The Wisdom of Diversity

We live in a society where we have—literally at our fingertips—a vast array of knowledge and information. Inherent in this knowledge and information is great wisdom.

When we think of wisdom, though, we usually think of knowledge gained over a lifetime of experience. But what we now accept—and sometimes flaunt!—as wisdom from our life experiences, often came from what we have learned from the experiences of others.

Our wisdom is increased by our engagement with other beings. A single life permits little time for actual personal experience compared to the vast amount of vicarious experience gained through observation, communication, compassion, and empathy. Wisdom gained is one of the many ways we benefit by connecting with others.

At the root of this human connection is seeking to learn what is important to someone else, and in turn striving to share what is important to us. When we respectfully learn more about other beings and their experiences, talents, and gifts, we gain important insights into ourselves. Exposure to how others perceive the world gives us more choices for interpreting our own experiences and provides more options for addressing any given challenge or opportunity that we face. The greater the diversity in our connections, the broader and more diverse our wisdom. We evolve as beings when we are exposed to new ways of thinking, new points of view, and new ideas.

As we explore the concept of wisdom this month, may we challenge ourselves to consider the new wisdom available to us when we open up to more diversity in our experiences, our ideas, and our connections.

Blessings,

Jane Davis, Ministerial Intern

Welcome to the First U Staff, Cherri!

We are so pleased to welcome Cherri Japhe as our new Director of Finance & Operations! After an intensive 2-week overlap with Paul Browne, Cherri officially stepped into the DFO position on February 29—a definite leap day for her!

Cherri comes to us with over 40 years of experience in Real Estate, Finance, Audit, Forensic Accounting, Risk Control, and Regulatory Compliance.

She was born and raised in central California, but moved throughout the United States during her 23-year career with a multi-national energy company.

Her posts took her to Houston, Seattle, Chicago, Cleveland, and Frederick, MD. Her last post was in Durango, Colorado, where she and her husband Jon visited and fell in love with the Albuquerque area.

While not a member of the First Unitarian congregation, Cherri and Jon’s beliefs and convictions are in line with those in practice by the church, and both look forward to taking a more active role in church volunteer activities. Cherri and Jon live on Albuquerque’s west side with their four cats.

Please take a moment to stop by the office and welcome Cherri to our community in person. We’re fortunate to have found such a dynamic and experienced professional to join with our ministerial team in leading First Unitarian into its future.
March 1
Worship, 9:30 & 11:00
“Wisdom”
The Rev. Angela Herrera

The 20th century French author Andre Maurois said, “The value of the average conversation could be enormously improved by the constant use of four simple words: ‘I do not know.’” We’ll consider what wisdom is and is not, and how we become wise.

Music: Spare Parts, with Chris Paul, Jayson Capps, Vance Bass, Drew Dooley, and Susan Peck

March 8
Worship, 9:30 & 11:00
“The Third Source”
The Rev. Angela Herrera

Bring a Friend Sunday!

Having expanded its search for wisdom beyond the bounds of traditional protestant texts, Unitarian Universalism draws from many sources. You can find them listed in the first pages of our hymnals. Today we’ll consider the one described as, “Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.” What have UUs learned from (and about) drawing wisdom from the world’s religions?

If you’ve been thinking about inviting a friend to try out our church, this is the perfect Sunday! Today’s sermon will include a brief introduction to aspects of our faith, along with a message for long-time UUs and newcomers alike.

Music: Dr. Stevie DeJuan Springer

March 15
Worship, 9:30 & 11:00
“The Wisdom of the Mind and the Wisdom of the Body”
The Rev. Bob LaVallee

Wisdom is typically thought of as a mental quality, but many folks have experiences where their body was a source wisdom. Rev. Bob LaVallee will draw on his experiences as an athlete, yoga instructor, and PTSD survivor as well his chaplain training in trauma-informed care to reflect on bodily wisdom.

Music: Lots of singing with our Family Sing song-leading team

Music: Chalice Choir, with Gabriel Longuinhos

March 22
Worship, 9:30 & 11:00 am
“The Wisdom in Our History”
Jane Davis, Ministerial Intern

We have often been told the importance of gathering wisdom from history, usually as a warning to avoid repeating past mistakes. We will look at some seldom-discussed things in Unitarian Universalist history that have strongly affected our denominational development, traditions, behaviors, and dispositions.

