



The Messenger

FIRST UNITARIAN

Albuquerque ✧ East Mountains ✧ Socorro

September 2020

September's Theological Theme Is Renewal.



I've been noticing how time has utterly changed for me. Staying home, the days melt into one another. I gaze at screens, edit virtual choir anthems, tend my yard, walk in the morning air. I muse on lines from Lynn Ungar's poem "Pandemic:" **"What if you**

thought of it ... as the most sacred of times?... Center down. And when your body has become still, reach out with your heart." I am learning new ways to be in this strange new world. Though the process is messy, this renewal is valuable. I am grateful for "connection, not perfection," for the slower pace of things, for more focused attention on my immediate surroundings.

As always, music offers up many metaphors for life. In these still times, I am drawn to simpler chants and hymns in which heartbeat pulse and waves of breath draw me deeper instead of forward. Here's a beautiful song that has touched me deeply, written for these times by a young singer who records under the name Humbird, written in the style of an old-timey hymn:

*On the day we are together again
On the day we are together again
I will pull you in close like a hoop with no end
On the day we are together again*
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSA4vF2qc3Q>)

Susan Peck, Director of Music

Are you longing to make music with other people, but wary of the technology? All of our music ensembles—Chalice Choir, Sol Singers, Disparate Parts—are finding ways to sing on Zoom (not perfect, admittedly), record virtual multi-tracked songs, share music in our monthly Open Mic Zoom sessions. As we step into fall, we'll be exploring additional ways of making music together. **Read more on Page 7.**

Each One Reach One!

Are there folks from church you haven't seen lately? As the season turns toward fall and the church year begins, it's time to gather up any members of our community who may have fallen away—due to summertime doldrums, pandemic stress, unfamiliarity with Zoom, or anything else. Help bring our whole congregation together again by reaching out to someone (or several someones!) you've been missing. Maybe they just need an invitation! If they need more, the Care Team and Tech Team are standing by. Contact us at caring@uuabq.org and let us know how we can help.

Our Each One Reach One campaign will begin on September 6 and culminate on Bring-a-Friend Sunday, September 20. Get an early start so you can raise your hand when we check in at service on September 13!

Help our community be whole, no matter how long we cannot physically be together. Each One Reach One this September!

-Kristin Satterlee for the Caring Network

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." **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

September 6

"Renewal"

The Rev. Angela Herrera

As we head into an uncertain autumn in the time of COVID, are you wondering where summer went? Even if with fewer events to attend due to social distancing, are you feeling inexplicably tired? A sermon about the hidden demands of this time, the importance of rest and renewal, and practical strategies for getting some in the midst of everything else. Feel free to wear your pajamas to this one.

September 13

"RenUUing!"

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

In the time of pandemic, gratitude practice is more important than ever. Let's celebrate this vibrant, life-affirming, life-changing congregation!

September 20

"Friendship"

The Rev. Angela Herrera

It's bring a friend to church day! We'll celebrate our connections within and beyond church, dispel myths about "ideal" friendship, and reflect on the peculiar (but common) experience of feeling lonely in the company of others.

September 27

"Racial Justice Is Faith Formation"

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

First U has a strong racial justice practice, but given what we've recently learned about the state of racism in America, how do we more deeply and authentically ingrain anti-racism in everything that we do together?

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 mourn with Marilyn O'Boyle and her entire family as they grieve the death of her newborn great-grandson, Adriel.

We mourn the death of Robert Mikkelsen, an early member of the church.

We grieve the death of church member Jim Scheibner.

We hold Nina Stephenson in our hearts as she grieves the death of

her cousin.

We rejoice in the news that, following surgery, Christine Hall has been declared cancer-free.

We light a candle for Sally Jacobsen, who is at home under hospice care. She would welcome cards and letters from her First U friends. Contact the church office for her address.

We hold Erika Johnson-Jimenez in our hearts as she grieves the unexpected death of her cousin.

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.

