From the Minister’s Study

I begin this New Year on a note of gratitude. I wish it were possible to thank everyone who came out to help AJ and me celebrate 40 years of marriage. We’re so grateful for the gifts in our honor to “forty-fy” the church. Your monetary gifts totaled $3800, which will go to the church’s Operating Reserve Fund. Many of you gave stamps to the church office, socks and supplies to No More Deaths and donations to the Community Food Bank. Many of you made commitments to spiritual disciplines that will strengthen our beloved community here at UUCT.

Sharing this highlight of my personal life with you reminded me of the days when people referred to the minister as the Parson, an old English word that means person. Quaint as it might be, I kinda like the title Parson. It humanizes the role. Ministers are persons, after all, with gifts and skills, flaws, quirks, and limitations. When I think of myself as the Parson, it reminds me that an important part of our ministry together is to make the world a more humane place, to reduce suffering and increase thriving for all persons.

The New Year at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson begins with a Mission and Vision Workshop on Friday, January 16 and Saturday, January 17, bringing our four southern Arizona congregations together. We’ll gather from 7:00 – 9:00 on Friday and from 9:00 – 4:00 on Saturday. Facilitated by the Rev. David Miller, it will be a fun, lively, and engaging time.

It’s been nearly 10 years since the mission and vision have been revisited. The world has changed in this past decade. How do we respond to today’s world? What are the forces that shape our ministry today? What kind of future do we envision?

The New Year stretches out ahead, a blank canvas of time waiting for us to fill it with life. Like all the years past, it will be punctuated by our usual routines and rituals, marked by the on-going life cycles of birth and death, and colored by celebrations of milestone events: birthdays, anniversaries and all the events that shape our shared life in religious community.

May each of these events be an opportunity to create the world we envision. Through small acts kindness, courage, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, and friendship, we make the world a more humane place for everyone.

Yours, the Parson,
Rev. Diane

Upcoming Services:

Sunday, January 11 10:30 a.m.
Rev. Diane Dowgiert
Faith With or Without God
Life without faith would be difficult, if not impossible. Think of the many things we take as a matter of faith, like the rising and setting of the sun. It isn’t a matter of whether or not one has faith, but how one lives a faithful life, with or without God.
Worship Associate: Celeste Rogers
Music: Leeza Beriyeva

Sunday, January 18 10:30 a.m.
Rev. Diane Dowgiert and Kathleen Hogue
What Have We Learned? Fifty Years Since Selma
We’ll gather as an entire intergenerational community for a time of Extended Family Worship to remember Martin Luther King, to celebrate his life and legacy, and to rededicate ourselves to continuing the work of racial and economic justice.
Worship Associate: Kathleen Hogue
Music: Desert Chorale and Leeza Beriyeva

Sunday, January 25 10:30 a.m.
Rev. Diane Dowgiert and Randall Springer
A Living Tradition
Living things must be cared for, nurtured, and tended if they are to thrive. Rev. Diane and Randy will share their perspectives on the future of our living tradition of Unitarian Universalism.
Worship Associate: Randall Springer
Music: Leeza Beriyeva

Wednesday, January 28 7:00 p.m.
Mid-Week Alternative Worship
Rev. Diane Dowgiert, Kathleen Hogue, Brian Moon, and Mary Wiese
A service filled with story, song, meditation, and ritual.
Artist of the Month’s January Gallery Show:
Tracings From Love Letters
Watercolors by Bernardita Reitz

Finding endless sources of inspiration from the sights and colors of the southwest, Bernardita Reitz captures the magical charm of this area on paper with electrifying energy and color. The opening reception for this show will be on Sunday, January 11th at 11:45 AM in Holland Sanctuary. Come greet Bernardita and enjoy the show. Refreshments will be served. The Gallery is open during church office hours, 9-1 pm, Tuesday through Friday and Sunday, 11:30-1 pm. The show runs through Sunday, February 1st.

CHINESE NEW YEAR – Year of the Sheep. UUCT Auction 2015 is almost here! Saturday, January 31 at 5:30 p.m. the doors will open. The silent auction starts then, followed by a delicious Chinese buffet supper, around 5:45, with the live auction beginning by 7:00. Your $10 admission (same price for 4 years now) buys you dinner, non-alcoholic drinks, and a bidder number. Special beverages available on a donation basis. Childcare and food for kids are available at no charge.

Donations: we need your donations by January 11, to have the catalog available later that week. Consider offering a meal, an outing, a service, arts or crafts items, a gift certificate, or anything else you think folks might want to buy. If you can’t think of anything, stop by the auction table in Goddard on Sundays to pick up a list of ideas, or to discuss it with one of our committee members. You can fill out a donation form there, or on the church website, www.uuctucson.org/auction. Or contact Bob Gordon, 329-8242, or bobgordonrg66@gmail.com.

Volunteer: We still need more good people to help make this the best auction ever. You can help us auction night, before, during, or after the auction. Sign up at the table in Goddard after Sunday services, or contact Jan Dowling, rubytues98@hotmail.com, or 940-7930.

Show up: Eat, enjoy good company, and above all, BID! We can’t do it without YOU.

Dance for Fun and Fitness
Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015 at 12:30 pm in Goddard Hall

Kick-start your fitness plan for the New Year with this fun and free class. Come learn ballroom, Latin, and swing dance steps that are modified to fit a line dance format. No partner required. Some belly dance, ballet, country swing, and hula might be thrown in too. This is an effective aerobic interval workout good for all fitness levels.

Presented by Julianne Blackwell, ACE CPT

* “Religious education, is the life-long process by which we come to more deeply understand who we are in the world, what our lives and actions mean, and how we are connected to the past and future of humanity. It is the on-going process of maturing, of growing souls, of coming toward the fullness of our human potential.”

