



THE MESSENGER

FIRST UNITARIAN

Albuquerque • East Mountains • Socorro

November 2021

This Month's Theological Theme Is Holding History.



As you may know, I've worked at First Unitarian for a while (almost 7 years!) and have served multiple roles, starting with four years as the Church Administrator. Since the pandemic hit last year, our staff has evolved and many of our staff members have never seen First Unitarian in full-operation mode. I am often the holder of our history, the person with the institutional knowledge to hand over as needed.

During the last 3 or 4 months, as the staff prepared to reopen our campus, I've found myself saying, "*but, before the pandemic, we did it this way...*" much more than I would like. It's important to know that there have been procedures and traditions in how our church operates, sure. But I've started to ask myself, "when does holding history turn into holding ON to history?" **When does saying, "this is the way we've always done it" keep us from important and challenging growth?**

If you've had the chance to come to in-person worship services, you know things are *not* the same as they were in early 2020. There are the obvious differences of masks and social distancing, but we're also making other changes in how we welcome each other, including those who we are welcoming for the first time.

We have our Welcome Table right outside the sanctuary doors, which is safer right now, and has the added benefit of allowing our hospitality to start before visitors even enter our doors. Soon, we will be adding Hospitality & Inclusion greeters to our front steps. Training for this new team is coming soon, and is based on the study of *Widening the Circle of Concern*, the UUA Commission on Institutional Change's report on how we can work to eliminate white supremacy culture in our congregations. Contact me if you would like to help us with this effort!

First Unitarian has a long and beautiful history that is worth holding onto, and we are fortunate that we have members of our community who hold that history to share. But, holding history is also acknowledging the ways we've failed to live into our values, and taking the steps necessary to do better. **We are all needed for this important work.** I hope you will read the letter from Mikaela Renz-Whitmore, our Board President, on page 4 for more on this. Your time, talent, and treasure is needed now more than ever.

Laura Magnusson, Director of Membership & Communications

Raise Money for Social Justice All November!

It's Beginning! **The Social Justice Silent Auction is open on Facebook for all of November!** Go browse, bid, buy, and party, yes, PARTY! On **Saturday, November 13 from 5:00—9:00 pm**, we will have a Live Auction in-person and on Zoom. Items to be auctioned include three sermon topics donated by the ministers, and a mural by Andrew Fearnside. **This auction will work in a different way.** The group will offer topics until there's a general consensus that two of the topics are something everybody can get behind. Then, rather than one person bidding against another, people throw in a little money here and there to keep raising the ante. It makes for a night of hilarity—and more money for Social Justice.

Meanwhile, the Silent Auction will be open for the entire month of November. Browse and bid at the Silent Auction Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2622599427989989>. **Beautiful holiday wreaths will also be for sale there through November 8.** If you saw the wreaths last year, you know how beautiful, aromatic, and long-lasting they are.

After seeing all the wonderful items that have been donated, if you suddenly think of something that would have been perfect for this auction, it's not too late to donate! Just contact Benita at benita.terrell@earthlink.net.

Keep watching the broadsheet, church website, and Facebook auction page for details! **Let's raise some money for the Social Justice organizations that we will support in 2022!**

Worship Calendar for November

Virtual Worship: Sundays at 9:00 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](#).

In-Person Worship: Sundays at 11:00 am in the Sanctuary

With the same sermon topic as the virtual service and live music, worship in the Sanctuary is at 11:00 am. Social distancing will be observed and masks will be required.

November 7

“Regret & Redemption: Living With Our Histories”

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

Judgment is a function of experience, but gosh, getting experience can be painful. To live is to make mistakes and even inadvertently cause other people pain. As we get older, how do we make peace with our pasts?

In the spirit of Samhain and All Souls Day, today’s service includes a special candle lighting and prayer honoring the deceased. Zoom attenders: have an extra candle handy. In person: candles will be available in the sanctuary.

Today we will also hold our annual memorial wall ceremony in Memorial Garden after the 11:00 am service, in which we remember those congregation members whose ashes and/or names have been added to the wall.

November 14

“The History We Are Making”

The Rev. Angela Herrera

Regardless of what came before, your history—your story— is still unfolding. By bringing our full selves to the present we have the power to shape a story we can tell later with gratitude, peace, a sense of wholeness and pride.

November 21

“Settler Colonization”

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

Settler colonialism is the ongoing process of non-Native settlers occupying Native land, demanding their world views, morals, and economies be followed, and attempting to erase, assimilate, and replace the original inhabitants. How do we understand our roles as UUs in settler colonialism?

