



# THE MESSENGER

FIRST UNITARIAN

Albuquerque • East Mountains • Socorro

March 2022

## This Month's Theological Theme Is Renewing Faith.



### A Faith Renewal is in order!

At times, over the past year or so, I have felt as if my faith was running out, trickling down the drain as each setback emerged—the continuing pandemic, the climate emergency, disturbing political

events, and the loss of community, people, safety, and you. I could easily continue listing more. But the Universe is still emerging, still changing, still being born. If the complexity of our times is weighing us down, let's begin our Faith Renewal with just ourselves, and then with our community.

In Religious Education this month, two of our weeks will focus on "Ourselves." Let us recognize our own gifts, our own inherent worth. And let us notice the simple gifts we always have and will always possess.

The other two weeks are about "Community." We will realize the beauty of how we Covenant together, and ask questions about what happens when we join forces for the Common Good. The short answer is: **When we work together, we build faith in each other, and by helping each other, we build hope.**

We can *all* begin by placing our faith in ourselves. Hope can be cultivated there. Building community, however, is a group effort. Our new Strategic Plan, approved in January, feeds my Faith Renewal. It speaks to me of a determination in our congregation to strengthen our relationships with each other, expand our church culture, and broaden our community. All of this is work we plan to do together. Again, **when we work together, we build faith in each other, and by helping each other, we build hope.** Where hope and trust lives, faith can emerge.

*It will be hard, and the road will be muddy and rough, but we'll get there.*

*Heaven knows how, but we will.*

*Woyaya, woyaya.*

**May our loving choices create a loving life, and a loving community.**

**Mia Noren**

**Director of Religious Education, Credentialed**

# Worship Calendar for March

## **Virtual Worship: Sundays at 9:00 am**

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

## **In-Person Worship: Sundays at 11:00 am**

Social distancing is observed and masks continue to be required.

## **Virtual Vespers: Wednesdays at 7:00 pm**

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

## **March 6**

### **Pulpit Guest, TBA**

**Music:** Karl Winkler, string quartet

## **March 13**

### **“The End is Near: Faith During the Apocalypse”**

#### ***The Rev. Bob LaVallee***

Times are bad and likely to get worse. Should we have faith? And if so, in what?

**Music:** Vocal trio, *After the Gold Rush*

## **March 20**

### **“Some of the Time: An Agnostic’s Faith”**

#### ***The Rev. Bob LaVallee***

About a third of the congregation at First Unitarian is agnostic. That is, they claim neither faith nor disbelief in God. What does that mean for our religious community?

**Music:** Spare Parts, First U’s contemporary band

## **March 27**

### **“When Life Stinks”**

#### ***The Rev. Angela Herrera***

We all experience painful seasons in life. What does it mean to lean on a UU faith when our personal lives are difficult?

**Music:** Lara Manzanares, New Mexican indie singer-songwriter

## **An Update About Masks**

You may be aware that on February 17, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham lifted the mandate requiring that masks be worn inside. We know that some folks in this congregation will be overjoyed. And we know that others, especially those with unvaccinated children or medically vulnerable loved ones, will find this decision terrifying. While we are aware that the infection rates in Bernalillo County have dropped over the last month, we’re also aware that the pandemic is far from over.

We will be convening our COVID Advisory Council on March 3 to consider this new policy and how we should move forward. Until then, **in an abundance of caution and empathy for our community, First Unitarian is continuing its policy of requiring masks for in-person worship services.** We hope you understand and we appreciate your patience.

## **We Light a Candle**

We grieve the death of church member Karen Williams and hold her husband Rick in our loving care.

We send healing thoughts to...

Dale Potter, who is recovering from a heart procedure.

Alison Kulp who is healing after illness.

Chris Johnson, who is recovering from some health issues.

Marion Ammerman, who is healing from a broken hip.

Bruce Little, who is in a rehabilitation hospital recovering from Covid.

*If you’re experiencing difficulties, health issues, or transitions, reach out to our Caring Network at [caring@uuabq.org](mailto:caring@uuabq.org).*

## **Living Alone, Eating Lunch Together!**

At the beginning of the pandemic, many of us found ourselves isolated in our homes with no social contact. First U created a virtual group called Living Alone Together (LAT) that meets once a week on Zoom. Now that things are opening up, we would like to continue the LAT meetings, with the added opportunity to get together for lunch after the church service on Sundays. If you are interested in joining us at 7:00 on Tuesday evenings on Zoom and/or meeting for lunch in person after church services. please contact Louise Gerstle at [Ltgerstle93@gmail.com](mailto:Ltgerstle93@gmail.com).

