



The Messenger

FIRST UNITARIAN

Albuquerque • East Mountains • Socorro

July 2021



There is a handwritten sign on one of the back doors at church that says: **“Door is alarmed. Open only in emergence.”** A misspelling? Maybe. But I find the word “emergence” instead of “emergency” rather charming. It sounds like coming out with bells on. Like a horn blowing as you fling the door open and shout, “Here I am, everyone!”

My friend Taryn, a minister in Atlanta, calls this phase of the pandemic “Early Emergence.” For many of us, vaccination and the lifting of restrictions means we can, at last, fling open the doors we pulled shut fifteen months ago. The “early” part is real though—not everyone is ready or able to come out yet. Some people, including many epidemiologists, are cautious about the risk of “breakthrough” infections, knowing that vaccination is highly, but not perfectly, effective. Others are not yet vaccinated, including children and people with weakened immune systems. For various reasons some people may never be. So, we will have a mix of bold and cautious, vaccinated and unvaccinated folks in the community—including at First Unitarian—for the foreseeable future.

The process of reopening our campus reflects this mix. Some small groups are meeting there again, while others continue on Zoom. Recently, we held the first in-person memorial service on campus in over a year. It took place in the courtyard, under the cottonwood tree that has watched over us for as long as anyone can remember. Ten days later, a memorial for another member was held, but this one took place on Zoom, a choice the family made in order to include as many loved ones as possible. I love knowing that this will still be an option for families long after the pandemic.

Bob and I are working with the COVID Advisory Council and the Board to plan our first Sunday back on campus, knowing virtual services will continue then, too. We don’t know the date yet. I expect we’ll have an announcement later this month. But before long, guided by principles of hospitality and care—and science, of course!—we will reopen the church doors. Whether you feel bold or cautious, there will be a place for you.

In philosophy, systems theory, science, and art, “emergence” has another meaning. **It’s what occurs when small parts come together to create a larger entity that does something different than any of the parts could do alone.** Water molecules form a winding river. Trees and other beings create a forest. Human cells become a heart. And people make a church community. Planning for Sundays on campus again involves many more people than the ministers, council, and Board. Church staff and countless volunteers are already restarting the behind-the-scenes work and cross-team coordination. It’s quite a process, and one that has never been started all at once before. But with kindness and patience, I know we can do it.

We really are opening in emergence. Let the bells ring!

Blessings,

Worship Calendar for July

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 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. **Enter Meeting ID: 168 223 701 or [click here](#).**

July 4

"Freedom Within"

The Rev. Angela Herrera

Whether we are conscious of them or not, negative beliefs about ourselves can become like prison bars around the spirit. On this holiday, a sermon about freedom of the most personal kind: freedom within.

July 11

"Same Storm, Different Boats: Surviving Capitalism with Your Soul Intact"

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

Late-stage capitalism has fostered incredible income inequality, exacerbating other issues like climate change, racism, and sexism. In addition, it diminishes our hearts, minds, and souls. How can UUs protect themselves and others from this blight?

July 18

"Transitions"

The Rev. Angela Herrera

Are you experiencing a transition of some kind? Aren't we all? Whether it's a change you looked forward to, or one you would never have wanted or imagined, this sermon on the psychology and spirituality of transitions will offer perspective.

July 25

"Life Hack: Communication"

The Rev. Angela Herrera

From time to time, we all get frustrated in our attempts to communicate. If you've ever wished you could understand someone better, or feel heard yourself, then this sermon is for you.

Virtual Vespers

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

These short (25-minute) services offer a midweek respite with readings, music, meditation, and prayer.

Enter Meeting ID: 593 831 292 or [click here](#).

We Light a Candle

We light a candle for Elya Arrasmith as they grieve the death of their father.

We hold Linda Sprague in our loving care as she enters hospice care. We also hold her sister, Phyllis Bergman, in our hearts. Linda would welcome cards from her First U friends.

We rejoice with Alison and Robert Grady, who welcomed twin girls to their family June 16.

We rejoice with David and Mary Colton, who just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, and with Dick and Jill Desjardins, who celebrated their 30th.

If you're experiencing difficulties, health issues, or transitions, you can reach out to our Caring Network at caring@uuabq.org.