Music: Giovanni String Quartet

March 29
Worship, 9:30 & 11:00 am
“The Wisdom of Children”
The Rev. Angela Herrera

Khalil Gibran said, “Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh, and the greatness which does not bow before children.” This intergenerational service will include playful wisdom stories and appreciation for the wisdom of our congregation’s youngest members.

Music: Lots of singing with our Family Sing song-leading team

Child Dedications

First U would love to welcome your baby or child to the congregation and the world! We’ll be performing child dedications on Sunday, March 29. If you’d like your baby or child to be dedicated, please contact Rev. Bob at blavallee@uuabq.org, or call the front office.

We Light a Candle

We grieve with Wayne Evelo, who is mourning the death of his stepfather, Dr. Ralph Reynolds.

We light a candle for Sara Maley who was hospitalized and is experiencing health challenges.

We send healing thoughts to Tony Stout, who is recovering from surgery.

We celebrate the arrival of Willa Lichtle, born to Kris Lichtle and big brother Josh on February 1.

We joyfully welcome Natalie May Kuo-Lillie, born to Emily Kuo-Lillie and Dan Lillie on February 5.

We all need help from time to time. If you’re experiencing difficulties, health issues, or transitions, you can reach out to the Caring Network of First Unitarian.

This month’s care coordinator is Kristin Satterlee. She will connect you with loving support, respecting your privacy and confidentiality.

Reach her at caring@uuabq.org.
Sunday Explorations This Month

The first three meetings in March will be covering **Esther: Farce and the Threat of Genocide**. In addition, John Edwards will continue his **Historical Sermon Series** and Ron Friederich will present Part Two of “Man’s Search for Meaning.” See the full schedule and more information on page 6.

New to First U?

Are you new here? Maybe you’re visiting for the first time, recently decided to become a member, or you’ve been coming to services for a long time but still feel new. Join the Membership Committee on **Sunday, March 15 at 10:30 and 12:00 in the Social Hall conference room** for a social time with other new folks. We’ll have snacks, conversation, and a chance to get your questions answered. Can’t make it this month? Join us next month on April 19.

Grief Groups Now Forming

After speaking with interested members and considering the realities of work schedules and night driving, the First U Care Team will offer a Grief Group on Sundays this spring. We will meet for **six sessions starting Sunday, March 22 from 9:00-10:55 am. We will not meet on Easter Sunday**. The group is offered to support anyone grieving the death of a cherished partner, family member, or friend and will provide companionship, support, information, and activities to assist with your unique grief journey. Experience tells us that you will be best served by this opportunity 6-36 months after the death. If you think a caring grief support group can be helpful to you at this time, sign up by emailing careteamuuabq@gmail.com.

Join Family Promise

First U volunteers will host up to four families experiencing homelessness during the **week of March 15 – 22**. The Social Hall will be closed after second coffee hour on March 15 and reopened for first coffee hour on March 22. It takes about 70 volunteers to have a successful and fun host week. To volunteer and join the fun, **stop by our Family Promise sign-up table on Sunday, March 8** at both coffee hours. Plan to attend one of the two volunteer orientations on Tuesday, March 10 at 6:30 pm or Wednesday, March 11 at 1:00 pm. Questions? Contact Paula Fisher at fastfins@comcast.net.

Thank God(dess) It’s Friday

Each Friday for more than twenty years the **Friday Painters** have been meeting in Memorial Hall, painting and inspiring one another. On Sunday, **March 29**, they will open an exhibit in the Social Hall with subject matter as varied as the artists who belong to the group. On opening day there will be a Mercado featuring smaller, less expensive items. Come and enjoy the creative artwork of many of your fellow members. Thirty percent of the proceeds will go to the church, so look for the member with a purple scarf or hat to help with your purchase.

Help Pets in Need

Animal Advocates will be partnering with local veterinarians and St. Martin’s HopeWorks for a **Pets of the Homeless Wellness Clinic** on **Wednesday, April 8 from 12:00-4:00 pm**. Volunteers—especially vet techs—are needed to help clients with intake forms, exams, and getting pet supplies. **We will be accepting donations of collars, leashes, harnesses, and toys** at our Snack Table on March 1 and April 5 during coffee hours in the Social Hall. To volunteer, email Sharon Hall at sharnold@aol.com.

Time to Wake Up Our Gardens!

