From the Minister’s Study:

Every year there comes a time when I wonder if General Assembly (GA), the annual national gathering of Unitarian Universalists, is worth all the time, energy and expense. There are years when I seriously consider not going. Always, I do go, and always I’m glad. I’ve missed only one GA since entering the ministry, and that was due to the death of my father-in-law that year. Every GA leaves me inspired, uplifted, and renewed in commitment to this liberal religious heritage that I love so much. This year was no exception.

Louisville, Kentucky was the site this year, a vibrant, friendly city. The First Unitarian Church of Louisville is within walking distance of the Convention Center. It was a real treat to visit their beautiful sanctuary with its art deco style stained glass and an artistic wood ceiling that echoes the gentle waves of the near-by Ohio river.

One of the highlights was when we gathered on the banks of that same river for a public witness event. The purpose was to raise awareness of the environmental destruction of Appalachia and its disproportionate impact on poor communities and people of color. Inspiring speakers included the Rev. Mel Hoover, Tim DeChristopher, Wendell Berry, and people from West Virginia and Kentucky who know first-hand the devastation caused by fuel extraction industries.

Eboo Patel, a Muslim scholar and activist, delivered the Ware lecture. In doing inter-faith work, he says we should look for what’s resonant, what’s similar among us. He challenged us to stay in relationship with people of other faiths even through our profound theological differences.

The Rev. Vanessa Southern delivered the sermon for the Service of the Living Tradition. The service happens each year to honor those entering our ministry, those retiring, and those who have died. Rev. Southern’s sermon invited us to dive into the sea of momentous change happening in our world today. She uplifted love and unity as the core of our enduring mission that will see us through times of scary change.

The Rev. William Schulz delivered the sermon for Sunday morning worship. He took us on a cosmic journey through the universe to gain perspective on our finite lives here on earth. The journey is filled with wonder, astonishment, and vulnerability. Through it all, he says, “there cannot be anything fundamentally wrong and that, held as we each are in the embrace of Creation, at the end of the day it’s all OK.”

One of my favorite parts of GA is in the chance encounters with people I’ve known for many years and those I’ve just met. I always learn something about congregational life. Much as our congregations are different from each other, they are also the same. In the chance conversations, I gain a different perspective on our common struggles: raising enough money, making newcomers feel welcome, finding enough volunteers, getting our message out into the community, dealing with conflict, etc.

I’m always inspired by the faithful commitment of those who come to the General Assembly. They know that the common struggles of congregational life will always be there. Yet, they dedicate themselves in hope that together, we can realize the promise of our faith and that we can live into the vision of the beloved community here on earth.

I want to thank Bruce Saunders, Carolyn Saunders, and David Burks for attending and serving as delegates. Special thanks go to Julie Slayton Frank for serving as an off-site delegate, participating from here in Tucson, on-line via computer.

If you want to learn more about this year’s GA go to www.uua.org. You can even have a bit of the experience by watching video coverage.

Next year – Providence, Rhode Island! Will you be there?

Yours,
Diane
Rev. Diane will be away for vacation and study leave from July 1 through August 12. In case of a pastoral emergency during this time, she can be reached through the church office.

Upcoming Services:
Sunday, June 30
Rev. Diane Dowgiert
From Promise to Commitment
Promises are easy to make, harder to keep. Rev. Diane will return from General Assembly with reflections on how we might turn our promises into commitments.
Worship Associate: Terence Sheridan

Sunday, July 7
Guest Speaker: Michelle Maliniak
Can We Achieve Freedom From Fear, Anger, & Hopelessness?
Worship Associate: Carolyn Saunders

Sunday, July 14
Guest Speaker: Galina DeRoeck
My Trip to Israel
Worship Associate: Gilbert Moore

Sunday, July 21
Speaker: Walt Emrys Staton
Receiving Gifts: The Anti-Economy Act of Compassion
The phrase, “It is better to give than to receive,” creates a puzzling conundrum for those on the receiving end. Giving and receiving are mutual activities, however society tends to place a more noble value on the giving side. Receiving a gift with genuine gratitude is often difficult. In learning to do so, we open ourselves to a deeper communal connection of humanity.
Worship Associate: Celeste Rogers

Sunday, July 28
Speaker: Caroline Isaacs
Private Prisons, Public Problems
Caroline Isaacs is the Program Director for the American Friends Service Committee office in Tucson, Arizona. She has worked at AFSC for over 15 years, focusing on criminal justice reform in Arizona. Isaacs has a Bachelor’s in Political Science from the College of Wooster and a Master’s in Social Work from Arizona State University, where she teaches as an adjunct faculty member and serves as a Field Student Liaison.

AFSC in Tucson has three primary interrelated areas of program focus: private prisons, sentencing, and solitary confinement issues. Caroline is the author of a report published by AFSC last year on private prisons in Arizona.
Worship Associate: Walker Smith

Christiane’s (final) Contemplations

As I write my last newsletter article as UUCT’s intern, I want to thank you all for contributing to my formation as a minister. The term formation encompasses a lot, from the initial call to ministry, which I experienced at age 13, to academic preparation, which I did off and on between 1977-2013, and my internship. I do not think that my ministerial formation will ever stop, since every new experience in life and ministry adds to who we are and how we can open our hearts and minds and show up for ministry. We are all being formed and transformed, through our choices and our life experiences, through our contemplations and meditations, to make manifest on the outside who we truly are on the inside.