November 28

“Mostly Grateful”

The Rev. Angela Herrera

A sermon about practicing gratitude, even if we can’t do it perfectly. *Updated for today, Angela originally preached this sermon in 2013.*

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 mourn the death of church member Wayne Siek, who died this month.

We grieve the death of Virginia Spruill, a founding member of our Carlsbad branch, who died September 27.

We hold Judy Goering in our loving care as she grieves the death of three close friends.

We grieve with Ron Garcia-Herrera, whose father, Paul, has died.

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

Community News

Membership Milestones

Happy Membership Anniversary in November!

One Year

Toya Abatso-Diaz & Jose Diaz

Carol Hobart

Kenny Jones

Patricia Milner

Debbie & Gary Norris

Ferris Todd

Five Years

Gail Feigenbaum

David & Sarah Manning

Joshua Newman

Hannah Stephens

Joanne Vye

Ten Years

Paula Edwards

Doug Loescher

Twenty Years

Ardis & Edward Hanish

Twenty-five Years

Vincent Hietala

Carolyn Kelly

Thirty Years

Anne Manning

And More...!

Ann & Tom Stafford - 42 years

Jean & Ray Rachkowski - 51 years

Buck & Marian Schreyer - 56 years

New Member Joining Ceremony

What does it mean to become an official member of First Unitarian? Unitarian Universalism is not a faith tradition with a creed. Instead we consider ourselves "covenantal." The act of joining the church is an affirmation, a way of saying: "This is my church and my community and I want to spiritually grow with this group of people." If you feel ready to make that covenant with your church, [please fill out a Ready to Join form on our website](#) or visit the Membership Table in the courtyard after the in-person worship service. We have joining ceremonies on the first Sunday of each month with **our next ceremony on Sunday, November 7 at 12:15 pm in the Arnold Room**. Contact [Laira Magnusson at LMag@uuabq.org](mailto:LMag@uuabq.org) with any questions or for more information.



Dear Friends,

As ministry is a whole-person kind of vocation, and many of you have come to know not just me, but my family as well, I have some personal news that I need to share: My husband Carlos and I separated in September and have agreed to end our marriage.

Our partnership has lasted twenty-six years. We consider it a smashing success. I've often said that a long marriage is a series of different marriages to the same person. This has certainly been true for us. In various chapters, we raised up two cherished children who became teens and then delightful adults. We supported each other through school and vocational goals, lived in three different states, and went on many adventures together. We still care deeply about each other. Yet it is clear that in our next chapter, our new relationship should be as family members who are not married.

It's a big change. Naturally, it entails feelings of sadness and loss. You may not see Carlos at church for a while as we navigate this time. We appreciate your prayers. I also have faith in love as our guide, leading us into healing, wholeness, and joy.

From countless pastoral conversations this year, I know 2021 is a time of momentous transition not just for my family but for many people. If that's true for you, please know that I am praying for you, too: May your faith be a comfort. May love be your guide in all of the transitions, losses, and growth 2021 has brought, leading you into healing, wholeness, and joy.

Blessings,

Angela

Family Promise Update

Family Promise ABQ continues to help unhoused families, and First Unitarian supports them by providing supplies and meals. **We have an upcoming host week November 7-14**. If you can cook a meal or help with laundry, please join us!

•To help with meals, contact Jenny Parsons at jennyparsons@gmail.com.

•To help with laundry or supplies, contact Kevin Whitmore at khwhitmore23@gmail.com.

Volunteers are also needed for a huge parking lot sale on November 12 & 13 at their San Pedro location. Or, come by to shop and tour the new building! To volunteer, contact Family Promise at 505-268-0331. Thank you!

Community News

New! 2021 Financial Update

The finances for our Operating Fund are in good health. Our contributions have been coming in slower than expected all year. We have been able to reduce our operating expenses with the campus closed most of the year, which leaves us in a good position, but we need all 2021 pledges paid by year-end.

We currently have an Operating Fund Balance of \$37,327 and we expect an uptick in Pledge Payments over the last few months of 2021.

If you have questions, please contact Phillip Robinson, our Director of Finance, at accountant@uuabq.org.