Support for Those in Grief

Grief is often a long and turbulent roller-coaster ride when we lose a beloved child, life partner, sibling, parent, or dear friend to death. While our culture does not acknowledge the time it takes to rebuild our lives, our congregation knows that you need time and support to build a new identity, see beauty, and experience joy again. Let us help. **The Care Team will offer a six-session weekly Grief Support Group this fall beginning on Tuesday, October 13 at 6:30 pm on Zoom.** We encourage you to consider this support group if the death of your beloved occurred six months ago or longer, and you think a supportive environment of readings, poetry, activities, and conversation will help you. If you would like to speak to a group facilitator, email us at caring@uuabq.org. If you are ready to register for the Grief Support Group, you may complete the registration form at:

<https://tinyurl.com/UUABQgriefgroup>

Community News

Membership Milestones

Welcome to our newest church members who officially joined in August:

- ♥ Arianna Coriz
- ♥ Katie Fellure
- ♥ Sharon Littrell-Marsh
- ♥ Debbie Wolfe

Happy Membership Anniversary to the following members of our community:

One Year

- ♥ Susanna Drury
- ♥ Jan Jurgens & Nic Provenzo
- ♥ Jennifer Lee
- ♥ Andrew & Elise Rodriguez
- ♥ Laura Tabor

Five Years

- ♥ Elya Arrasmith
- ♥ Sergio Ciani-Chapman

Ten Years

- ♥ Judy Bentley

Save the Date for Dan!

On **Sunday, October 4 at 4:00 pm MDT**, the congregation of First Unitarian will have the special joy of **ordaining our former ministerial intern, Dan Lillie**. Dan served as ministerial intern from 2016-2017 and Ministerial Resident from 2017-2019. In August, Dan, his wife Emily, and their daughter Natalie moved to Washington State, where Dan serves as minister for the UU Congregation of Woodinville. The congregation of Woodinville will ordain him together with First Unitarian. Go to <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/98865870761> to attend.

Free Estate Planning Class

Estate planning can help you preserve the assets you've spent a lifetime building, protect your loved ones, ensure that your assets are distributed appropriately, and manage taxes. Join First U members Vickie Wilcox, Estate Attorney; Kris Kennedy, Financial Advisor; and Pat Diem, Chair of Keepers of the Flame for a one-hour lunchtime class on Tuesday, September 15 at 12:00 pm. Sponsored by the Radical Generosity team. Go here to register: <https://tinyurl.com/firstestateplanning>

2021 Radical Generosity Pledge Drive

The 2021 pledge drive will be in a **new easy-to-use online format** this year! Stay tuned for more details later in September. If you prefer a paper pledge card be mailed to you instead, please notify us at publications@uuabq.org.



Join a 2021 Giving Circle!



As we prepare for the 2021 pledge drive, **we invite you to consider becoming a member of a Giving Circle**. Pledge levels are commitments that are fulfilled within a calendar year. If you cannot contribute at a Giving Circle Level at this time, your gift is no less important. Every single pledge matters. **Our community is stronger because of each individual that makes up the whole.**

Giving Circle Levels

- Transformers: \$10,000 or more annually
- Visionaries: \$7500-9,999 annually
- Beacons: \$5,000-7,499 annually
- Sustainers: \$3,000-4,999 annually

As a member of the Giving Circles, you will be invited to events that celebrate your commitment to the work of this community. We welcome your membership and look forward to your participation. If you would like more information about becoming a member of the Giving Circles, please contact Angela Herrera, Senior Minister, at aherrera@uuabq.org or Kathryn Probasco, Chair of the Radical Generosity Committee, at klprobasco@gmail.com.

An Update on Immigrant Justice

The Immigrant Justice Task Force, created almost four years ago at the direction of our church board, is in the process of reformulating our group and mission. We are rethinking how to respond to the increased threats to immigrants and help support their needs.

After considering and deciding not to offer physical sanctuary at our church, members of the task force

(cont'd)

Community News

provided support to other local churches that provided sanctuary for two years to two immigrants at risk of deportation. Members have continued to advocate for and offer support for immigrants and asylum seekers in our community.