Working with plants can be a spiritual practice, too. After all this construction, **your Landscape Team needs help this spring** renovating two planting areas around the Social Hall, re-claiming the swale outside the Sanctuary, and with our normal spring landscape cleanup. We want our campus to sparkle as much as our buildings do! Please join us **Saturday, March 14 and Saturday, April 4** for some raking,
digging, pulling, clipping, and discovering new plants sprouting. We'll start at 8:30 am and end with lunch about noon. Your Landscape committee welcomes all volunteers, including kids and adults of all ages. You can sign up during coffee hours or email Sarah Manning at manning.saraht2020@gmail.com.

Come to Ghost Ranch with Other UUs

Western UU Life Festival (WUULF) is a fun week at Ghost Ranch, NM with about 100 other UUs from Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and other western states. It is a week-long family camp June 15-21 spent enjoying nature and building lasting friendships. Enjoy workshops, hiking, a children’s and youth program, and fellowship with other UUs in this beautiful natural setting. For more information or to register, contact Pat Diem at patdiem@gmail.com or go to www.WUULF.org.

Read to Me Book Drive

For the sixth year, First Unitarian will participate in the city’s Read to Me Book Drive from March 15 to April 12. Donation boxes will be placed in the Social Hall, Church Office, and RE foyer. This Religious Education social justice activity is a great way for our church community to support the literary development of Albuquerque's children. Children receive a book of their own, which helps build literacy skills and encourages life-long reading habits. Please call Geri Knoebel if have any questions or want to help (401-5990). This year’s Read-to-Me goal for Albuquerque is to collect 30,000 new (or gently used) English and Spanish children’s books. Look for Geri Knoebel on Sundays after each service for more information. She’ll be the one wearing the “book” costume!

Board of Directors Update

The board met for its 2020 retreat and had its first meeting the other night. Fresh from hearing from members of our church at our annual congregational meeting, I have two bits of news that might be of interest.

First, we heard many church members express concern about the amount of money in the church’s campus care budget, which we use to maintain our church infrastructure. At our first meeting as the new board, we voted to accept the Endowment Committee’s recommendation to add $10,000 to care for our campus. Thank you to those who support the endowment for this much-needed gift.

Secondly, you heard at the annual congregational meeting that our former intern Dan Lillie has requested to be ordained in our church. Many expressed their enthusiasm for this idea. The board has voted to hold a special congregational meeting on March 15 at 12:15 pm to vote on one item: whether to ordain Dan. Please plan to attend this important meeting!

At our board retreat, we set the board’s goals for the year. These include:

- Our church will begin discussions on our next 5-year strategic plan this year with an anticipated congregational vote in January 2021. If you are interested in joining a board task force or have suggestions about strategic planning or our strategic plan, please email boardpres@uuabq.org to let us know. Of course there will be many conversations to come as we envision together the future of our church.
- We are working on getting the new social hall rooms named.
- We’ll be looking at the structure of the Buildings & Grounds and Landscape committees and exploring with stakeholders whether there might be a better way to organize ourselves in service to our church maintenance and grounds.
- We’re conducting a holistic checkup of our branches and untapped resources, such as restricted gifts and land we own in Rio Rancho. This checkup could flow into the strategic planning process.
- We’ll focus on diversity and inclusion and the best ways that the board can approach and support our long-standing goal of diversity for our church and being truly welcoming to all newcomers.

More on our progress throughout the year. If you have any areas where you think the board can help, please email me at boardpres@uuabq.org or attend one of our Coffees with the Board in the social hall the first Sunday of each month.

Heather Clark, President of the Congregation
Religious Education

From Our Director of Religious Education

“\"The day the child realizes that all adults are imperfect, he becomes an adolescent; the day he forgives them, he becomes an adult; the day he forgives himself, he becomes wise.\"

Alden Nowlan

Greetings!

Are you checking out the Soulful Home newsletter? If you have registered your family in our Religious Education program, you receive an email from me each month containing Soulful Home and the RE calendar. Now, I know that just because you receive it doesn’t mean you have the time to open it—I’m sometimes guilty of that, too! So, this month, I’m going to do a wise thing and share a few wisdom questions for you to have fun pondering with your family!

1. Which animals do you think of as wise, and which do you think of as foolish? Why do you think you have those ideas?

2. Do people go around saying how wise they are? If not, how do you know they’re wise?

3. What’s the most “un-wise” thing happening in our world today?

4. Is wisdom the same as knowing facts? How are they different?

5. What is a wise thing you know today that you didn’t know a year ago?

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how wise were you today? What did you do or not do that made you give yourself that score?

