From the Minister’s Study

Sabbatical is a religious and spiritual practice, an intentional time of rest and renewal. It references the ancient seven-year cycle of crop rotation. Allowing each field to lie fallow once every seven years increased the yield.

I’m grateful to the forward thinking and planning that took place to make this sabbatical happen. Your Board of Trustees has been intentional in setting aside funds so that there is no direct impact on this year’s operating budget.

It’s hard to believe that sabbatical is just around the corner. I’ll be away from the church beginning January 7 and returning April 1. During that time, Christiane Heyde will serve as Sabbatical Minister. I’m grateful that the church will be in such capable hands.

My goals for this sabbatical time are rest, renewal, and reflection. I’ll be spending part of the time on the east coast and the rest at a small retreat center near Sedona. While on the east coast, I’ll spend time with my son and new daughter-in-law in New Jersey. AJ will come with me for this portion. From there, I’ll take a slow, leisurely train to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. There’s nothing quite like these barrier islands to restore my soul.

Next on the itinerary is St. Petersburg, Florida, the site of the biannual Institute for Excellence in Ministry, a five-day conference put on by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA). I’ll be spending the five days in a seminar titled *Ordained Ministry for a New Millennium: Theologies and Practices of Renewal*, led by Rebecca Parker and Susan Ritchie from Starr King School for the Ministry, my seminary.

I’ll then return to Arizona to become a hermit, spending time in a little cabin in the woods, spending time in quiet and solitude. There’s an on-site spiritual director who’s available to make the experience deeper and more meaningful. AJ will be able to join me on weekends.

I’ve also enrolled in the UUMA’s new peer-coaching program. A coach will be checking in with me regularly to keep me on track with my goals. In addition, I’ll be continuing a practice that I started earlier this year, *A Year in the Life: Clergy Photo Challenge*. The challenge revolves around daily theological themes. Each participant takes and posts photos daily. Already the practice is helping me to see the world with fresh eyes. A bonus is that I’m becoming more adept at using digital technology, a skill most definitely needed in ministry these days.

While I’m away, a Sabbatical Team is in place to support Christiane and to be a point of contact for any questions you may have. The team consists of:

- Christiane Heyde
- Mary Wiese
- Michelle Maliniak
- Poonam Bhola
- Celeste Rogers

I’m immensely grateful for this time away and I’m looking forward to coming back, renewed, rejuvenated, and ready for even greater yields in our ministry together.

Gratefully yours,
Diane

Upcoming Services:

**Winter Solstice - Alternate Worship**
**Friday, December 21 - 6:00pm**
Alternative Worship Service "Winter Solstice" *The End of the World as We Know It*. This service will focus on those times in life when everything changes -- seasons, getting married, having children, getting divorced, moving to a new home or a new city, starting a new job, aging, a new illness. In the darkness is all we've left behind. We light candles and bonfires to illumine a way forward, to welcome the new.

(Childcare available)

**Sunday, December 23—10:30am**
Rev. Diane Dowgiert
*A God Who Looks Like Me*

Worship Associate: Steve Kraynak
Music: Leeza Beriyeva

**Christmas Eve**
**Monday, December 24 - 5:30pm and 7:00pm**
Rev. Diane Dowgiert and Christiane Heyde
*Let Christmas Come*
We'll welcome Christmas with two evening services for singing and candle lighting. The 5:30 service will include a child dedication and music by the *Holiday Choir*. The 7:00 service will be quieter and more contemplative with music by *Brian Moon* on guitar, *Celeste Rogers* on harp.
Arizona Centennial TUUR Financial Success for UUCT

Twenty three UUs and friends traveled with tour leader and UUCT member Julia Mehrer on an exciting tour of Northern Arizona last month. The trip was a financial success earning $8,580.81. This was the most profitable of the four trips that Julia has organized and led as fundraisers for the church.

