meaning; the right of conscience. We also find that lodestar in our many and varied Sources. And it is in community that we learn about perspectives outside our own.

I'll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,

Terry

News about Homeless Youth Connection: Volunteer Opportunities in April 2019

Maggi Mahan

We have received the following message from HYC. We need some helping hands! There are two volunteer opportunities in April: AZ Gives Day and Phoenix Pride

These two events will raise awareness for the population HYC serves and the money needed to support continuous efforts for addressing teens experiencing homelessness.

First Opportunity Event: AZ Gives Day

Date: Tuesday, April 2nd

Available Shifts: 3 PM to 6 PM and 6 PM to 9 PM

Locations: Homeless Youth Connection, Main Event and Dave & Busters

AZ Gives Day is a 24-hr online giving event for charitable organizations who have qualified and HYC is happy to be apart of the action. We are needing an online presence like never before, and we have created multiple events to help aide our efforts. We know this is easily achievable with our unique partnerships and the huge support of our dedicated and passionate volunteers. We are hosting a unique celebration at two entertainment venues (Dave & Buster's Glendale and Main Event Avondale) for a chance to make a huge impact for HYC youth.

What will be your role? Event Setup; Welcoming Guest; Helping Guest with Raffle Table; Event Breakdown; Transporting items to venues.

Second Opportunity Event: Phoenix Pride Parade and Festival

Date: April 6th & 7th

Available Times: 9 AM - 1 PM

40% of Youth Experiencing Homelessness Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT). Up to 1.6 million youth experience homelessness each year in America. HYC will stand, walk, hop skip and jump with pride as we support our students who identify as LGBT, and we are hoping you will too. We are looking forward to a large crowd of HYC supporters, marching in all colors of the rainbow, as you'll stand together with HYC students and staff, full of PRIDE! We will also be needing volunteers to help staff our booth during the festival.

Interested in volunteering? Please contact Maggi Mahan at magathalee@gmail.com or 303-884-6157 for more information.

Passover Seder Saturday April 20, 5PM *Susan Lee Walling*

Join us at a Passover Seder to be held at our UUC. We will enjoy an evening of traditional Seder food and an abbreviated Seder service, co-led by Rich Manalis and Susan Lee Walling. Whether the Seder is a part of your family tradition or a new experience, we hope you will join us for a delightful evening of food, wine, song and a chance to socialize while taking part in this special spiritual event that celebrates freedom!

Because of limited space ... members and church attendees will have first "dibbs" on signing up – but, to confirm your reservation, you must sign-up AND PAY no later than March 31 (unless we fill up earlier in which case we will maintain a waiting list). Sign up begins February 24. The cost is \$20 per person, preferably paid by check. Children of members/church attendees who are 14 years old or younger may attend free of cost. Please sign up each of your children who will be attending with you at the time you sign up. There will be planned activities for the children related to Passover.

If there are still spaces available, on April 7, you will have an opportunity to sign-up and PAY for up to two guests per household, again on a first come-first serve basis. Cost for guests is \$30 per person and must be paid by check.

This year the committee will be doing the prep work and cooking, mainly in the UUC kitchen, BUT we do need volunteers to set-up the social hall, set the tables, set up the buffet, serve, clean-up and break down the room. Please sign-up to volunteer for one of these assignments (if you are physically able to do so) when you make your reservation on the sign-up sheet. The Passover Menu will be posted at the table adjacent to the sign-up sheet.

In past years, the Seder has sometimes been fully subscribed and gotten rave reviews – so we suggest you sign-up and pay early. Your payment is your confirmation of a place at the table.

For more information and to sign-up and pay, visit the Passover Seder table in the Social Hall after services on or after February 24th or contact Susan Lee Walling, 602.750.3293.

BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle meets SECOND Tuesday evening 6:30-8:30 pm in the Choir Room. Please join us whether you've finished the book or haven't yet started it. For more information, contact Julie Wambach azwambach@icloud.com. We have two months before summer and will continue in October.

April 9, 2019 - **"Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World - and Why Things are Better Than You Think"** by Hans Rosling, Anna Rosling Ronnlund and Ola Rosling.

Offers ten instincts that interfere with our getting correct answers to important questions and our being systematically just plain wrong.

"One of the most important books I've ever read - an indispensable guide to thinking clearly about the world." - Bill Gates

"Factfulness by Hans Rosling, an outstanding international public health expert, is a hopeful book about the potential for human progress when we work off facts rather than our inherent biases." - Former U.S. President Barack Obama

May 14, 2019 - **"Born on Third Base: A One Percentor Makes the Case for Tackling Inequality, Bringing Wealth Home, and Committing to the Common Good"** by Chuck Collins.

Born on Third Base is a term used for those born with a silver spoon in their mouth, but who arrogantly maintain they are self-made. In his early twenties, the author of this book gave away his inheritance and has devoted his working life to writing and teaching about inequality.