I hope you’ll soon have a chance to check out the rest of the family resources in Soulful Home! Look for your copy when the March RE Calendar is emailed out. You can also find it in the RE section of our website under “Learn”—“RE for Children and Youth.”

Mia Noren
Director of Religious Education, Credentialed

Make a Commitment to Your Child’s Religious Education

If you missed your chance to sign up for a teacher team, you can fulfill that 16-hour RE commitment by signing up to float. No matter the time of year, floaters are always in demand! Floaters sub for unexpected teacher absences and help run our teacher holiday activities. It really helps our programming run smoothly when you sign up ahead of time!

You can sign up to be a floater here: https://tinyurl.com/fallfloating

Upcoming Events for Children & Youth

- **Friday, March 6:** Potluck Theology 6:00-8:00 pm in Memorial Hall. Theme: Wisdom. Bring your families and join in a guided discussion in a church setting with childcare and food. Use the sign-in “Noren” and password “4670” to sign up here: https://tinyurl.com/potlucktheology. A group is forming to take over running this monthly event. If you’re interested in joining them, please contact Mia at dre@uuabq.org.

- **Sunday, March 8:** La Amikoj Lunch 12:30 pm at Sweet Tomatoes, 4901 San Mateo Blvd NE

- **Saturday, March 14:** Youth Advisor Training 10:00 am -4:00 pm in RE Room 1, lunch provided.

- **Wednesday, March 18:** Intergen Chess 5:30-7:30 pm, RE Building

- **Friday, March 20:** Intergen Game Night 6:00-8:00 pm, RE Building

- **Sunday, March 29:** All Youth Spring Break BBQ, 12:15 pm in the La Amikoj Room.

Save the Date!

- **April 3-5:** Spring Youth Conference, sponsored by First Unitarian Society in Denver.

- **Sunday, April 19:** Worship in the Wilderness with Rev. Bob LaVallee and DRE Mia Noren, 8:00 am at Pueblo Montaño Trailhead.

- **Sunday, April 26:** Coming of Age service
Youth News

If you’re like me, the cultural and societal messages you’ve received are that wisdom isn't really associated with youth. It’s often attributed to our parents or grandparents—people who have lived longer than us and have more knowledge. I’m happy to see some amazing youth becoming social justice warriors (Greta Thunberg, David Hogg, Yara Shahidi) and debunking the notion that wisdom only comes with age, SAT scores, or even IQ tests. This month we’re going to explore wisdom from the point of view of a search for truth.

I will be traveling to Boulder, CO with Mia to a Liberal Religious Educators retreat. I am excited to bring newfound knowledge and connections with other youth leaders back to our church to continue working on providing a rich and fun program for the youth of our congregation. In district news, Spring Conference is coming up April 3-5, 2020! Check your email for more information! Email me anytime at youth@uuabq.org with any questions.

Alana Rodriguez
Youth Programs Coordinator, RE Assistant

Sunday Explorations This Month

Esther: Farce and the Threat of Genocide, a Purim tale, is the subject of the first three March Sunday Explorations. Esther is one of only two books in the Hebrew Bible named for a woman and where "God" is not mentioned. By contemporary standards, much about the Esther narrative is politically incorrect. An easily manipulated King issues an empire-wide order that wives are to be subject to their husbands. The Queen is banished and a new Queen, Esther, a Jew, works to outwit the evil King Haman and save her people.

Sunday Explorations meets in the Arnold Room every Sunday at 9:30 am. Bring your coffee and join us for stimulating conversation.

Sunday Explorations Schedule

March 1
Esther: Farce and The Threat of Genocide. Esther Chapters 1-3. The main characters are introduced: the Persian King Ahasuerus; the “short-lived” first Queen Vashti; her successor, Queen Esther, an unsuspecting girl plucked from the King’s harem; and Esther’s resourceful foster father, Mordecai. Materials provided. Led by Jim Stewart.

March 8
Esther: Farce and the Threat of Genocide. Esther Chapters 4-6. Join us for a lively interactive reading of this over-the-top Purim tale. In this session the discussion will focus on the evil Haman’s plot to destroy all the Jews, Mordecai and Esther’s plan to foil the plot and the King’s surprise decision to advance Mordecai. Materials provided. Led by Jim Stewart.

March 15
Esther: Farce and the Threat of Genocide. Esther Chapters 7-10. In this last session, the scripture tells how the wicked Haman is exposed and sentenced by the King to die. Queen Esther averts Haman’s evil design against the Jews, genocide does not occur and the festival of Purim is inaugurated. Materials provided. Led by Jim Stewart.