Much of the success of the trip can be attributed to Julia’s knowledge and expertise from her years as a professional tour leader who had her own travel business. Besides having an outstanding itinerary that included the Petrified Forest, Monument Valley and Canyon de Chelly, we were able to attract UUs from as far away as PA, TN, NY as well as CA and Phoenix, because we offered home hospitality to all the out-of-town guests.

Many thanks go to Margo and Larry Newhouse, Margot and J.D. Garcia, Judy Dare, Janet Moore, Margi Magruder, Bob and Rae Consigli, Susan Call and Julia Mehrer for providing airport transportation and beds and breakfasts before and after the trip. In addition, Chris Wallace, Reah Barrows and Melissa and Daryl Brosanders all volunteered their homes as well. So thanks to all of you who worked so hard on this project with special thanks to our travel expert, Julia Mehrer!

MUSIC NOTES:

On December Sundays before Christmas, we're going to begin the services in song! Although the services will still begin at 10:30AM, informal singing of Holiday music will start approximately 15 minutes before the service begins. Anyone present can sing, or listen, or watch . . . show up a little early in December and prepare yourself to worship through music!

Help bring Holiday cheer to a family in need!

UUCT has adopted a family for the holidays that would not otherwise be able to afford gifts or clothes. The family consists of a single mom with 4 children, who also recently obtained temporary custody of her sister’s 5 young children. You can help by purchasing gifts, clothes, or gift cards. We’ve already had one person commit to donating gift wrapping supplies and another family will help deliver the gifts. Contact Ashley at office@uuctucson.org if you would like to help. The deadline to drop off gifts is December 18th.

Intern Contemplations

The Invisible Congregation

We have a congregation of about 300 members and another 100 friends. At the same time, we may not experience being part of a 400 people congregation, when we come together and worship on Sundays among maybe 150 fellow congregants. There are those who are not visible to most of us. Many religious education volunteers are not seen, even though they are present on campus on Sunday mornings. Many people are active at UUCT, but do not attend on Sundays. They may be in a covenant circle, or be committed to the quilter’s group or a book study. This does not mean they are not an active member, though we may not see them during Sunday services.

UUCT has a large percentage of older congregants, many of whom are between 85 and 100 years of age, and some of whom cannot attend services any more. These people still are part of our community, and deserve ministry and support. Over the last three months, I have visited about 30 homebound or potentially homebound congregants. I have a much longer list of people I still want to visit. It is important for me to get to know the congregation, the visible as well as the invisible members. This goes back to our principles, the first of which states that we affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. This not only includes those of different beliefs, gender identity and orientation, and life styles. It also includes those with various levels of physical mobility, levels of energy, and people of all ages.

As an older congregation, we have the challenge that it takes more staff hours to meet the needs of the invisible, non-attending congregants. At the same time, I have found it most delightful to get to know these congregation members. This will also give me the opportunity to be there for them if they have a crisis or an unexpected need for ministry. That allows us to be a dynamic congregation, serving our community while seeing and treating each person with the awareness of their inherent worth and dignity.

Please let me know if you have pastoral care needs which are currently not addressed, or want an opportunity to meet with me so we can get to know each other. We are in the process of forming a pastoral care ministry in this congregation so that this kind of outreach will continue way past my time as an intern minister. I love this congregation and am looking forward to becoming further immersed in it.

With Love and Blessings,

Christiane Heyde, Intern Minister

520-393-9960, csheyde@msn.com
**Mata Ortize Pottery Sale a Rousing Success!**

Thanks to UUCT for sponsoring an outdoor sale on the patio on October 28, and most especially to Julia Mehrer for organizing the event which attracted lots of attention, both within and outside the church. Folks at UUCT once again demonstrated our generosity, with help from others, so that more than $5,500 was raised to entirely benefit the village in Mexico which has been struggling without its usual number of tourists buying their pottery.