# Community News

## Membership Milestones

**Welcome to our newest members who joined the church in February!**

Kat Anderson & Ted Zuschlag

David & Erin Bouquin

Mireya Bouquin

Amy Sun

**Happy Membership Anniversary in March!**

### One Year

Andrea & Jennifer DeAngelo

Debi & Jerry Goyer

Victoria Rosquist

### Five Years

Clay Alberty

Shelley Alonso-Marsden & Chase Henson

Lindi & Steve Anderson

Julia Catgnus & Richard Sauls

Grace Hawkins Perce & Richard Perce

Jennifer Turner

### Ten Years

Joan Davis

Rick Held & Sandy McCardell

Caroline Monie

### Fifteen Years

Roseann Cimino

Alex & Erika Johnson-Jimenez

### Forty Years

Charlotte Carlson

Mary Schwartz

### And More!

Ina Miller - 63 years

## Healthy Community & Conflict

**Resolution:** The Healthy Community Committee continues to serve the congregation by providing resources for dealing with conflicts within the church, including those involving members, committees, teams, and ministers. For more information on self-directed resolution, our procedures, and how to contact us, please see our page at the church website under About - Governance & Organization - Conflict Resolution & Healthy Community, or go directly to <https://uuabq.org/conflict-resolution-healthy-community/>.

## 2022 UUA General Assembly in Portland

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles.

**Registration opens March 1! Join us June 22 - 26 online or in-person in Portland, Oregon. Go to the GA website for more information and to register:** <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

General Assembly will continue to offer virtual attendance with robust programming and enhanced delegate discussion tools. For those who have been missing the physical experience, GA 2022 will also feature face-to-face interactions, hanging banners, a browsable exhibit hall, meals with friends old and new, local site attractions, and more!

Interested in being one of First Unitarian's voting delegates for General Assembly? Delegates must be church members in good standing and approved by the board. Email Judy Bentley at [judybeme@msn.com](mailto:judybeme@msn.com) to let her know you are interested.

## Afterschool Tutoring Report

We are happy to report that First Unitarian's After School Tutoring Program is doing well, with 16 enrolled students from Montezuma Elementary. Tutors and students have all stayed healthy! Besides working on reading, math skills, and homework assignments, there are a lot of other fun and educational activities going on such as a Readers' Theatre performance and a chess club. Students and tutors are watching our tulip and daffodil bulbs sprout, soon to make our playground area more beautiful. The new saucer swings are lots of fun, too. If you would like to help out or learn more, contact Carol Oslund by email at [astp.carol@icloud.com](mailto:astp.carol@icloud.com).

## Save the Date: Paula Cole Jones

Everyone in the congregation is invited to attend an online workshop with the co-founder of the 8th Principle movement, Paula Cole Jones, on **Saturday, April 23**. The workshop is from 1:00 - 4:30 pm and consists of two 90-minute sessions separated by a 30-minute break. She'll provide experiential learning on the relevance and transformative nature of the 8th Principle and a larger framework for understanding cultural change in the UU context. Read more about the 8th Principle here: <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>. Contact Rev. Bob LaVallee at [blavallee@uuabq.org](mailto:blavallee@uuabq.org) with any questions about the workshop.

# Community News

## Monthly Financial Update

First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque 2022 Financial Update (Fund 01- Operating Revenue & Expenses)				
As of 01/31/2022	2022 Budget	2022 Jan YTD Actual	Remaining Budget (\$)	Remaining Budget (%)
Contribution Revenue	\$ 1,068,385	\$ 118,631	\$ 949,754	89%
Other Revenue	38,417	624	37,793	98%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>1,106,802</b>	<b>119,255</b>	<b>987,547</b>	<b>89%</b>
Compensation Expenses	857,320	59,561	797,759	93%
Operations Expenses	114,794	11,003	103,791	90%
Program Expenses	28,022	1,206	26,816	96%
Capital Expenses	-	-	-	-
Other Expenses	96,082	13,502	82,580	86%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,096,218</b>	<b>85,272</b>	<b>1,010,946</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>EXCESS INCOME/EXPENSES</b>	<b>10,584</b>	<b>33,983</b>		
Capital Transfer	-48,084	-4,007	(44,077)	92%
Allocated Surplus- Prior Yr	37,500	37,500		
<b>ENDING SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 67,476</b>		

We are starting 2022 in a good financial position with our Operating Fund. We currently have an Operating Fund Balance of \$67,476. Our operating revenue for January is proportional to our annual budget. Expenses in our Operating fund are low and we continue to plan for the rest of the year.

