



The Messenger

FIRST UNITARIAN

Albuquerque ✧ East Mountains ✧ Socorro

August 2020



B.C. (before-Covid), my favorite part of my job was Sunday mornings. Standing on the steps of the sanctuary with my cup of coffee, greeting members of our community as they arrived for a service, talking to a visitor for the first time ... I loved all of it. Finding a way to get to know and connect with each of you gave me a surge of energy and spiritual purpose. I miss it. I miss you.

It feels like so much has changed.

I've made a little corner of our family room into my office, trying my best to keep doing my work for the church while the dog barks, the kids sing—or scream—and my husband participates in a Zoom meeting in the same room. While I sometimes feel *too* connected to the people I live with, I often feel hugely disconnected from the rest of the world.

I know I'm not alone in this sense of disconnection. I've talked to members who have been home alone since March, trying to connect with others through technology, but not really feeling like they are living their lives. **As Angela said in a sermon last month, "This is still hard."**

So, what *can* we do to feel connected to each other as the pandemic continues?

The truth is, while so much has changed, so much is the same. **Your church is still here.** Groups are meeting online, friendships are being made during virtual coffee hour, and new people join the church each month. **Connections are still happening!**

Every fall around Labor Day, we kick off our church

year with **Connections Sundays.** This huge event is like a giant fair in our courtyard, with lots of tables for church groups to share who they are and what they do, and for members of our community to find out more about how they can get involved. It's always a great party! It's also something we just can't do right now.

But, guess what? We're adapting! I'm thrilled to introduce you to **Connections Week**, a completely online celebration of all the ways we are connected, happening **Sunday, August 30—Saturday, September 5.** Each day that week, you will have the opportunity to login and hear about different groups and sign up to get involved. (*If you have been waiting to join one of our beloved Covenant Groups, this week will be your chance!*) Starting Monday, August 17, you will be able to go to our website at www.uuabq.org and click on a Connections Week icon. There you can view and register for the sessions you would like to attend.

I can't wait to see you on the sanctuary steps again. Until then, I'm grateful to know **our connections continue, even when we're physically apart!**

Laura Magnusson
Director of Membership & Communications

P.S. Make sure you read Angela's message on **page 3** to see more of how First Unitarian will connect us this fall!

An Update on Re-Opening

First Unitarian's Advisory Council (an interdisciplinary group integrating science and UU values) and the Board of Directors have agreed on a set of protocols for small group activities on campus. The protocols will be posted soon on the church website.

However, there is also agreement that with COVID-19 on the rise again in New Mexico, and with our neighboring states at crisis levels with the pandemic, now is not the time to host or encourage gatherings. The Advisory Council has been tasked with

determining when in-person small groups can responsibly resume. During this time, the office is open by appointment only and also has strict protocols in place. Many staff continue to work almost entirely remotely. Staff who work onsite are signed up for staggered shifts to minimize risk.

Meanwhile, there is lots of support available for Zoom gatherings. Need access to a Zoom account? Need a tutorial on how to lead a group on Zoom? First U can help! Contact Director of Membership Laura Magnusson at LMags@uuabq.org.

Join Us on Zoom

Worship services and other meetings continue on Zoom. Go to www.zoom.us to set up your free account, download the app to your computer or smart device, and select "Join a Meeting." When prompted enter the Meeting ID and you're in!

You can also call in without a computer or smart device to (669) 900-6833 and, when prompted, enter the meeting number.

Virtual Worship

Sundays at 11:00 am

Led by our ministers and music director, all of our Zoom worship services are intergenerational, and contain a message for all ages as well as music and a homily.

Meeting ID: 168 223 701

August 2

"Bridging"

The Rev. Bob LaVallee and Bridging Youth

A special service co-led by some of our recent high school graduates and Rev. Bob, as the youth mark their transition into adulthood.

August 9

"Ten Years at First Unitarian"

The Rev. Angela Herrera

In August 2010, Angela arrived as First Unitarian's new Assistant Minister. She'll reflect on what she has learned in a decade... and what she still wants to know.

August 16

"A Year at First U"

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

Rev. Bob started as our Associate Minister one year ago—and what a year it's been! He will reflect on all he has learned, and talk about our future together.

August 23

"The Right to Vote"

The Rev. Angela Herrera

On August 26, 1920, an amendment was added to the US constitution, stating: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Many Unitarian and Universalist women were involved in the suffrage movement. As we mark the 100th anniversary, we'll remember them, the long fight for voting rights, and the work still ahead.