Board of Directors Update: Looking Ahead to 2022

In her sermon in August, our minister emerita, the Rev. Christine Robinson, shared a story from her first years at the church—hard years with lots of disagreement and hard feelings, and maybe not quite enough listening and accepting. The elders of First Unitarian shared the wisdom that kept them going when the church had encountered hard times before—just keep the doors open. The rest will work itself out.

For those of you who have pledged for 2022 online or sent your pledges to the church, thank you for doing your part in keeping our doors open—for yourselves, for others, for me.

We are rooted in gratitude for all that we have—a beautiful sanctuary, renovated social hall, full-time staff that can support our church mission and our personal and collective journeys. **And now it is time to ask ourselves whether we can grow in love.**

Our pledges are tracking below the pace of last year. Even as the staff has done an amazing job of keeping our expenses down, our budget this year will only come out balanced because of the surplus we carried over from the COVID-19 federal emergency response funds we received in 2020—funds that we will not have in 2022. **We are the source of the funds we will have.**

So what will your pledges support? Our church, with doors open to those in need of love and the freedom to search for meaning and to trust what they find.

And if you are able to pledge for the first time, or pledge a little more than last year, what will your pledges support? Our church, growing in love. With staff who can serve our mission and help us in our personal and collective journeys. And a campus that can serve as our spiritual home and a gathering place

First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque				
2021 Financial Update				
(Fund 01- Operating Revenue & Expenses)				
As of 09/30/2021	2021 Budget	2021 Sept YTD Actual	2021 Forecast	Comments
Contribution Revenue	982,436	730,043	941,035	Contributions are down, need 2021 pledge payments
Other Revenue	48,950	705	29,800	Low due to pandemic
TOTAL REVENUE	1,031,386	730,748	970,835	
Compensation Expenses	782,725	556,132	738,388	Low due to pandemic
Operating Expenses	139,000	96,758	114,791	Low due to pandemic
Program Expenses	31,800	16,490	20,225	Low due to pandemic
Capital Expenses	86,084	44,816	86,084	Expected as budgeted
Other Expenses	98,333	85,780	107,237	Higher due to Audit of 2020
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,137,942	799,977	1,066,725	
EXCESS INCOME/EXPENSES	-106,556	-69,229	-95,890	
Allocated Surplus- Prior Yr	106,556	106,556	106,556	
ENDING SURPLUS / DEFICIT	0	37,327	10,666	Ending Fund Balance

for other communities and social justice efforts we want to support.

The board has begun to imagine the transformational work that we will need to do as a congregation, and as growing and learning people, to transform from a church that works very well for some and not as well for others, to a church that is truly a multicultural home that reflects and celebrates the glorious diversity in our midst.

We will need to look at all we do and how we do it, making sure we are considering the ways in which our doors are open or closed for different people among us: those of different races and ethnicities, different ages, different incomes, and different abilities. **We hope this work includes a milestone of a congregational vote to adopt the 8th principle to keep us committed to this hard, joyous, and worthwhile work.**

To keep our doors open—to keep our ears and our hearts open to one another—we will need all that our faith teaches us about how to listen and love across differences.

We are a faith with love at the center. We are not Pollyanna optimists; we know how challenging and potentially divisive this work can be. But we also know this is the work. This is our faith. Searching for the lessons in our differences. Growing as we learn to love each other.

This love fills me with pride and gratitude and hope for our future together. **Will you help us grow in love?**

- Mikaela Renz-Whitmore, President

Go here to pledge for 2022:

<https://uuabq.org/2022-pledge-drive/>

Religious Education



From Our Director of Religious Education

“To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves.”
-Alice Walker



Greetings!

There are many ways we cultivate “Holding History” with our children. An idea articulated in our Soul Matters resources excites me: a principle called “Seven Generations,” which has often been used in the context of caring for our earth. The idea holds up the importance of looking back at our history in order to move forward in a deeper and more meaningful way. It comes from a principle of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Iroquois), which was one of the first and longest-lasting participatory democracies in the world. Their idea of the Seven Generations is to be in relationship with the three generations before you and the three generations that will come after you. Those generations may not necessarily mean your relatives—as we confront climate change, we realize that we hold responsibility for everyone in the generations to come, and that we have all been affected by the generations that came before.

It’s all a beautiful reminder that holding history inevitably involves holding responsibility, or, as Ron Deganadus McLester, Executive Director of Algonquin College, puts it: “This means that our choices, our behaviors and our mistakes reverberate that far throughout history.”