If you have questions, please contact our Director of Finance, Phillip Robinson, at [accountant@uuabq.org](mailto:accountant@uuabq.org).

## Board of Directors Update

**A new year is a good reminder of all the ways we can start again.** The new board had a wonderful retreat facilitated by Julica Hermann de la Fuente. We learned a shared vocabulary around anti-racism and anti-oppression (AR/AO) in order to fully embrace multiculturalism. The board is fully committed to this year of AR/AO work with the goal of readying our congregation to vote on the 8th Principle at the annual meeting in 2023.

At the retreat, the board explored what this work might look like and feel like for the church and for ourselves. Julica encouraged us to approach this as fractal work—work happening at all levels, everywhere you look in the church, and in every moment, every interaction. This work calls for courage, vulnerability, curiosity, humility, and compassion, no matter where you are on this journey—whether you feel like you’re at the beginning or well into your marathon mile.

<https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/the-intercultural-development-continuum-idx/>

In our first meeting, **the board decided to form an 8th**

**Principle Task Force** to help guide and coordinate this work across all church groups, church staff, and members. Board members will be drafting a charge to this task force that gives direction about the expected work itself—providing opportunities for people to engage at the personal level, interpersonal level, and at the institutional/systemic level—but also how this work should be done. The Task Force—and all of us—must lead in love, loving people where they are on the journey, even as we invite each other to learn a little more and do a little better, remembering always that our relationships and our covenant with each other are more important than our mistakes or our failings. The charge will also lay out how task force members and a chair or co-chairs will be decided. Several members have already expressed interest in serving, which is so appreciated. Stay tuned!

Even though this work is certainly our priority for this year, there is much more that the board must do. Many of our board committees that keep our church running are thin on members, and several committee chairs are looking to step aside now or soon. **If you are looking for ways to step up in service or commitment to our church, have we got some good opportunities for you!**

- **Finance Committee:** Joyce Etheridge is seeking new members. This committee works with our Director of Finance to oversee our financial health.
- **Buildings and Grounds:** Stephen Phillips wants to mentor a new chair, and new members are needed. This committee will take a big role in next year’s major priority—updating our campus master plan and deciding on the ultimate use of the Arc Building.
- **Landscape Committee:** Melisa Nicoud wants to mentor a new chair, and new members are needed. This committee recently did great work updating the church playground to be ready for our children in this pandemic moment.
- **Personnel Committee:** Geri Knoebel wants to mentor a new chair, and new members are needed. This committee will be key to examining our hiring practices and staff practices to find and remove structural barriers to people of color and other structures of oppression.

For all the ways we serve each other and this church, I thank you! We renew our faith with each commitment we make to each other.

Mikaela Renz-Whitmore, President

# Religious Education



## From Our Director of Religious Education



***“Faith is taking the first step even when you can’t see the whole staircase.”***

***-Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.***

Greetings!

In this challenging time, when I am sending lessons home to our RE families to practice together, here is how we’re considering the theme of Renewing Faith: We want children to know how they are Building Faith. To do that we:

- Teach and practice Covenanting, keeping promises together that help us feel safe, connected, and strong.
- Renew faith in ourselves, by recognizing and trusting the gifts we all have. Our gifts are part of our inherent worth. Each one’s special gifts remind us that we can rely on ourselves in challenging times—helping ourselves and each other.
- Noticing what happens when we join forces for the Common Good, and experience faith in each other. We help each other, and that is a great source of hope.
- Noticing the everyday joys and gifts that we already have and will always possess, outside of our consumer society and social media.

I plan that one day, when our children and volunteers return, we will practice the creation of covenants together, one of the first things we do when beginning a new session of RE. Returning to this pivotal concept in our faith is a great way to restart our time together.

**Mia Noren**  
**Director of Religious Education, Credentialed**  
[Dre@uuabq.org](mailto:Dre@uuabq.org)

## Our Current Programming for Children

Our children need time to play. (So do we!) Time spent outside on our playground helps children re-establish connection with adults, other children, and our church environment. **If you are comfortable with returning, we are here. If you’re waiting, we’ll be here when you’re ready.** The theme of play and interaction will continue.

If you want to be a part of our RE community, please consider volunteering for a session of play! We are not yet asking for volunteer teachers. Sign up here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2022REvolunteer>

At home, parents have been responsible for the Religious Education of their children. Noting that families are not returning in large numbers yet, Mia is creating weekly posts and emails featuring a recorded storybook on the theme, questions to ponder together, and an activity to do with children.

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 and 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 ensuring your contact information is up to date!