August 30

"Question Box Sunday"

The Ministers

Got spiritual questions? Think it would be fun to stump the ministers? Now's your chance! For this special service you are invited to email a question ahead of time. Drawing them at random and speaking off the cuff, Angela and Bob will respond to as many questions as they can during the usual sermon time, and will consider the rest as they plan future sermons. Email your questions to specials@uuabq.org.

Virtual Vespers

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

These short (25-minute) services offer a midweek respite with readings, music, meditation, and prayer. Small-group conversations are also offered after each service for anyone who'd like to participate.

Meeting ID: 593 831 292

We Light a Candle



We hold the family and friends of Margaret Rickert in our heart as they grieve her death at the end of June.



We grieve the death of Steve Phinney, the former minister for the UU church in Rio Rancho.



We hold Barry Clark and his family in our hearts as they grieve the death of his brother, Bill.



We light a candle for Beatriz Mitchell as she receives treatment for cancer in Denver.



We light a candle for Marilyn O'Boyle's great-grandson, who is in the hospital in Alabama.



We grieve with Drew Dooley and Deb Lucero. Drew's father died this month at the age of 90.

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 at caring@uuabq.org.

Community News

Membership Milestones

Welcome to our newest church members who officially joined in June and July:

- ♥ Cynthia Applegate & David Robertson
- ♥ Katerina Azhdaji
- ♥ Francie & Steven Durand
- ♥ Cathy McCurdy
- ♥ Sonja Pulvino
- ♥ Judith Rapping
- ♥ C. Reed

Happy Membership Anniversary to the following members of our community:

One Year

- ♥ Ashley & Stephen Miller

Five Years

- ♥ Ian Carillo

Ten Years

- ♥ Frances Bargas
- ♥ Skip Bleistein & Mia Noren
- ♥ Nancy Harris & Scott Lake
- ♥ Bill Wible

Fifteen Years

- ♥ Anna Eder
- ♥ Bill Slakey
- ♥ Maria Zuschlag

Twenty Years

- ♥ Roger Melone

Thirty Years

- ♥ Peter Chestnut

Forty Years

- ♥ Jonathan Weiss

Are You Ready to Join the Church?

We will have our next virtual joining ceremony on **Sunday, August 2 at 12:15 pm**. If you have not done so yet, please fill out an “I’m Ready to Join” form on our website under “Connect—Becoming a Member.” Laura Magnusson, our Director of Membership & Communications, will confirm your attendance and send you the information for the ceremony. Contact her at LMags@uuabq.org if you have any questions about officially joining our community.

A Message from Angela Herrera



Fall is coming! And though this year is different than others, we are still excited to launch a new church year. In the next several weeks, we have so many special events to look forward to along with **Connections Week**. On the evening of Sunday, August 16, we will hold our **annual backpack blessing** ritual: this time reimagined as a drive-by! Kids and adults alike are invited to ride or drive through the church parking lot between 6:00 and 7:00 pm with a backpack or other object representing work or a sense of vocation in this time, to receive a hands-free blessing from the ministers. Kids and youth will also receive a charm for their backpack or bag, to remind them of the church community that cheers them on in their learning this year. (Bring your mask! We will all be wearing them and maintaining social distancing.) On Sunday, August 30 we’ll welcome forty (FORTY!) **new members** into our congregation with a special ceremony. Come and see who they are, and maybe make a new friend! On September 20 we’ll **celebrate friendship** with “**Bring a Friend**” Sunday. Since we’re a virtual church right now, friends can join from anywhere in the world! Meanwhile, new **zipcode groups** continue to form each month. If you’d like to help one get rolling in your area, or for more info, send me a message. And watch for a date to be announced soon when worship leaders will return to our **sanctuary**, the heartspace of our church campus, to lead zoom worship. One day we will all be back in the sanctuary together again. Until then, we will once again light our chalice there, letting the spirit prepare the way.

Whew. But that’s not all! Keep an eye out for more fall events in the weekly eBroadsheet and the September Messenger.

Living Alone Together

Many of us are waiting out the pandemic at home on our own. If you would like to regularly connect with other people living alone and provide mutual support, please email the Care Team at caring@uuabq.org to sign up for a new group now forming.



Music News from Susan

Musicians, like so many others who are used to working together in groups, are finding ways to adapt to the restrictions of the pandemic.