Here at UUCT, we take the lifespan approach to learning with classes, presentations, worship services, small group ministries etc. taking place for people of all ages, but we begin with our children, our most precious gifts. We are a cooperative program that relies on parents and other adults to teach RE classes.

Throughout the year you see proof that our Religious Education program is nurturing our children. It is evident in our pageants, services, stories and social justice projects. Want to be a part of growing souls and changing lives? Come teach, learn and grow as Unitarian Universalists with us. We have a teacher training following the service on January 11, 2015 at 12:15.

*From the Church of the Larger Fellowship: What does “religious education” mean to UUs?

Are you reading the newsletter?
We are trying to determine if people are getting their church news via the newsletter. If you are reading this, please contact Ashley in the office and let her know 1. Your name, and 2. If you are reading a hard copy newsletter or if you are reading it online. You may contact Ashley via phone (748-1551), email (office@uuctucson.org), snail mail (4831 E. 22nd St., Tucson, AZ 85711), or stop by the office! Thank you!

January Share the Plate

On January 18th our Share the Plate recipient is Interfaith Community Services (ICS)! As you may know, UUCT partners with ICS throughout the year to help Tucson families in need. Last month UUCT participated in the Gifts of Love program in which we sponsored 3 low income families for the holidays. If you’re interested in volunteering for ICS or if you’d like more info about their programs, contact UUCT’s ICS liaison, Ashley Davis (office@uuctucson.org or 748-1551) or visit ictstucson.org. Thank you for helping support this wonderful local non-profit!
From Green Valley UU
Sounds of the Desert Concert Series
Unitarian Universalist Auditorium

On January 10th, the second annual “Sounds of the Desert” concert series will kick off for 2015. Featured first will be “Rick Jones & Valerie Neale”, a dynamic couple from San Francisco, prove that some marriages are music in the making. They met in London 30 years ago when she was doing research in Art History and he was a children’s TV presenter and part of a popular British country rock band “Mealticket”. For this couple, life is from the heart ….Their lyrics are more than observations … they make you feel that you were there … their CD, “Life Drawing” is just that … drawn from life and love …
The second concert on February 7th is a “double header” featuring Becky Reyes (with Scott Muhleman) and the Pueblo High School Mariachi band. Becky has become an institution in Southern Arizona with her melodious voice backed by great guitar work featuring a wide range of ballads and Latin songs. Becky, plays regularly in Bisbee and Sierra Vista and at Stables Restaurant in Tubac. Her partner, Scott Muhleman, plays a robust blues harp which nicely complements Becky.
The second half of the concert features the award winning Mariachi Aztlan de Pueblo band from the Pueblo High School in Tucson. As Tucson’s most popular youth mariachi, they have gained a reputation for excellence, sharing the stage with many of the world’s finest Mariachi ensembles as well as Symphony Orchestra’s.
The third Concert on March 7th, features the Kevin Pakulis band. As an award winning Americana singer-songwriter, Kevin is a shining light in the Tucson music scene. His tight, edgy, guitar driven compositions, delivered with plenty of raw energy, received national attention with release of his album “Yeah, Yeah, Yeah”. His songwriting ranges from introspective and reflective to satirical and political, from rocking blues to quiet acoustic pieces.
Finally, on April 4th, we will be roundly entertained by the Sonoran Dogs, a rousing Bluegrass band. Formed in 2011, the Sonoran Dogs have exploded upon the Arizona bluegrass scene and in 2013, were Rockygrass co-finalists. The group is made up of seasoned veterans who have come together to enjoy bluegrass music and friendship. They play a collection of traditional bluegrass standard, new-grass and original compositions. Each concert is different as they often improvise the performance to meet the mood of the audience. It makes for a fun and dynamic show.

All shows are on Saturdays, 2:00PM, at the Unitarian Universalist Auditorium at the Amado Territory Ranch. Directions: Take Exit 48 from I-19 then 1000 feet East to Territory Lane.

Mission/Vision workshop
Friday, January 16, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Saturday, January 17, 9:00 am - 4:00 am

Our four UU congregations in southern Arizona will gather at UUCT for a mission/vision workshop. Okay, I saw your eyes roll. I know what you’re thinking. With so many wonderful things to do on a Friday and Saturday in Tucson, why would anyone want to come to a workshop at church? Why? Who wouldn’t want to be part of shaping the future of Unitarian Universalism in our congregation and southern Arizona? Who wouldn’t want to spend time with the dynamic Rev. David Miller, a facilitator from San Diego who brings not only his experience as a UU minister, but his expertise from 25 years spent in the corporate world helping businesses to be strong, healthy, and successful? Who wouldn’t want to spend time with bright, interesting, curious, dedicated Unitarian Universalists? Really. You’ll want to be there.

Childcare available if requested by Jan.14 (Heather Reed hrered@uuctucson.org).

Volunteer Position Available

Our Share the Plate program needs someone to help keep the program alive. Duties include: (1) notifying the organization, or the person who nominated the organization, to offer the opportunity to send a speaker and arrange to get information materials; and (2) writing a newsletter article and brief announcements for the weekly email and Orders of Service. An organizational spreadsheet and article/announcement template are already created. Training available. If you re interested, please contact Heather Reed at hrered@uuctucson.org.

UU B&B available

Queen bedroom, private bath, pool, & hot tub. Do-it-yourself breakfast. $90/night, non-smoking, 25% refundable deposit. $10 key deposit. 20% goes to UUCT. jdiartsudio@dakotcom.net (520)514-2241

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline to submit an announcement is the 24th day of the month and the newsletter will be printed and available online the first week of the following month.