Mia Noren

Director of Religious Education, Credentialed
Dre@uuabq.org

Our Current Programming for Children

Our children need time to play. Time spent outside on our playground helps children re-establish connection with adults, other children, and our church environment. If you consider yourself part of our RE community, please consider volunteering for one session of play! Click here: <https://tinyurl.com/UUABQplay>



Thanksgiving Day Is November 25

RE’s Teacher Holiday is Sunday, November 28. There will be no formal programming, but space will be held for children and youth who want to come play or hang out.

2021-22 Registration

The very best way to stay up to date with the latest in First U RE is to register your children/youth in our program. It’s free! You’ll remain on our email list which we use to communicate the most up-to-date information about classes, holidays, and events. You also get access to our exclusive Facebook page, a special birthday gift from us, and more!

[Click here to register](#) your family or use this QR code to go to the new Google form registration. Please register even if you have registered prior to August 2021. This new form will automatically populate a new spreadsheet for us and will ensure our contact information is up to date! Registering ensures that you will continue to receive updates about RE Programming via email and our First UU Families Facebook page!



Youth News



In Leonard Cohen’s song “Anthem” he sings, “there is a crack, a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” Very few of us have pasts without pain woven through. It’s just easier to shut out those traumatic times than confront them head-on. We are all well-taught in

the game of sweeping old wounds under the rug. And of course, there’s also the unprocessed horrors woven throughout our cultural history. They are the rule not the exception, but too often we work hard as a society to close ourselves off from them. All of which is to say, there is a deeper relationship between history and vulnerability than we often recognize. So, this month as we explore the theme of Holding History, we’ll do so by talking about how people die but love doesn’t, standing on the shoulders of those who come before, truth telling, and your unique history.

Alana Rodriguez (youth@uuabq.org)
Youth Programs Coordinator, RE Assistant

Connect & Learn

Adult Faith Formation Sunday Explorations

Bring your tea or coffee and join us at 10:00 on Sundays for discussions on a variety of topics related to faith, spirituality, justice concerns, and UU history.

Our theme this month is **Holding History**.

[Meeting ID: 842 4289 2753](#)

[Passcode: 041625](#)

November 7—History and Remembering History is the study of what happened, inquiry into what occurred in the past. The narratives of what we recall about events differ. What determines what we remember? What are the implications for how we consider history?

Angela Merkert, facilitator

November 14—History and Vulnerability Hebrew texts and the rabbis who teach them remind us of the significance of “a broken-open heart.” We cannot place the holy words of Torah in our hearts when they are closed. The rabbis call for us to place them on our hearts so that when they are broken open and we are vulnerable, those teachings reach us. Let’s explore wisdom teachings in our history and their relationship to vulnerabilities.

Angela Merkert, facilitator

November 21—Nature and Spirituality Our class will be based on “Nature,” a chapter in the good book, *Heart to Heart* by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins. Christine writes, “Whatever our theology, Nature has spiritual gifts for our lives.” We’ll explore the connection between the spiritual and nature.

Ron Friederich, facilitator

November 28—The Doctrine of Discovery of the U.S. and Its Impact Because of what we remember, what is taught and celebrated, there are narratives that are perpetuated. How have those narratives been challenged over recent years, and what difference do those changes make in our perspectives? Locate the roots of white supremacy, discrimination, and racism in these histories.

Angela Merkert, facilitator

Music Notes from Susan Peck



We hold history through song lyrics and tunes. *Singing the Living Tradition* (STLT) was published in 1993, and contains standards from earlier UU hymnals and pieces composed specifically for that edition, such as hymns that celebrate the beauty of darkness. Some of these hymns are still favorites; others are sorely outdated in view of advances in UU thought on anti-racism and inclusive language. Many tunes come from European Protestant sources. The historical poetry sheds light on a time when secular humanism guided many congregations.

Singing the Journey (STJ) was published in 2005, including “hymns that reflect our theological diversity and our respect for the variety of cultural expressions” and contemporary musical language to “touch the heart as well as the head” (Rev. Bill Sinkford).

Rev. Kimberley Debus blogged through both hymnals, with personal reflections and historical background on each hymn:

<https://farfringe.com/category/hymn-by-hymn/>

You may not always agree with her taste, but it’s a great place to dig deeper into our living musical tradition.

In 2010, the UUA released the Spanish language *Las voces del camino*, with translations from STLT and STJ and additional contemporary Spanish songs. We are long overdue to purchase copies of *Las voces* for our congregation. As we emerge from the pandemic and celebrate singing together out loud, I pledge to bring these songs to our worship.