♪ A musician can **focus on playing or singing solo or with household members**, honing their skills in dedicated practice, or writing new music.

♪ Some groups are **meeting outside in parks, garages, or courtyards**, widely spaced, with or without masks. The science is not yet in on the safety of this.

♪ Singing together on Zoom is frustrating, due to Zoom's single mic preference and unavoidable network time lag. **Sol Singers are using Zoom for song-leading**. One person sings, and everybody else mutes their mic and sings along at home, a whole group of people singing duets.

♪ **JamKazam and Jamulus are experimental new applications that** work around the latency issues using shared servers and fast internet connections, so that multiple musicians can play or sing together in real-time. These programs require a high level of tech wizardry to work, and musicians must learn to play against the small lag.

♪ **Chalice Choir and Disparate Parts are making virtual recordings, also known as multi-track recording**. Studio musicians have done this for decades, following pioneer Les Paul. Composer Eric Whitacre invented the virtual choir in 2009, recording *Lux Aurumque* with 185 singers. His current virtual project, launched this March, is *Sing Gently*, with 17,572 choristers from 129 countries: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InULYfJHKIo>.

Whitacre says, "Yeah, so the downsides of virtual choirs are legion. A virtual choir is ... is this gorgeous, delicate, ephemeral artwork. And what's beautiful about it is that it will exist for all time. But, singing together in a room, taking that first breath together ... and then singing together. I mean, nothing beats that, and nothing ever will."

No Parking? No Problem?

The Buildings, Grounds, and Landscape team have heard a variety of comments about pre-virus parking

at the church on Sunday mornings. We're hoping to get a more complete picture of the situation. If you drive a car to the church on Sunday morning, please take a few minutes to complete the **parking survey**: <https://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/5713591/Sunday-Parking>. We've even included a joke as a modest reward for your participation! Thanks!

Board of Directors Update

The board passed the church's first set of re-opening guidelines for the congregation, covering small group meetings indoors and outdoors. But read to the end of this article, because we're not opening up yet!

Things were looking up when the COVID Advisory Council starting thinking about how to re-open facilities to small groups while keeping people safe. By the time the policy reached the board, COVID cases were on the rise again. **Leadership is hard when you don't have a working crystal ball!** The board persevered and discussed the proposals during a special meeting in early July with the medical expertise of Jonathan Eldredge and James Probasco. Joining these two on the advisory council is Richard Sonnenfeld. I can speak from working with them, others on the council, and the board members—these decisions are in smart hands! **The board authorized the council to determine when the policy should go into effect**, and it's in place so we can be ready to move quickly when the time is right.

The board is also working on the 2021 church budget. Because times are so uncertain, the board approved a stable, baseline budget request. Next month, the board will consider a possible, to-be-determined aspirational budget. **You can help us by sending your aspirational ideas of what the church could do with more money**. What would you like to see happen if we all managed to pledge just a little bit more? What could an extra \$1,000 pay for? What would an extra \$10,000 cover? Please send me your ideas and I'll share them with the board. You may email me at boardpres@uuabq.org.

Until next month!

Heather Clark, President of the Congregation



Religious Education for Children & Youth

As we move into our fifth month of virtual church, I keep thinking back to our February theme of “Resilience.” It seems like so long ago now. We didn't know how swiftly our routines were about to change! During the Time For All Ages, Mia talked about rubber bands. They come in different sizes, and are subject to different challenges, just like people. The rubber goes through a process which creates cross-links—called vulcanization—giving the rubber durability and the ability to snap back. Even though humans have our own cross links, right now we are being stretched so much that it feels like it may be harder to snap back.



A crucial part of resilience—the “snap back”—is having our family, friends, and community for support. During this time of socially distancing, it's more difficult to lean on those we consider our “vulcanizers” (a word I just made up). Despite the challenges, I have witnessed some incredible examples of resilience over the summer. Families in our community are connecting, spending more time outdoors, and creating things together. They are also spending time grieving all we have lost: time with friends, vacations, UU Kids camp and other camps, and the excitement of seeing our friends again when we return to school and RE.

In July, First U Families learned about different cultures through stories and food. As we continue to adjust to our own culture shift (from in-person to online), your RE department is learning new ways to make our time together special and fun, keeping the mindset that we can snap back stronger with the help of cross-links like our church. This month Mia Noren, DRE, is returning from her sabbatical, which she spent researching, learning, and reflecting on how we go forward this fall with continuing challenges, but exciting opportunities. Keep checking your emails, the Families Facebook page, and the Broadsheet for information, including Youth Hang-outs via Zoom. To receive our emails, **register online for Religious Education** at <http://uuabq.com/registering-for-re/religious-education-registration-form-2019-2020/>.