As we go forward some of the possible actions we are exploring include:

- Supporting asylum seekers in detention.
- Partnering with Immigrant Justice groups in Albuquerque.
- Providing support to ABQ Faithworks.
- Encouraging local government action and legislation that benefit immigrants.
- Supporting immigrants in our neighborhood.

We welcome discussion among members of our congregation. Join us for our Connections Week session on **Friday, September 4 at 7:30 pm** by registering on the website at:

www.uuabq.com/welcome-to-connections-week

Join Our Online Auction!

The Social Justice Council uses the proceeds of its annual auction to fund requests by social justice groups within the church and the larger local community.

We also support local nonprofits by giving them the coins placed in our Sunday service offering baskets. Now, in our new normal, the SJC has pivoted to meet the times and is donating to financial needs related to COVID-19.

You can help with this year's online auction, happening the entire month of November. You each have something to give, whether it's time, talent, knowledge, or something tangible: grocery shopping for a month; a pencil drawing of the bidder's pet; delivery of a homemade dish, dinner, or dessert to someone's home; a virtual talk on a unique experience or teaching a class over Zoom; hosting a virtual coffee klatch or a happy hour poetry slam. The pandemic is presenting us with opportunities to be creative. Tell us what you're going to do! Contact Benita.terrell@earthlink.net.



Board of Directors Update

This month, the board took a look at the budget for the first half of 2020. With the pandemic, we weren't sure what to expect—and I'll share that it has caused me some anxiety in recent months—but I won't keep you in suspense. The news was good. While we lost some income, like rental income, for obvious reasons, there were also fewer expenses in other areas. At the same time, pledges, our main source of income, are coming in strong. And, thanks to the congregational vote earlier this year, we have federal assistance to help us as well. In short, we're in good shape financially. What a relief!

Last month, the board requested the Radical Generosity Committee build a pledge campaign around a baseline budget, which seemed appropriate in these uncertain times. Then we thought about what our church could accomplish, if we had a little bit more. We discussed a number of priorities, including small raises for church staff, even though the federal annual cost-of-living increase is expected to be zero percent. (We're not sure we quite trust that unprecedented zero-percent growth.) Did you know our staff is working on computers that are 10 years old? Upgrading computers and the church server was another priority on our wish list. We also thought of a custodial contingency fund, since our custodial staff is on the front lines of the pandemic and has extra duty on cleanings to keep us safe. Other items included much more money for maintenance of the facilities, Kids Camp scholarships, paying more of our fair share to the UUA, and other items. Some might say all these things are wishful thinking in a year following a pandemic, and maybe they are right. Time will tell. And if pledges stay stable, so be it. But the board didn't want to miss a chance to be aspirational, to dream, and to talk about what we might do with more financial resources, if we had them.

I hear an upcoming theme for our church is connection. I like that, because not seeing you in person has made me feel very unconnected to the church this year—a year when I should have been even more connected than usual. You may connect with me at boardpres@uuabq.org, if there's anything the board can do for you.

Heather Clark, President of the Congregation



Religious Education

From Our Director of Religious Education

A Back-to-school Blessing

"May your mask keep you safe and your light always be seen.
May you learn and grow each day in person and on screen.
May your hearts and minds journey and discover what is true.
But most of all, may you know you are loved simply for being you!"

Jules Jaramillo, DRE

Jefferson Unitarian Church, Golden, CO



Greetings!

I'm so happy to return to our community after my sabbatical! Our theme for September is "Renewal." A sabbatical is a time for renewal, too. It's all about learning, growing, and taking care of yourself. The plans I made for my

sabbatical all changed when everything shut down to manage Covid-19, but eventually I figured out how to have a meaningful experience, even with the roadblocks that Covid threw my way.

That was good practice for figuring out how to offer RE this fall! Sometimes, roadblocks force us to re-imagine things in creative ways that we don't think about when everything is running smoothly. So here are a few highlights of what to expect this fall:

- Religious Education **will begin September 13** and will remain online, and in shorter classes.
- Resources—stories, meditations, activities—will be available to families offline, so that they may be accessed at your family's convenience.
- The elementary class will meet Sunday morning, before services. If we have some volunteer teachers, we'll be able to use the breakout rooms for younger and older elementary gatherings.
- Youth meetings will resume and be held after our worship service.
- I'm considering some additional special programming—short, and fun!