Community News

Membership Milestones

A warm welcome to our newest members, who joined the church in June!

Alana Kuhlemeir & Eric Michaelsen

Happy Membership Anniversary in July to:

One Year

Sonja Pulvino

Five Years

Jean Conner

Ten Years

Nancy Brockerman

Barbara Mann

Sonia Contreras

Fifteen Years

Douglas Crosbie

Kathleen Economy

Mary Edwards

Nancy & Roger Harmon

Thirty Years

David Ewing

In-Person Joining Ceremony!

Are You Ready to Join the Church?

We will have an in-person joining ceremony on **Sunday, July 11 at 1:15 pm in the Memorial Garden**. 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.” Questions? Contact Laira Magnusson, our Director of Membership & Communications at LMags@uuabq.org.

Help Fund First U’s Future

On May 16, this congregation voted overwhelmingly to purchase the ARC Building that lies on the south side of our campus. Acquiring this building is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Since the launch of this capital campaign on June 16, our congregation has pledged over \$450k. We are very close to completely reaching our goal! [Click here to make your pledge](#). If you have questions about the ARC Building Capital Campaign, please contact Rev. Bob LaVallee at blavallee@uuabq.org.

Meet Matt!

Hi everyone! My name is Matthew Pargeter-Villarreal (please call me Matt!), and I am First Unitarian’s incoming Ministerial Intern. I am a 2019 M.Div graduate of Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, with a concentration in Sexual & Gender Justice, and a Candidate for Ministry with the UUA. During the pandemic, I’ve had an unexpected ministry venture: offering worship planning and making virtual pulpit visits to 22 states across the country, “visiting” UU congregations of all sizes. Some of my ministerial and social justice interests are LGBTQIA+ ministry, immigrant justice, anti-racism/anti-oppression, and youth/young adult ministry. **A few fun things about me:**



- Although I was born in Massachusetts and grew up in Oklahoma, if you ask me where home is, I will tell you San Antonio, Texas.
- I am a Spanish speaker.
- I am a huge foodie and I love baking (some of my favorite recipes are [posted on my blog](#)).
- I love all kinds of music, both listening to it and making it.
- I am the proud parent of a 10-year-old calico named Juliette, who makes up most of the photos on my social media.
- A guilty pleasure of mine is competition reality shows.

I look forward for the opportunity to get to meet everyone and get to know the congregation—as well as Albuquerque and New Mexico—a little better. I am excited for the work that we will get to accomplish together!

*Please join us in welcoming Matt! **His ten-month, full-time internship will begin on August 15.** Angela Herrera, Bob LaVallee, and Susan Peck really enjoyed getting to know Matt through the interview process. If you’d be interested in serving on this year’s intern committee, send a brief letter describing your interest and any relevant personal information to Angela at aherrera@uuabq.org. No specific background is required of committee members. Diverse perspectives are intentionally included. The committee meets monthly with the intern, offers support and feedback, and writes midterm and final evaluations.*

Community News

Music Notes with Susan Peck

Note: Susan Peck is on sabbatical from June 21 - August 16.



I am so grateful to this congregation and the board for this much-needed sabbatical, and I am grateful to the musicians and tech folks who are stepping up to bring wonderful music to your summer worship.

The pandemic has been difficult for me, because musicians thrive on making harmonies and rhythms together in real time. Multi-track audio and video recording was an engaging challenge, but I'm looking forward to the day we can dance to one another's heartbeats and mix our breath in sweet harmonies.

For the next 8 weeks, I will be visiting other churches on Zoom, reading fiction, hiking in the mountains, and composing new music for First U ensembles. I won't be checking church emails! In case of an emergency, please contact Rev. Angela Herrera or Rev. Bob LaVallee, and they will reach me.

For questions about our church band, Disparate Parts, please contact Vance Bass at dbmaj7@gmail.com.

Sol Singers are meeting in the church courtyard every Monday 5:30-7:00 pm, raising voices in harmony. All voices are welcome! For more information, contact Jetta Reynolds at jettaruthreynolds@gmail.com or Linda Chase at jesusisl@gmail.com.