Alana Rodriguez
Youth Programs Coordinator, RE Assistant
youth@uuabq.org

Adult Faith Formation

Sunday Explorations

Sunday Explorations continues **every Sunday at 9:30 am** on Zoom. Bring your coffee, sign in, and join the stimulating conversation.

Meeting ID: 842 4289 2753
Password: 041625

August 2

The 8th Principle: Are We Ready? Guest facilitator Thornell Jones of Annapolis, Maryland is an African American who led the Unitarian Church of Annapolis in their adoption of the 8th Principle:

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

Read about the 8th Principle here: <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

Rusty Vaughn, co-facilitator.

August 9

John Lewis and Non-violent Resistance. The legacy of Representative John Lewis. What can we learn from his words, his actions, his moral stands?

Angela Merkert, facilitator.

August 16

Historical Sermon, “A Time to Break Silence,” the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. The sermon text will be distributed and it can be accessed on YouTube.

John Edwards, facilitator.

August 23

Our Well-Being in Hard Times. We'll share our ways of coping with this prolonged national crisis. What does our church offer us?

Ron Friederich, facilitator.

August 30

The Wisdom of Toni Morrison. Novelist, essayist, Nobel Prize winner.

Angela Merkert, facilitator.

Connect and Get Involved!

The Show Will Go On!

“What show?” you ask. The Social Justice Council (SJC) is pleased to announce that the **Annual SJC Auction is going virtual!** The Auction will go online **November 1** and run the entire month, giving everyone a chance to participate.

This is an opportunity for us to connect as a congregation, sharing our talents and skills, reducing our environmental impact as we exchange goods rather than buying retail, and most importantly, raising funds for our Social Justice work in the community where—this year—it’s needed more than ever before.

Think about what you have to give that others might value. Do you have a talent, service, skill, or simply some time to donate? Consider donating a voucher to draw a personalized portrait, write a poem, sing a song, research genealogy, shop for groceries, or do some yard work. Items are welcome, too. Think broadly; that brand-new coffee pot you bought last year and never used, that beautiful piece of jewelry that you just don’t like, a basket of homemade bread, the bicycle your child has outgrown, or the piece of furniture that just doesn’t fit in—it’s all welcome. Someone will love it.

Please contact Benita at Benita.terrell@earthlink.net to discuss how to make your donation. The Social Justice Council thanks you.

Go to School to UU the Vote

Get involved and join hundreds of others across the nation in **UU the Vote**, a non-partisan faith initiative in partnership with the UUA and state advocacy networks—along with broader justice movements—to engage and educate communities, mobilize voters, protect elections, and support key ballot initiatives. UU the Vote is now offering a free **6-session online skill training, "It Starts with Faith: Summer Organizing School,"** for individuals and congregations to learn organizational skills and how to take effective advocacy actions upholding principles of democracy and justice around the upcoming elections and beyond. Find more details about the initiative, planned skill training, and how to participate at uuthethevote.org. Also, contact Peggy Roberts, docpegasus@gmail.com with additional questions and if you may be interested in working as a congregational team in this effort.

The Latest on Family Promise

First U’s Family Promise volunteers hosted just one family July 5–12 because some of the families we have hosted in the past had moved into their new homes! Success! We donated \$200 of our budget and some supplies to Family Promise ABQ instead of having First U’s fabulous cooks taking care of only 3 people. Family Promise anticipates we will have 3–4 new families to host soon. Any new families coming into Family Promise are required to quarantine for 14 days.

Family Promise ABQ is looking to have their own site to house families by the first of the year, with the support of their national office. This is great news, and it means First U’s support will change. We will stay committed to Family Promise, as it is one of the premier programs in the city supporting families facing homelessness. As volunteers, we may be providing meals, spending time with families, or staying overnight. Maybe we’ll have a big “painting party” when they move into their new digs. We shall see!

Thank you all for your continued support for this social justice project and Family Promise of ABQ. If you wish to donate money, you can either donate directly to First Unitarian and indicate Family Promise as the recipient, or go to Family Promise of Albuquerque’s website at <https://www.familypromiseabq.org>. **Our next host week is November 1–8.** If you would like to volunteer, contact Paula Fisher at fastfins@comcast.net.