March 22
Historical Sermon Series: “The Faith of an Unrepentant Liberal” by Rev. A. Powell Davies. “Liberalism is that which liberates. Its object is to loosen bondage, whether of the mind or of the person, whether of individuals or societies, and its motivation is the faith that human life can only reach its fullest stature through continuous liberation—through the struggle to be free.” John Edwards, facilitator.

March 29
“Man’s Search for Meaning” by Viktor Frankl, Part 2. We will continue to explore his ideas in this great book. What does he say is “The highest goal to which man can aspire?” For believers, why did God allow this to happen? Join us, even if you are not reading the book or missed the first session. Ron Friederich, facilitator.
Theology on Tap
At Theology on Tap, we explore spiritual and theological topics with our minds and hearts by reflecting on our experiences. Food and drinks are available for purchase, but you need not eat or drink to participate. We will meet **Monday, March 2 from 6:30-8:30** at Rio Bravo Brewing Company, 1912 2nd St NW. We’ll discuss the monthly theme of “Wisdom.” No RSVP is necessary; just come join the discussion!

Vernal Equinox Wisdom Circle
As spring raises its lovely head, we on the elder path will once more gather round the table to break bread together and talk. Our topic this month is *The Sage Within*, with Charlotte Carlson facilitating. During periods of personal challenge or crisis most of us ask others for advice, but don’t we also get advice from within? If we tune in, do we hear a still small voice whispering guidance? What do we do with these leadings and intuitions? You’re invited on **Saturday, March 21** to be part of the adventure as we seek the sage within in company with one another. Potluck brunch (bring your own hot drink), 9:30-11:30 am in Memorial Hall. For more information, contact Jerilyn Bowen, jbowen1@unm.edu.

Ostara: Celebrate Spring!
Join Coyote Willow CUUPS as we host Sandia Mountain Grove, our local Druid Fellowship, for Ostara on **Sunday, March 22** at 4:30 pm, in Memorial Hall. Celebrated on the Vernal Equinox, Ostara is named for the Germanic goddess, Eostre/Ostara, who was traditionally honored with festivals to celebrate fertility, renewal and re-birth. The Christian celebration of Easter evolved from Ostara.

After our ritual, we will enjoy our usual potluck. In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, please bring your own non-disposable table setting and a non-perishable donation for the Food Pantry.
Contact Raven Reed Starr at ravenreed@gmail.com for more information about CUUPS.

No March Hike
There is no hike scheduled for March. Contact Kathleen Rhoad at krhoad33@yahoo.com to be added to the hikers’ email list and hear about future hikes.
https://abquuhikers.org/author/abquuhikers/

March Reads
**Bread, Wine, and Book Club** will meet **Friday, March 13** at 7 pm. We will be discussing *A Woman of No Importance* by Sonia Purnell. Contact Martha Beyerlein (martha.beyerlein@comcast.net) for the location.

**Monday Afternoon Book Club** will meet **Monday, March 16**, at 1:30 pm at the home of Jana Muneta. The March book is *A Spark of Light* by Jodi Picoult. Please contact Jana at 505-275-7596 for directions.

**Nonfiction Book Club**: Wednesdays at 2:00 pm in the Arnold Room. Contact Bob Wood at roberttwood@gmail.com for this month’s title.

The **Reading on Racism Book Club** meets on the last Wednesday of each month. Call (792-4162) or email Becky Steele (d2steele2@gmail.com) for this month’s book title and the meeting location.

**There’s More!**
There are lots of ongoing groups at First U, and all are welcome (including newcomers)!
Visit https://tinyurl.com/uuabggroups

Go to http://uuabq.com/small-groups-and-activities/.

Contact our Director of Membership and Communications, Laira Magnusson, at LMags@uuabq.org for more!
Register Now for the District Assembly

Mark your calendars for May 1 and 2, when First U will host Unitarian Universalists from all over the Mountain Desert District for *Living from the Heart: Bringing Hope to a Changing World*. This two-day event will include music, speakers, and workshops focused on living the values of our faith in our current world. **Registration for the weekend is only $65.** Go to [www.mddua.org](http://www.mddua.org) to register and find out more.

For a full list of speakers, workshops, and events, go to: [https://tinyurl.com/MDDAssemblyAgenda](https://tinyurl.com/MDDAssemblyAgenda)