Again, I am so happy to be back! Even though we aren't meeting together in the RE Building, I am so grateful to be able to interact with you online.

Mia Noren

Director of Religious Education, Credentialed
Dre@uuabq.org

P.S. Our typical RE programming depends on many volunteers, and I hear that families are just stretched to the limit these days. That's a big reason to change how we do

things while we are meeting virtually. But know that our community is still "the curriculum." Now, more than ever, we want to show our children how a community shows up for each other. Classes will be shorter and simpler, and I still need you. Please email me if you think you can help!

Youth News

Well, here we are. Another school year has begun, but it looks so different than what we're used to. You're not running from class to class, trying to decide if you have enough time to stop at your locker, or if you just need to carry what feels like 100 pounds of textbooks with you so you're not late. When we started to do just about everything online in March, I don't think any of us thought it would last this long. But the pandemic stretches on, wears us down, and has changed many of our plans. I have witnessed such resilience in our youth, and I am always thankful to have you in our community. September is a season of homecoming for UUs. Renewing our commitments to each other and our values is central to that. This idea of "renewing commitments" is something we will spend some time exploring this month. Of course, this is in addition to strengthening, building upon, and creating social bonds and a place for fun. As we come together again, we will hold space to be at ease, be among friends, and see what exciting and innovative ways we can make 2020/2021 First Unitarian Youth Group amazing!



Alana Rodriguez

Youth Programs Coordinator, RE Assistant

youth@uuabq.org

Zoom Meetings

Look for emails and Facebook posts with more information soon about the elementary and youth Sunday meetings and their schedules. Parent/Caregiver check-in and Theology without the Potluck will resume—if you want them I'm waiting for input from parents to see if there is a more convenient time for you to attend. **Our RE Council will meet via Zoom on Sunday, September 20.**

If you're not getting the notices for our online check-ins, make sure your family is registered!

All current 2019-20 registrations will continue into the new year. Please contact Alana Rodriguez at reasst@uuabq.org if there are changes to your information, especially email. This is the only way we have to contact you! New registrations can be submitted anytime under "Learn" on our website: uuabq.org.

Adult Faith Formation

Sunday Explorations

Refill your cups of coffee or tea and join us in stimulating discussions every Sunday at 9:30 am on Zoom.

Meeting ID: 842 4289 2753

Password: 041625

September 6: Commitment to Renewal

What does it mean to be a people and a person of renewal? Exploring the paths for renewal and the risks we take.

Angela Merkert, facilitator

September 13: UU Faith and Commitment to Covenant

Our renewal through repair of broken covenants and relationships. Finding meaning in keeping covenant.

Angela Merkert, facilitator

September 20: Historical Sermon Series

“Why Anti-Racism Will Fail” by Rev. Thandeka from UU GA 1999. Text available here:

<https://www.meadville.edu/files/resources/thandeka-why-anti-racism-will-fail-447.pdf>

John Edwards, facilitator.

September 27: Being Grateful in Spite of..., Part 1

Our text will be *Attitudes of Gratitude*, a good book by M.J. Ryan. It explores the gifts, attitudes, and practices of gratitude. How do our feelings of gratefulness benefit us at this time?

Ron Friederich, facilitator.

New Class Offering! A Spiritual Practice Using the Tao Te Ching with Christine Robinson

We will use chapters and verses of Tao Te Ching and a variety of established spiritual practices (study, writing, focused attention, art, conversation) to learn about this ancient wisdom and about ourselves ... and each other. This class will take place on Zoom over 6 Tuesday evenings in September and October from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Participants need access to one contemporary translation/interpretation of this short book (Stephen Mitchell, Ursula LeGuin, Jonathan Star, or—for the scholarly minded—Roger Ames), as well as paper or an online journal. You'll need to be able to connect to Zoom with a camera and microphone to participate.