Board of Directors Update

You'd think I'd know better by now, but I'm still shocked by the fact of change. We are so good at habituating, quickly settling into the "new normal" even when we know there's no such thing. And then we're rocked to our core when the next change comes, and we have to remake our lives and our new habits yet again. Rev. Angela reminded the board this last month that changes—even good ones—carry grief.

We find ourselves as a church at the beginning of the next new journey, with many crossroads that will bring new opportunities and new losses as we say yes to new ways of being together, and say goodbye to many things that no longer serve us. But we have tremendous power and potential in this moment to be thoughtful and intentional and bold in choices that can serve us—all of us—better.

One example with big consequences is how we will worship together in a large group of vaccinated and unvaccinated, healthy and medically vulnerable, young and old. In our joy and eagerness to be together, we cannot skip the step of reducing risk for those who either cannot be vaccinated, such as our youth under 12, or who remain high risk even after vaccination, such as our elderly and immune-compromised members. Our covenant to each other means we have a higher standard of care and responsibility to one another and even more obligation to take steps to protect the most vulnerable among us than the rest of society, which seemingly can be so casual in prioritizing vaccinated people over others. Here is the opportunity to practice our faith. Here is where we must lead with grace, assuming the best intent of those we love and those who love us, even as we acknowledge that the impact of our actions does not affect us all equally. In fact, far from it. And so we ask for your patience as we make careful plans for reopening our campus to large groups and for in-person worship.

I have felt the growing swell of eagerness to be together, but I have also seen the on-the-edge exhaustion of the staff and committees and lay leaders who have held this church together for the last 18 months. Our bonds are frayed, and they are strained. There will be joy and balm in coming together, but it will be yet another source of change, and therefore little griefs, and lots of new sources of stress. And so I ask for your patience as we open. Things will not work the same. Staff and ministers will be stretched thin and pulled in multiple directions. Let us be kind and forgiving and do the hardest faith work that there is for some of us: assuming that others are doing the best they can. And perhaps even harder: finding the blessings in the changes that come. What new ways of doing our work to serve each other and our blessed community are opened up in this strange, new, post-COVID world?

How can we harness the same freedom from social anxiety and social patterns that the random nature of breakout rooms after Zoom worship affords us to make new connections, as one example? How many of us experienced that profound blessing of having exactly the conversation we needed but didn't even know it? Will we find new ways to hold onto that teaching in our old spaces? What new learning is waiting for you in the next little grief wrapped in change?

— **Mikaela Renz-Whitmore,**
President of the Congregation

Religious Education



From Our Director of Religious Education

"Those who play rarely become brittle in the face of stress or lose the healing capacity for humor."

-Stuart Brown, MD



Greetings!

Play and healing are the themes for the rest of the summer!

We've all been through so much this last year and a half! I hope that you'll find time to play in all the ways that will aid your healing. Help your children to do the same.

Summer Sunday school is on hiatus for the rest of the summer. If your family signed up for the SUUmer AdventUre JoUUrnl, I'll be in touch about a possible get-together.

I'm going to continue to run some online RE movie nights, and hope to offer a virtual game gathering. Watch our UU Families Facebook page for details.

This summer, I will be working with our church staff on what our RE Program future looks like. In the meantime, HAVE SOME FUN!!!

Mia Noren
Director of Religious Education,
Credentialed
Dre@uuabq.org

Stay in touch!

2021-22 RE Registration will start up again this August. If you're not getting notices from us, make sure your family information is up to date! Please contact Alana Rodriguez at reasst@uuabq.org if there are changes to your registration information, especially email and physical address. [Here's a link to our electronic RE registration, open all year.](#)

Youth News

Linda M. Underwood wrote, "...I will spend my soul, playing it out like sticky string into the world, so I can catch every last thing I touch." It's ironic because over the past year we definitely didn't want to catch everything. Nor were we touching many things that hadn't previously been sanitized.



While we still have to act with caution, this summer is shaping up to be much different from the last. For instance, we are able to gather in small groups at the church now. In fact, the youth did just that in June. It felt so good to be together again, even if we couldn't hug and wore masks. This summer, we will be spending time reconnecting as a community through more safe in-person gatherings, virtual games—including Minecraft—and welcoming a new batch of youth into our group.