Ana Trillo and her family and friends displayed and sold hundreds of pots, after carefully wrapping and transporting them for the 8 hour plus trip from Mata Ortiz, the small town in Chihuahua. For the church's kindness in providing this sale, Ana donated two pots to be sold at the spring auction. (Similar pots are for sale around town, priced at more than $200.) So mark your calendars now for the auction, March 2, 2013.

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**Youth Mental Health First Aid Training**

Saturday- January 19th from 8 AM – 5 PM, Mental Health First Aid USA will offer an 8 hour course focused on helping youth (ages 12-18) who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or in a crisis.

The course is designed for adults whom regularly interact with adolescents, and older adolescents so as to encourage youth peer to peer interaction. Anyone who regularly works or interacts with youth – teachers, athletic coaches, mentors, juvenile justice professionals. For more information and to sign up, stop by the LFD table.

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**Radical Hospitality Event**

Mark your calendar for January 26th, the date of an exciting new presentation/discussion on creating a welcoming and inclusive congregation. The family gathering will include a potluck, childcare and a lively dialogue about avoiding a revolving door for newcomers, from initial greeting to facilitation of church guests into engagement and participation that leads to eventual membership. Bring a dish, thoughts and experiences at 4:30 p.m., ending by 7:00 p.m., to this Saturday evening event which is being hosted by the Leadership and Membership Committees.

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**Talent Surveys Reveal Interests & Gifts**

What’s turns you on, gets you moving and involved? The Leadership Development Committee is collecting information on UUCT congregants to help committees and staff get folks plugged into church life in a meaningful way. Initial survey results, for example, show many members who would enjoy telephoning, greeting and visiting others in their homes. What interests you? If you haven’t completed a survey, you will have an opportunity before or after church in the next few weeks.

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**It's About Your Vision**

The Strategic Planning Committee has started its work of developing comprehensive plans for consideration by the congregation.

The team is comprised of two board members and three members of the congregation. The strategic plan guides us toward achievement of our ten year vision. The plan will have a five year horizon and address all aspects of congregational life including staff, space and finances.

We will be gathering your thoughts, dreams and wishes via a computer or paper survey. You can also share your dreams with committee members Mark Henson, Jessica Erickson, Fran Brazzell, Evan Keyes and Janet Moore.

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**Save The Date – UUCT Town Hall**

**January 20 at 12:15 PM**

**Congregational Town Hall**

Come meet with the Board of Trustees to learn about how we (Board, Staff, and Congregation) have addressed our budget needs, and what remains to be done.
Carnavale in Venice, this year’s UUCT auction, is March 2nd, and it’s not too early to be thinking about what you can do to participate in the biggest fund raiser of the year!

Donate a silent auction item (gift card to Gaslight Theater, that nice piece of jewelry you no longer wear, handmade art, or baked goods), a service (a ride to the airport, tutoring, dog walking, house sitting), or something for the live auction like a dinner. Or donate your time to volunteer for one of the many tasks involved like helping to set up for the auction, or being a check in or check out person auction night? AND come to the auction to bid on the many tempting and exciting items! Check the auction tab on the UUTC website for more information & a donation form, & look for the auction table in Goddard Hall after church beginning 6 January!

The deadline for the Tucsonitarian is the first and third Tuesday of each month with publication on the second and fourth Wednesday. The next deadline is December 18th at 5 pm and the publication date is December 26th.

**UUCT Book Club Book List for December - June**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society</td>
<td>Mary Annie Shaffer and Annie Barrows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>The Greater Journey</td>
<td>David McCullough</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</td>
<td>Sherman Alexie</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>The Hours</td>
<td>Michael Cunningham</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>The Heart is a Lonely Hunter</td>
<td>Carson McCullers</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>The Seville Communion</td>
<td>Arturo Perez-Reverte</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>A Prayer for Owen Meany: a Novel</td>
<td>John Irving</td>
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Book Club meets the third Thursday of each month at 7pm in the Awareness Room. Free childcare is available if requested in advance. May and June’s books will be harder to find, so look in used book stores. We may adjust the list, if needed. Contact Lois Atkins 991-5351