Christine Robinson is the minister emerita of our congregation and a nearly life-long student of the Tao Te Ching.

Tuesday evenings starting September 15; limited to 12 participants.

To register, contact Christine at RevCRobinson@gmail.com or Angela Merkert at angela.merkert@gmail.com. Participants will receive a link to the class after registering.

Wisdom Circle: When Pigs Fly!

On the third Saturday of September, we elders will come together again on Zoom to hang out and talk. Our theme will be “When Pigs Fly.” Looking back over your life, do you remember something welcome but entirely unexpected that struck like a bolt out of the blue? Or maybe just crept up on you without your believing it possible? Come prepared to share your story. If you can't recall any such event, you can tell us about something you've wished for (and maybe still wish for) that seems to you realistically out of the question. If you'd prefer just to listen to what others have to say, that's OK, too. All are welcome to join us on **Saturday, September 19 at 10:30 am**. If the spirit so moves, bring along a beverage to sip and/or a snack to nibble. For information to join the meeting, contact Jerilyn Bowen, jbowen1@unm.edu.

Groups & Activities

all are welcome

Mabon Ritual with CUUPS

Coyote Willow CUUPS will gather virtually for Mabon on **Saturday, September 26 at 6:30 pm**. Mabon is the second of three harvest festivals



celebrated by many modern pagans. We will focus on the aspects of our lives we are harvesting. We will feast together in virtual space during the ritual, so please have something ready to eat and drink, as well as something for cakes and ale. Have a candle and source of flame ready for the beginning of the ritual. If you would like to join us, please join our Google Group (<https://groups.google.com/g/cwcuups>) or email ravenreed@gmail.com for the meeting login info.

September Reads

Bread, Wine, and Book Club will meet **Friday, September 11 at 7:00 pm** on Zoom. We will be discussing *Reading with Patrick* by Michelle Kuo. Contact Martha Beyerlein (martha.beyerlein@comcast.net) for the meeting information.

Monday Afternoon Book Club will meet **Monday, September 21, at 1:30 pm** on Zoom. The book is *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. 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's September meeting will be September 30, when we will discuss *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad. We meet via Zoom on the last Wednesday of the month from 3:00-5:00 pm. Contact Becky Steele for more information at d2steele2@gmail.com. We welcome new members!

Music Notes from Susan Peck

Are you longing to make music with other people, but wary of the technology? As we step into fall, we'll be exploring additional ways of making music together.



Chalice Choir will not only be rehearsing online and recording virtual anthems, but will also embark on deep-dive studies of major choral works (think Music Appreciation 101). When small groups are again hosted on our campus, **Sol Singers** will gather in our courtyard, masked and very well-spaced, to harmonize in person. And if our **Folk Song Circle** is ready to reconvene, we can break out some virtual ukuleles, guitars, banjos, and fiddles and dig into *Rise Up Singing* and *Rise Again*.



We have several tech experts who can assist you with computer and phone settings to participate in online singing and recording. For the tech-adventurous, we'll get a group to check out Jamulus, a new technology that folks around the world are learning to use to sing and play (almost) in sync in real-time. Chamber music, anyone?



If you miss the learning aspect of making music in a group, we'll be offering one-on-one coaching. Want some tips on vocal technique, how to harmonize, the music theory behind keys and chords? Susan will be offering introductory Zoom sessions on music fundamentals and vocal technique, and can also refer you to local music teachers for private lessons to guide you into deeper practice.

Contact Susan at speck@uuabq.org with your questions or for more information.

There's More!

Contact our Director of Membership and Communications, Laira Magnusson, at LMags@uuabq.org for a listing of other activities you can join online until we are meeting in person again. Email her with your questions about Membership, to subscribe to our email list, or to request help with Zoom or other virtual tools. She'll get you connected!



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– DATED MATERIAL –

It's Connections Week!

August 30-September 6 is Connections Week, your chance to connect online with 30 different church groups and find out how you can get involved.

To register for any of the remaining sessions, go to www.uuabq.com/welcome-to-connections-week/.