To find out what is happening, be sure to check your email, Facebook and Instagram! If you have questions, email me at youth@uuabq.org.

Alana Rodriguez
Youth Programs Coordinator, RE Assistant

2021 UU Kids Camp

After careful consideration, your Camp Leadership Team has decided this year, we will have a scaled-back, in-person, day camp! **Mark your calendars for July 22–24, 2021!** [Click this link to register.](#)

Check the camp website often for all up-to-date information: <https://uukidscamp.blogspot.com/> or email Alana at reasst@uuabq.org.

Save the Date!

Our congregation will have the pleasure of **ordaining our former Ministerial Intern, Jane Davis, on Tuesday, September 7 at 6:30 pm.** The ordination service will be on Zoom and will include Jane's home congregation, Bradford Community Church UU in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Watch the Messenger and Broadsheet for more details and updates as we get closer to the event.



Connect & Learn

Adult Faith Formation Sunday Explorations

Join us every Sunday morning at 9:30 for weekly discussions on a variety of social justice, UU history, and faith-based and spiritual topics. Bring your coffee or tea and be a part of this virtual group.

Meeting ID: [842 4289 2753](#)

Passcode: [041625](#)

July 4: The Declaration of Independence and Its Underlying Values. Affirmation of those values in 2021. What are we celebrating today? How do we live out and honor those values now?

Angela Merkert, facilitator

July 11: Differing Visions of the U.S.—The Four Americas. Purpose and Meaning for the Four Americas. Discussion of the characteristics and implications for enhancing communications. From *Last Best Hope* by George Packer. Angela Merkert, facilitator

July 18: Emerging from the Pandemic: Faith, Trauma and Grieving. We have had a wide range of responses to the consequences of the pandemic. Let's discuss sources of inspiration and strength that ground our spiritual wellbeing as we acknowledge the vulnerability we experience. Angela Merkert, facilitator

July 25: Nature, Part 1. The Hidden Life of Trees is an astonishing book by Peter Wohlleben. We'll learn how trees in a forest communicate, need each other, and exist, not as competing individuals, but in community for mutual benefit. Ron Friederich, facilitator, leads UNM campus trees/plants tours for Oasis and other groups.

Addiction Recovery Ministry

From: *The Addiction Ministry Handbook* by Denis Meacham, 2004, Skinner House Books, pg 35

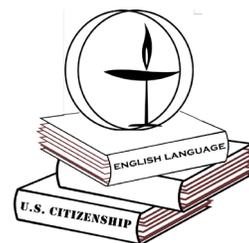
“Recovery calls us to cultivate an awareness and receptivity to the transcendent in life. For people with a theistic faith, this awareness may be the sense that God is at work in their lives. For others, it may be the experience of music or nature, a walk on the beach, cultivating a window box garden, or caring

for grandchildren. Such experiences at once go to the core of our being and seem to release our deepest love and sense of peace and fulfillment. People in long-term stable recovery have learned how to acknowledge these experiences and make them essential parts of their lives. And through being alive to such experiences, people in early stages of recovery begin to touch anew the true vital center of their selves. This signals a voluntary turning away from surfaces and superficiality and toward depth and fullness; an opening to the beauty, passion, and even the pain and anxieties of life where the soul reaches for the outstretched hand of God. While prayer and meditation can bring such an awareness, for people in stable recovery it is less a focused, time-circumscribed activity and more a way of being in the world. Being open to such experiences as we go about our lives belies the notion that there are specific times or places for the soul to be refreshed or inspired. Like children who find wonder and delight in life's simplest encounters, recovering people must be in the world with such openness and trust that they can be fully ready for the numinous to break through at any moment. Clearly this means being open to the transcendent in life requires being full present in the moment—being here now.”

Are you or a loved one affected by addiction? Join us for an Addiction Recovery Ministry “breakout” session every 1st and 3rd Sunday at 12:00 pm; or contact us recovery@uuabq.org.