Collins asks, "Can we suspend both class wars long enough to consider a new way forward? Is it really good for anyone that most of society's wealth is pooling at the very top of the wealth ladder? Does anyone, including the one percent, really want to live in a society plagued by economic apartheid?"

October 15, 2019 - **"The Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging"** by Sebastian Junger.

Junger points to the levels of depression and loneliness among us today brought on by the difficulty in finding a group we can call our own.

"Combining history, psychology, and anthropology, **TRIBE** explores what we can learn from tribal societies about loyalty, belonging, and the eternal human quest for meaning."

Musings from the Loft!

Debby Bullins, Music Director

April is one of my favorite months. It brings new beginnings, nature in bloom and a new start for the



year. I know most attribute that to the New Year but I like April. It is a time that I like to bring things into my life that give me comfort, calmness, serenity and a feel of spiritual wholeness. I have several tools that I try to use...meditation, deep breathing, nature walks,

enjoying the night sky and of course, music. The poetry and lyric melodies in music soothe my soul as nothing else has ever done.

One of my favorite hymns is "The Oneness of Everything" by Jim Scott. His lyrics touch me deeply. "Far beyond the grasp of hands, or light to meet the eye, past the reaches of the mind. There find the key to nature's harmony in an architecture so entwined. Like the birds whose patterns grace the sky and carry all who join in love expanding. The message of peace will rise in flight taking the weight of the world upon its wings. In the oneness of everything." I am grateful for this church, this UU community in Surprise, AZ. I encourage all to reflect on what this church and its community means to each of us and give generously.

I am reminded of a song by Leonard Bernstein, "My House".

"Will you build me a house? A house that really will be mine! Then let me give you my design - A simple scheme of the house I dream of. Build my house of wood, Build my house of stone, Build my house of brick and mortar; Make the ceiling strong, Strong against the storm, Shelter when the days grow shorter; But build my house of love, and paint my house with trusting, and warm it with the warmth of your heart; Make the floor of faith, Make the walls of truth, Put a roof of peace above; Only build my house of love."

"Music can change the world because it can change people!" - Bono

The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

Welcome to our Spring reading list of three varied and excellent reads in their topics. These books are also very popular check out items here at UU Surprise. Please be sure to stop by the UU Library Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. to talk books and pick out your next read for the upcoming week!

“Attitudes of Gratitude,” subtitled ‘how to give and receive joy every day of your life’, by M.J. Ryan, number 179.9RYA. This book, published 10 years ago, remains a very popular check out item from our Library and is a 4.5 Amazon book. “Gratitude is a simple, profound practice that can change your life. Taking the time to notice and reflect upon the good things restores us to the natural place where we notice what’s right instead of wrong, opens our hearts, and creates happiness. In a series of brief, evocative essays, the author teaches us how to unlock the fullness of life through the simple joy of living from a grateful heart,” from the review.

“Moral Politics,” subtitled ‘how liberals and conservatives think’, by George Lakoff, number

172LAK. “When first published this book redefined how Americans think and talk about politics through the lens of cognitive political psychology. Now, this classic has become all the more relevant as liberals and conservatives have come to hold even more vigorously opposed views of the world with underlying assumptions of their respective worldviews at the level of basic morality. Even more so than when, Lakoff wrote, liberals and conservatives simply have very different, deeply held beliefs about what is right and wrong,” from the 4 star Amazon review.

“Listening for Our Song,” subtitled ‘collected meditations’, by Margaret Beard, editor. This book contains over 50 meditations suitable for public and private use. It includes inspiring observations about the natural world, solitary reflections, and celebrations of family and community life. This is a very popular check out item in our Library. “The meditations prompt the quiet reflection we need to counter the busy days of our lives. Ranging from solitary reflections to social commentary, from wry humor to poignant memory, these readings urge us to reconnect with our inner selves.”

Enjoy the spring warm up and have a great day shared with a great UU read!



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Unitarian
Universalist Church
of Surprise

A Progressive, Inclusive Faith Community

WELCOME



RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

What's going on in children's RE this Spring?

5th-6th Grade OWL has taken flight! March 10th



was the first class of the Our Whole Lives sexuality education class for 5th and 6th graders. Classes are Sunday mornings from 9:00-10:00 a.m. and will run through May 19th.

The new Disability Awareness Class began on March 3rd. It's designed to help children better understand what it

means to live with a disability and to encourage them to be accepting of differences. In the first two introductory classes we talked about the words disability, impairment and empathy. We spent a lot of time talking about language and the perceptions it can create. We all agreed that some of the language used to describe individuals with disabilities sounded more like name calling. This discussion was followed up by practicing "person first language" which always puts the person in front of their disability because individuals ARE more than their disability. Next month we will focus on vision and hearing disabilities.