## Youth News



There’s a chant by Amy McCreath called “What We Need Is Here” that is sometimes used in UU worship. It’s beautiful and evocative of the theme this month: Renewing Faith.

So, what does it mean to renew faith anyway? Have we lost faith that everything is going to be OK? Climate change, racism, partisan politics, the pandemic and its variants don’t tell us things are getting better. But we still hope! We know we must renew faith in change, in ourselves, in each other.

Maybe renewing faith is more about remembering our longing for what we love, and what is important. As spiritual people, we renew faith in these basic things to get us through, to help us keep going. We’ll explore the theme by exploring the practice of covenanting, trusting our gifts, joining forces for the common good, and noticing the richness we already had and always possess.

**Alana Rodriguez ([youth@uuabq.org](mailto:youth@uuabq.org))**  
**Youth Programs Coordinator, RE Assistant**

# Connect & Learn

## Sunday Explorations

Bring your tea or coffee and join us at 10:00 on Sundays!

[Meeting ID: 842 4289 2753/Passcode: 041625](#)

Our March theme is “Renewing Faith.”

**March 6—Living in Faith.** What does it mean to you to live your faith or to live faithfully? How does it look and feel to live faithfully? What does this word faith mean to you and how do various religions define faith?

Angela Merkert, facilitator.

**March 13—“Faith is taking the first step even when you can’t see the whole staircase,”** said Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. What challenges in our lives today call for us to take the first, the next step, even when we don’t see the outcome? What supports courage, strength, resilience as we take those steps?

Angela Merkert, facilitator.

**March 20—Our Faith and Trust in Democracy: Where Are We?** The roles we may assume as our country experiences challenges to the democratic system of government. How to rebuild trust and also adapt institutional practices that support the democratic principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

Angela Merkert, facilitator.

**March 27—Keep Sharp, Building a Better Brain at Any Age, Part 2** by Sanjay Gupta MD will be our text. How can we reduce our risk of dementia? “Whether you’re concerned about memory loss or want to boost your mental acuity, this book is an essential guide.” Unnecessary to have attended Part 1.

Ron Friederich MD, facilitator.

## ESL & Citizenship Classes Start March 7



This time we really are re-starting the Adult Literacy & Citizenship in-person classes at First U! **Classes are free.**

Please help spread the word to anyone who wishes to improve their English skills, complete the Citizenship application, or

study for their exam. Paper flyers are available in the church office for distribution around town. **Registration will be March 7 at 6:30 pm and the first class will be March 14 at 6:30 pm in the RE Building.** All tutors and students meeting in-person must be fully vaccinated. Please contact Connie Molecke at [conniemolecke@gmail.com](mailto:conniemolecke@gmail.com) for more information.

## Back by Popular Demand! UU 101

Great news! Rev. Bob LaVallee will be offering a virtual UU 101 session for anyone who wants to learn more about what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist today. If you are a new member, considering joining the church, or looking for a new perspective on being a UU, plan to join us on **Saturday, April 2 at 9:00 am.** To register, go to <https://forms.gle/of2Y8hKYuV7qCRGk9>.



## Investment Strategies for Retirement

**Wednesday, March 16 at Noon.**

*Sponsored by the Radical Generosity Committee.*

Are you financially ready for retirement? And if you are retired, do you have your investments allocated to carry you through? Join Kris Kennedy, UU Member, Financial Advisor & Founder of Kennedy Financial Network, for this complimentary 45-minute Zoom webinar about investing for retirement. [Click here to register](#) or email her at [kris@kennedyfinancialnetwork.com](mailto:kris@kennedyfinancialnetwork.com).

## Wisdom Circle: Favorite Movies

**Saturday, March 19, 10:00 am - noon on Zoom**

As spring raises its lovely head, we of ripe years will meet on Zoom again, this time to talk about our favorite movies. What films have had the most impact on you? What movies have you most enjoyed? Which actors and directors do you like? How has the cinema changed during your lifetime? What would you like to see more/less of in current offerings? In our personal experiences of this powerful art form, there is much to share about and learn from. **Everyone welcome...ya'll come!** Contact Jerilyn at [jbowen1@unm.edu](mailto:jbowen1@unm.edu).

[Meeting ID: 962 2094 2211 / Passcode: 485006](#)

## Another Puzzle Exchange!

Puzzlers who want new puzzles, bring your old puzzles (ones you are almost positive have all their pieces, please!) to the Social Hall on **Saturday, March 5 at 10:00 am.** We'll set them all out, look them all over, and then let folks choose new puzzles to take home. Leftovers will be donated. Puzzles of all sorts are welcome (cardboard, wood, 3-d, etc.) Email Christine Robinson ([revcrobinson@gmail.com](mailto:revcrobinson@gmail.com)) for more information.