Adult Literacy & Citizenship

It's hard to plan ahead when you can't predict the future! Our Adult Literacy & Citizenship program has been reduced in numbers—but not in heart—through the pandemic. Six of our students received their citizenship! We still have tutors and students who are meeting via Zoom or WhatsApp. Those who are fully vaccinated are starting to meet in parks, libraries, or coffee shops. We are getting ready for a fall semester of in-person classes at First Unitarian—when it is safe. We don't know how many students we will have or how many tutors we will need—yet. During the rest of the summer, we are working toward creating a more organized library of our materials. If anyone wants more information about the “possible future” of this program, please contact Connie Molecke via email at conniemolecke@gmail.com.



Groups & Activities

Family Promise Update

Family Promise ABQ is going strong. Currently, three families are being housed and supported. Last weekend, Judy Goering, Kathy Nunn and Paula Fisher did laundry (sheets and blankets) for them, something we do twice a month.

Our next host week is July 11-18.

We will be supplying dinners during this week! If you would like to help out, please contact Paula Fisher: fastfins@comcast.net.

Family Promise ABQ is raising funds to remodel their new headquarters on San Pedro. If you wish to donate, go to their website:

<https://www.familypromisealbuquerque.org>

ABQ FaithWorks Collaborative

FaithWorks was established in 2019 as an alliance of churches responding to the needs of people who came knocking on their doors. We wanted to respond to the needy with more than a 'water bottle and a granola bar.' There are now a dozen churches of many denominations working together in our community, serving marginalized populations—the unsheltered and resident migrants. Each program has its unique characteristics and client populations, and there is overlap in the basic humanitarian needs of clothing, food, shelter, and transportation. If you are interested in volunteering and working on a team, please send an email to admin@abqfaithworks.org. Visit our website <https://www.abqfaithworks.org/> to learn more! Thanks First Unitarian for its membership and support of these great programs in our wider community.

CUUPS This Month

Coyote Willow CUUPS will have a virtual Semi-Annual Meeting on **July 9, 2021 at 7:00 pm**. We will vote on officer positions, set our calendar for the next six months, and decide what direction we want our CUUPS group to go in and where we want to direct our attention and energy for the next half of the year. After our business is complete, if time permits, we will socialize. Eating dinner during the meeting is perfectly acceptable! Please have a candle and source of flame nearby for the meeting. **Email Victoria Rosquist at bboydbabe@gmail.com for login information.**

Wisdom Circle: Bringing Our Spiritual Life into the World

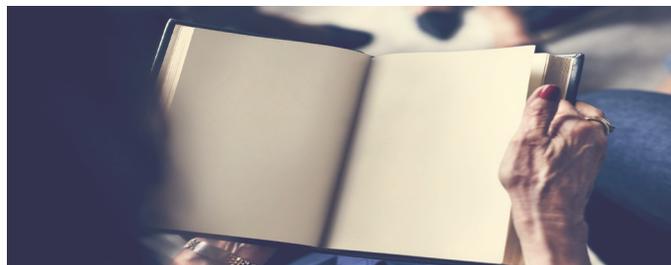
Saturday, July 17, 10:00 am - Noon

As the summer reaches its height, we of ripe years will gather round our Zoom table again to share our personal sense of spirituality and how that can manifest in the world. Do you feel yourself to have an inner spiritual dimension? How would you describe that? Does that aspect of your being show up in your interactions with society? Do you encounter difficulties? What are the rewards of these soulful, inside-out engagements?

Finally, you're invited to contemplate what is to be learned from experiences of bringing your inmost awareness and presence into the objective realm where our fates are forged, both individually and collectively. We continue to meet on Zoom until the church deems it safe for groups of twelve or more to re-convene in person. Contact Jerilyn Bowen at jbowen1@unm.edu.

Meeting ID: 962 2094 2211

Password: 485006



The Monday Afternoon Book Club will meet **July 19 at 10:00 am** (due to the heat) at Mary Fox Park. The book is yet to be determined. Please contact Joyce Etheridge at 509-308-5523 for further information.

Reading on Racism Book Group's selection for July is *On Juneteenth* by Annette Gordon-Reed. Our meeting is **July 28, 3:00 - 5:00 pm**. To join us and receive the Zoom link, please contact Kent Madden at revmadden22@gmail.com.

The Nonfiction Book Group is now meeting in person in the Arnold Room on **Wednesdays at 2:00 pm**. We're starting a new book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari. Send any questions to roberttwood@gmail.com.



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