CUUPS This Month

Coyote Willow CUUPS will hold its **first hybrid Planning and Social Circle on Friday, November 12 at 7:00 pm in the Wesson Room**. Those who wish to attend on Zoom may contact Victoria Rosquist at bboydbabe@gmail.com for the log-in information. In-person attendees should be vaccinated, must wear masks, and understand that in-person attendance at an indoor event increases risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission. Serving food is not currently allowed at in-person events. **Those who wish to attend in person must RSVP** to Victoria Rosquist, as the room can only hold a handful of people while observing social distancing precautions.

Groups & Activities

Wisdom Circle: How to Become a Loving, Diverse Community

Saturday, November 20, 10:00am—noon

At our November meeting, we of the elder persuasion will again gather around an actual table in person, this time to explore the question of how to do our part to foster a loving, diverse community. Come prepared to examine what stands in the way of that, to learn, and to contribute your own insights and experiences.

We'll be returning to our former meeting space in Memorial Hall (west side of the courtyard) and will, of course, observe safety precautions. Accordingly, we won't be having a potluck brunch but feel free to bring your own beverage to sip from a thermos or other enclosed container. If you'd prefer to attend on zoom, please let Jerilyn know and she'll do her best to accommodate that via a laptop computer. At this meeting we'll also take time to talk about which topics we want to explore in the coming year and compile a list for the group to vote on. All welcome to join the circle.

Contact Jerilyn Bowen at jbowen1@unm.edu for information.

Earth Web's Green Corner

Albuquerque's Climate Action Plan advocates our city's values and defines actions to halt its contributions to climate change. The Plan will also discuss what our community will do to prepare for our changing climate. For Albuquerque's Climate Plan, equity is in the driver's seat. Throughout the process, residents that are most vulnerable to climate change were invited to lead the conversations about current challenges and future solutions. This approach will help ensure that front-line communities—those that have been harmed by environmental injustice and who are likely to be hurt by the impacts of climate change—will benefit first and foremost from climate action. For more information check out this link:

<https://www.cabq.gov/sustainability/climate-action-plan>

Earth Web is currently working to improve bus service in Albuquerque and planning a snowshoe event in January. Hope you will join us at 2:00 pm on Zoom on the 2nd Sunday of each month! Contact Marilyn O'Boyle (marilynlea@aol.com) with your ideas and input. Together we make meaningful change possible.

Addiction Recovery Ministry

First Unitarian's Addiction Recovery Ministry is known as a welcoming, safe, and supportive space to members and the larger community affected by addiction.

Join us on Zoom on **Sundays, November 7 and 21 at 12:30 pm**, right after worship services.

Meeting ID: 961 4648 2750 Passcode: 425559

Contact us at recovery@uuabq.org.



The Bread, Wine, and Book Club will meet on **Friday, November 12 at 7:00 pm**. Our book this month is [*The Wednesday Sisters*](#) by Meg Waite Clayton. Contact Martha Beyerlein (martha.beyerlein@comcast.net) for more information.

The Monday Afternoon Book Club will meet **November 15 at 1:30 pm** on Zoom. The book is [*Have You Seen Luis Velez*](#) by Catherine Ryan Hyde. Please contact Joyce Etheridge at 509-308-5523 for further information.

The Readings on Racism (ROR) group is dedicated to learning more about racism and white supremacy in its various forms, how these negatively impact all of us and our society as a whole, and what we can do about it. This month, we will meet on Zoom **Wednesday, November 24** (the last Wednesday of the month) at 3:00 pm. Email emvmil@yahoo.com for this month's topic and to be added to our Zoom invitation list.

The Nonfiction Book Group meets every Wednesday at 2:00 pm in the Arnold Room. Contact Bob Wood (roberttwood@gmail.com) for more information.



First Unitarian
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
- DATED MATERIAL -

Sunday Worship Services

Virtual Worship

9:00 am

Albuquerque

11:00 am in the Sanctuary

East Mountains

11:00 AM

1 Deanna Ln.

Edgewood

(off Dinkle Road)

Socorro

4:00 PM

Epiphany Episcopal
Church, 908 Leroy Place

Would you like to donate our Sunday flowers? It is a meaningful way to celebrate an anniversary or birthday, or to remember a loved one. Dates are still available for November. Arrangements can be simple, and creativity is encouraged! Please contact Sara Friederich at saradell@comcast.net to reserve a date.