Obviously, my internship was the most obvious and external event of formation in my path to ministry, and one I will treasure forever. Not only did I grow to love this community and congregation, you became part of who I am as a minister from here on out. You are in my heart, and while we will not see each other often, my love for you will stay with you, and you will stay in my heart, even as I move on and work as a minister elsewhere.

This summer, I will go to GA, enjoy a visit from my German niece in July, and then spend a couple of months preparing for my interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in Boston on September 28. After that, I will plan my ordination, which may be as early as this November, or might be scheduled for sometime next year. I will write an article for the newsletter in the fall and keep you posted on the details. I will hold the ordination at UUCT, even though my membership congregation Mountain Vista UU will do the ordaining, so I do hope that most of you will be there.

By that time, I will have started working as the new minister of the UU Church of Southeastern Arizona in Sierra Vista. I look forward to spending 3 days a week there, and living with my family in Tucson the rest of the time. Please do not come to visit me in that church. Your commitment is to UUCT, and mine is to have boundaries with the members of my internship congregation for the next three years. On the other hand, I do hope all of you will show up for my ordination. You can even contribute to the ordination fund (checks made out to Mountain Vista UU, 3601 W. Cromwell, Tucson, 85741, add “Christiane’s ordination” in the memo line.) But I urge you to please support UUCT first, since the ministry of this congregation is powerful and important, and I will forever be grateful for this church, its minister Rev. Diane Dowgiert, and its wonderful staff, who are working hard and doing a great job.

I wish you well and look forward to seeing you at GA, or my ordination, or UU district events, or hopefully all of the above! I will see and hug many of you on June 16th, my farewell Sunday at UUCT, and please know that all of you are in my heart from here on out. I thank you for your love and support and the many ways in which you have touched my life and supported my path to ministry. May you continue to be a teaching congregation!

With much Love and Gratitude,
Christiane Heyde,
Ministerial Intern, UUCT, 2012-13
Now I am glad to be back home and am determined to help make this coming year at UUCT a great one. I guess you could say I am “motivated”. Famous race car driver Mario Andretti says, “Desire is the key to motivation, but it’s determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek.” I firmly believe that if we as a congregation commit to one another and the goals and vision of our church, we will succeed.

Kathleen R Hogue
LFD Director

July’s Share the Plate Recipient

Half of all non-pledge income in the offering on July 21st will be shared with Habitat for Humanity Tucson. Habitat for Humanity Tucson offers an innovative solution to the crisis of poverty housing by giving a hand up, not a hand out. They accomplish their mission by building homes in partnership with the community and with low-income families. They value inclusiveness and win/win partnerships, respect for the dignity of each person, and a commitment to deliver a strong return on the community’s investment in their work.

For more information about Habitat for Humanity Tucson, including volunteer opportunities, visit their website http://www.habitattucson.org. Thank you for your generous support!

Let’s Go Tubing Down the Salt River!!
Saturday, July 13, 2013
$17 per person
(Must be at least 8 years old and know how to swim.)
We will be car pooling from the church. Contact Kathleen (khogue@uuctucson.org or stop by the LFD table after church) for more info and to sign up.

Safe Sitter Trainers Needed!
We are looking for volunteers 21 years of age or older to teach the Safe Sitter (childcare and safety) program to our youth as well as youth in the community. Once you become a certified trainer, you will be asked to teach the 1-day class once or twice a year. Contact Heather (hreed@uuctucson.org or stop by the LFD table after church) for more info.
INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICES (ICS) SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

SEND STUDENTS BACK TO SCHOOL WITH “GIFTS OF LOVE” SUPPLIES: UUCT, in partnership with ICS, is collecting school supplies to assist over 450 children from economically disadvantaged households across Pima County. Most-needed items include backpacks, binders, notebooks and notebook paper, spiral notebooks, scissors, glue sticks, folders, markers, rulers, highlighters, protractors, erasers, pens and pencils, and crayons. At UUCT we will be collecting school supplies in the red and white box in the church foyer.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE! VOLUNTEER WITH NO MORE DEATHS THIS SUMMER!

During June and July, there is only one publication of the Unitarian per month. The next deadline is Tuesday, July 16 at 5pm with a print date of Wednesday, July 24th.

In order to have the humanitarian aid summer desert camp program run as well as it can, No More Deaths, a social justice ministry of UUCT, needs a lot of help from local volunteers behind the scenes. Please consider signing up for one of the following areas: Grocery Shopping, Transportation from Airport, Preparing Meals for Summer Volunteers, or Weekend Housing for Long Term Volunteers.

If you are available to help this summer with any of these four areas, please reply to Jordan, our logistics coordinator, at Logistics.nmd@gmail.com with your name, phone number and e-mail address, and which task you are willing to volunteer for. If you have any questions, Jordan's cell phone is (520) 307-2626. Thanks so much!