We are still looking for guest speakers that have personal experience with disabilities to come and speak to the children on any of the above relevant topics. A template and assistance would be provided to help develop a presentation, so, please, don't let that deter you! If you would be interested in sharing your experiences, please contact me at uucslisal@gmail.com

The weekend of April 20-21st is reason to celebrate three times over. We will be honoring Passover, Easter and Earth Day! Be sure to sign up for the family Passover Seder on April 20th. It promises to be family friendly with some fun activities for the children. Then, following service on April 21st, we will have our annual Easter Egg Hunt on the grounds outside the church. During class on the 21st our theme is "Earth Day, Fun Day". Children will be embarking on a classroom adventure to the Budongo Forest of Uganda, examine their own environmental footprints and

decode a distress message from Nanuq the polar bear. They won't want to miss this!

The Camp DeBenneville Pines Scholarship Competition will draw to a close on Sunday, May 5th. That way, our top two attendance holders will be able to register for camp before the "Early-Bird" discount ends on May 15th. Winners will be awarded in a short ceremony following service on 5/5.

This contest has really helped our Sunday morning attendance, and I know that our winners are going to have a wonderfully enriching experience at camp as well. I am hoping that we will be able to offer this scholarship contest again next year. If you would like to make a donation towards this scholarship program, either now or in the future, please contact children's RE director, Lisa Lawrence or Reverend Terry Sims.

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:
Brooks Marshall at 623-362-1195.

We Are Here To Be Of Assistance!

Lay Pastoral Care Committee

If you, your family or another member of our congregation are experiencing illness, hardship, isolation or are in need of support, please contact Lenore Gaudin (623-933-0186) or the church office (623-875-2550) or speak with any of the committee members on Sunday at church. We wear a second name tag that says *Lay Pastoral Care*.

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

Rave Reviews for Lights, Camera, Auction!

Held on Saturday, March 2nd

The UU Stars - our amazing volunteers - worked their behind the scenes magic on Friday and Saturday to create a special evening for all. We have an amazing community and should all be proud of the wonderful way we work together for a common cause. And to all of our special guests - thank you for joining us for an evening of fun, entertainment, lively conversation, good food, and an opportunity to support the church. Guests arrived for the evening to walk the red carpet under the marquee to attend the premiere event and socialize with established and new celebrities. Red Carpet photos were taken by John Marshall who stepped in for the photographer who was held up at the Oscars, and we can't thank John enough for volunteering ... more information about how to purchase your photos will be shared in an email bulletin.



The evening began at 3:30 pm with guests pursuing numerous choices of fine goods to bid on during the Silent Auction, while sipping on prosecco (donated and served by Liz and Frank Swan) and enjoying appetizers (the shrimp rolls were particularly popular). For shrimp pinwheel recipe go to <https://www.pillsbury.com/recipes/festive-shrimp-pinwheels/f5ff531-08f0-493b-a460-608e0adb475c> (we used puff pastry, pam/oil on knife helps with cutting the rolls - tip courtesy of Mary Ann Balzer)

Dinners, trips, and other activities went to the highest bidders at the Live Auction from 5 to 6 pm. Dinner service began at 6 pm (Starstruck Shrimp, Celebrity Chicken, and Red Carpet Pasta). The competition for 19 tables during the Dessert Dash was intense and profitable. As dinner and dessert were finished, many finalized their purchases (others did so the following day).

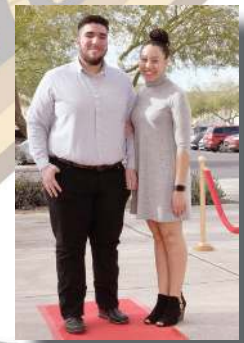
The gala was a success with over \$11,000 being raised to support the operations of the UU Church of Surprise (final numbers being calculated). A debriefing meeting was held on March 10th to review what worked well and gather suggestions for the 2020 Auction.

KEEP the DATE: Saturday, March 1st, 2020
3:30pm at UU Church of Surprise
Theme: ***"Take Me Out to the Ballpark"***

So those heading north during the summer, remember to bring your favorite baseball cap and tee-shirt back with you for the casual park vibe.

Co-chairs: Mary Beth Chrest, mbchrest@gmail.com or 503-317-1182; and Janet Jeffrey at jjeffrey@yorku.ca or 416-602-5928.





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40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

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 April 2019

The Theme for his month is "Salvation/Wholeness"

4/7 – Rev. Terry Sims Salvation as Integration

No one gets saved as someone else. Not even a better version of themselves, although we can all strive for improvement. No, if we are to be saved, it must be as our whole, fragile, broken selves, but with hope for healing.

4/14 – Rev. Terry Sims..... Salvation in This Lifetime

Recently I gave another talk about our faith to non-Unitarian Universalists. After I had told them that some of us are humanists and agnostic about many theological issues, including the possibility of an afterlife, someone asked me directly, "So what does salvation mean for Unitarian Universalists?"

4/21 – Rev. Terry Sims..... Getting Saved Together

The question of salvation is almost always considered from the standpoint of whether an individual will be saved. But in a deeply intertwined world, during Passover, on Easter, and on the eve of Earth Day, I want to know what will save all of us together.

4/28– Emrys Staton.....The Controversial Controversy

A look at the role of controversies in Unitarian Universalism. How they push, inspire, challenge and define our religious identity.