Wisdom Circle Time Capsule

As COVID rages on, on **Saturday, August 15 at 10:30 am** the elders will once more gather on Zoom to keep one another company and talk. Our mission this time is to create a time capsule for those who’ll be carrying on this world in the year 2075. What would you like to put into that time capsule? It can be a specific tangible item, but it can also be a song, a poem, a play, a movie, a work of art; it can be philosophical, ethical, spiritual, practical, comical, visionary. Reflect on why you’re picking what you’re picking so that you can tell us about that. Everyone is warmly welcome. If you feel like having something to sip and nibble on, please do. For information about the meeting, contact Jerilyn Bowen, jbowen1@unm.edu.

Groups & Activities

all are welcome

Coming to the Table

Coming to the Table (CTTT), a conversation for understanding toward dismantling racism, meets on Zoom on the third Monday of each month at 6:00 pm. To **join the August 17 meeting**, email RacialJustice@OurBestTeam.com with "CTTT-ABQ" in the subject line for the Zoom Meeting information. Learn more about Coming to the Table at www.ComingToTheTable.org.

Theology on Tap

Theology on Tap will meet on **Monday, August 3 at 6:30 pm** via Zoom. Jon Eldredge will lead a discussion on "What good can we find in the COVID-19 Pandemic that we want to carry forward?" Anyone who wants to participate can email him at jonathan.eldredge@gmail.com and put "Theology" in the subject line.

UU People of Color Group

We welcome all self-identified people of color in our congregation to join us in creating and holding a safe, confidential, and brave place for self-reflection and for the sharing of our individual experiences, to be held in community and compassion. Our meetings are currently being held via Zoom the first and third Mondays of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. For more information, please contact Ron Garcia-Herrera at rgpa7@yahoo.com.

Newbie Connections

Are you new here? We have found one of the best ways to feel truly connected to our community is to join a small discussion group. Join Nancy Bowen and Chuck Blocher for a drop-in discussion about all things UU. No need to sign up or make a long commitment. We meet once a month on the last **Tuesday at 7:00 pm, with our next meeting on August 25**. Go to <https://zoom.us/j/94692958960> and join our Zoom Meeting.

Brothers Men's Group

All male-identifying members of our community are welcome to join for conversation and support on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm. Join us on **August 11 and 25** at <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/736923181>.

Anti-Racist Book Groups Forming

Recent national events have made racism more visible. Educating ourselves about racism is timely. We will be forming new reading and discussion Zoom book **groups starting in September**. The first book will be *White Rage* by Carol Anderson. If you would like to participate in a group of 6 Zooming people, please email Pat Diem at patdiem@gmail.com.

August Reads

Bread, Wine, and Book Club will meet **Friday, August 14 at 7:00 pm** on Zoom. We will be discussing *Small Great Things* by Jodi Piccolt. Contact Martha Beyerlein (martha.beyerlein@comcast.net) for the meeting information.

Monday Afternoon Book Club will meet **Monday, August 17 at 1:30 pm** on Zoom. The August book is *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate. Please contact Joyce Etheridge at 509-308-5523 for further information.

Nonfiction Book Club meets on Zoom **Wednesdays at 2:00 pm**. For the latest book and meeting information, contact Bob Wood at 352-0212 or roberttwood@gmail.com.

The Reading on Racism Book Club has put off our discussion of "Me and White Supremacy" by Layla Saad until our September 30 meeting because it is back-ordered, due to high demand. At our **August 26 meeting** we will discuss the newly released Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change, "Widening the Circle of Concern" found at: <https://tinyurl.com/uuawidenthecircle>.

We meet via Zoom on last Wednesday of the month from 3:00-5:00 pm. Contact Becky Steele for more information at d2steele2@gmail.com.



**First Unitarian Church 3701 Carlisle Boulevard NE Albuquerque,
NM 87110**

www.uuabq.org phone (505) 884-1801

Non-Profit
Organization

**US POSTAGE PAID
Albuquerque, NM**

Permit No. 80

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

– DATED MATERIAL –

What's the Latest?

Have you moved, changed your name, disconnected your landline, or switched email addresses? Let us know! Email our Church Administrator, Jess Bess, at admin@uuabq.org with the new information. Keeping in touch is more important than ever!

Still Reading?

If you would like to stop receiving the mailed Messenger or switch to our emailed version, email publications@uuabq.org and let us know.