# Groups & Activities

## Music Notes from Susan Peck

**Fourth Sundays @ 4:00**, our monthly open mic, happens **Sunday, March 27** on Zoom. This monthly gathering allows members of our congregation to share music, poetry, stories, and art with a supportive audience. Originals and covers, all welcome!



Contact me at [speck@uuabq.org](mailto:speck@uuabq.org) if you're interested in participating.

With AUUMM colleague Natasha Steinmacher, I've co-written a new online course for the UUA's Music Leadership Certification Program (MLCP), similar to LREDA's renaissance modules. The 6-week course, *Developing and Managing a Music Program*, will be offered online in March and April. Religious professionals can audit or take the course for credit. Natasha and I both completed the MLCP in spring of 2020. The 3-year MLCP curriculum covers UU history, anti-racism/anti-oppression work, music skills, budgeting, copyrights and permissions, working with staff teams effectively, self-care and ethics, connecting with the wider community, and using technology to support worship.

## Volunteer! Spring Campus Clean-Up

Spring is right around the corner and so is the first of our two campus clean-ups. Please, mark your calendars for:

**Saturday, March 19, 9:00 - noon**

**Saturday, April 23, 9:00 - noon (day after Earth Day!)**

And, like "in the old days," we've been given permission to serve lunch afterward, outside, in the courtyard! Bring your gloves and pruning shears, and come join us to rake, trim, mulch, weed and get our campus lookin' good for Spring! Questions? Email Melisa Nicoud at [mnicoud2@gmail.com](mailto:mnicoud2@gmail.com).

## CUUPS This Month



Join Coyote Willow CUUPS for an **Ostara Ritual on Saturday, March 19 at 7:00pm**. Ostara is the festival of the spring equinox, a time to celebrate the moment between darkest winter and the height of spring, where day and night are equal. It symbolizes fertility, rebirth, and renewal. For this ritual we will be energizing and focusing our intent on the things we wish

to manifest for spring. Bring an open mind and an open heart. This will be a magical night for all involved.

Coyote Willow CUUPS holds its **Planning and Social Circle on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:00 pm**. Due to the ongoing social distancing requirements, we are again meeting in the virtual world for this event. On **March 11**, we will have a discussion on Runes. Please have a candle and source of flame nearby for the start of the meeting. Email [bboydbabe@gmail.com](mailto:bboydbabe@gmail.com) for the Zoom meeting information for both of these events.

## Earth Web's Green Corner

Our church's environmental study and action team, Earth Web, will host their annual **Sustainability Fair on Sunday, May 1**, under our wonderful cottonwood tree! After a two-year hiatus, we're glad the patio is open again and ready for plant sales, informational tables, and exhibits about energy and sustainability options. Joining us this year will be the **Animal Advocates Arts & Crafts Fair**, with jewelry, art, and craft items for sale just in time for Mothers Day. Earth Web has met on Zoom throughout the lockdown era, with several guest speakers, a book study, support of the Green New Deal and more! Now we are examining our part of the Strategic Plan and the 8th Principal. We hope you will choose to join us this spring to help in these endeavors as well as to create a fantastic Sustainability Fair. Please contact Marilyn O'Boyle at [marilynlea@aol.com](mailto:marilynlea@aol.com) if you would like to help!

## **MONTHLY READS**

**The Bread, Wine, and Book Club** will meet on **Friday, March 11 at 7:00 pm**. Our book will be [\*Fake Accounts\*](#)



by [Lauren Oyler](#). Contact Martha Beyerlein ([martha.beyerlein@comcast.net](mailto:martha.beyerlein@comcast.net)) for more information.

**The Monday Afternoon Book Club** will meet **Monday, February 21** at 1:30 pm on Zoom. The book is [\*The Housekeeper & the Professor\*](#) by [Yoko Ogawa](#). Contact Joyce Etheridge at 509-308-5523 for further information.

**The Nonfiction Book Group** meets every Wednesday at 2:00 pm in the Arnold Room. This month they are discussing [\*The Icepick Surgeon\*](#) by [Sam Kean](#). Contact Bob Wood ([roberttwood@gmail.com](mailto:roberttwood@gmail.com)) for more information.

**The Readings on Racism Group** meets the last Wednesday of each month at 3:30 pm. Contact Elly Van Mil ([emvmil@yahoo.com](mailto:emvmil@yahoo.com)) to be added to their email list.



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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**

3:00 PM

Epiphany Episcopal  
Church, 908 Leroy Place