



THE MESSENGER

FIRST UNITARIAN

Albuquerque • East Mountains • Socorro

February 2023

Our theological theme this month explores “The Path of Love.”



My grandma died of breast cancer when I was in high school. It happened on a Sunday, and our mourning family found our way to the Unitarian church that morning—compelled by the sacred space created in that familiar community. We collectively lit a candle for her during “joys and sorrows”

and I remember feeling held in love in my sadness and overwhelm. This became a foundational moment in my understanding of a theology of love. I simultaneously experienced the love of community (a love offered and received without anyone in the room knowing what we were experiencing) and the love of something bigger and more mysterious than I could explain in words. I later discovered Elizabeth Norton’s song—based on the words of Rebecca Parker—capturing perfectly the expansive love that I felt in that moment.

“There is a love holding me.

There is a love holding all that I love.

There is a love holding all.

I rest in this love.”

This month’s theological theme of “love” invites us to make meaning of this concept that people have wrestled

with for centuries. And of course we could reflect on the theme of love every month until the end of time and still have more to explore. Unitarian Universalists hold love as a central tenant of our faith—perhaps one of the most consistent and persistent aspects of our covenant with each other.

This month, let’s allow ourselves to explore new ways of understanding love. This exploration won’t look the same for each of us, because we all start with different definitions. Perhaps you will lean into bell hooks’ concept of love as a verb; maybe you’ll engage in the offerings of “Side with Love” and their “30 days of Love” campaign—seeking love through a lens of justice; possibly you will lean in to the love found in community; or you will embrace a “revolutionary love” seen through Valarie Kaur’s work as an “orientation to life that is personal and political rooted in joy.” Whatever it is, may this month find you making meaning of love in new ways.

There is a love holding us. May we rest in this love.

Kristin

Sabbatical for Me... and The Messenger

I am very grateful to be taking a 10 week sabbatical starting on February 20. After 8 years of service to the church and the last 3 in a programmatic role (during a global pandemic!) I am ready for a rest. I’m fortunate to be supported in this time of retreat and renewal by our ministers and a wonderful staff ready to step in and cover what is needed while I’m gone.

That being said, our entire staff is operating under a tight budget with few extra hours available each week. We are running lean, and one of my favorite job duties—editing and producing the monthly *Messenger*—is too much for other staff members to cover. **The Messenger will be on sabbatical, too, and will return to normal publication on June 1.**

Not to worry, we will still have weekly eBroadsheets, announcements in the worship services, and our website and social media accounts with the most up-to-date information. If you have concerns about getting your group events publicized during this time, reach out to me before the 20th and I will help you come up with a plan.

I will return to worship services on April 30 to see my oldest child, Shane, participate in the Coming of Age service and will be primarily a proud mom that day—but feel free to come give me a warm welcome back! On Monday, May 1st, I will return to the office with many ideas and plans for 2023 and beyond, with a renewed sense of purpose and joy.

I’m grateful to work for and with this very beloved community.

Laira Magnusson (she/her)
Director of Congregational Life

LMags@uuabq.org



Worship Calendar for February

Worship on Sundays at 9:00 and 11:00 am

Livestream at 9:00 am on Zoom

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

Virtual Vespers: Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Enter Meeting ID: 831 0756 4002 with

Passcode: UUABQ or [click here.](#)

February 5

“Eulogies”

The Ministers & Musicians

The popular, annual service dedicated to regular yet notable people who died in the last year. We'll celebrate some of the people whose lives touched ours, even if we never knew their names. Inventors, activists, scientists and more... come for good music and good stories; leave with a spring in your step.

Music: Spare Parts, with Vance Bass, Jayson Capps, Tania Hopkins, Keith Morris, Chris Paul, Susan Peck

February 12

“The Souls of Animals”

The Rev. Angela Herrera

Do animals have souls? How can such a thing be assessed? A message about our existential and moral relationship with the non-human critters of the world. This sermon topic was a winner at last fall's Social Justice Auction.

Music: Lydia Clark

February 19

“Love Wisdom”

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

For this sermon, Rev. Bob interviewed wise elders at First U for their thoughts about love. Come hear some sage advice about one of life's mysteries.

Music: Lydia Clark

February 26

“What Even Is Love?”

The Rev. Angela Herrera

Love, like “soul,” is hard to define. We know it when we see it. But it's also a skill we can get better at. And who doesn't want to be great at love?

Music: Chalice Choir directed by Susan Peck, Nicia Rae, piano

Staff News

Please join Susan Peck in welcoming two talented pianists to our music program!

Nicia Rae, a long-time church member who served on the RE council, joined Chalice Choir this fall as pianist. Nicia also provides service music and accompanies congregational singing on choir Sundays.

Also joining our staff this winter is Lydia Clark, a pianist, singer, composer, arranger, music teacher, and film producer who recently relocated to Albuquerque from Santa Fe, where she was the music director of the Santa Fe Center for Spiritual Living. Lydia has deep connections in New Mexico's contemporary music community, and will bring soulful jazz, R&B, and original music to our worship services.

We Light a Candle

We grieve with the family and friends of church member the Rev. Glenda Gray, a retired minister who died on December 27. A memorial service is being planned for the spring.

We grieve with the friends and family of Len Truesdell, a member of our branch congregation in Socorro, who died on December 30. We hold his wife Joan in our loving care.

We hold Dianne and Roy Moody in our care as they both recover from major health issues and surgeries.

We send healing thoughts to Carol Oslund, who has been diagnosed with cancer, and hold her and husband Ken in our care.

We light a candle for Jeannette Held, who has been moved into hospice care. We hold Jeannette and her son Rick in our hearts during this time.

Melisa Nicoud appreciates good wishes and prayers as she faces medical complexities and uncertainties prior to determining effective treatment.

We joyfully congratulate church members Joela Bezzeg and Derek Trumbo who were married by Rev. Angela last fall.

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

Community News

Membership Milestones for February - May

One Year

Maggie Agard & Brent Willoughby
Kat Anderson & Ted Zuschlag
David & Erin Bouquin
Mireya Bouquin
Ollie Bradstreet
Cecelia Dunbar
Elaine Edmonds
Michelle Ellis
Jacob Shull
Amy Sun
Lisa Westfall

Five Years

Marie Baca
Hannah Dowdy-Sue
Timothy Funk & Darlene Gray
Sheryl Guterl
Faye Rafferty
Shelley Simms
Joe Trujillo

Ten Years

Michelle Auron
Molly Caskey
Nick Shuman
Dana Workman

Fifteen Years

ViV Bakula & Gwen Sawyer
Jessi Bezzeg
Joela Bezzeg
Edward Calhoun
Barry Clark

Fifteen Years, continued

Alisa Escandon-Tannirat & Geoff Escandon
Winona Fetherolf
Amanda Harper
Nancy Kilpatrick
Michelle Kjeldgaard
John & Kathy Kwait
Andrea Lee
Cara Potter
George Ruptier
Carol Schwarz
Hart & Debi Weiss

Twenty Years

Caitlin Anderson
Brenda Cole
David Simpson

Twenty-Five Years

Jack Wilder

Thirty Years

Dona Duquin
Chris Paul

Forty Years

Eric Sorenson

Forty-Five Years

Shirley Williams

Fifty Years

Rebecca Gracey

Next Joining Ceremony February 5

Our next New Member Joining Ceremony will be on **Sunday, February 5 at 10:15 am in Memorial Hall. This will be the last joining ceremony until May.** If you would like to join, please fill out the [RSVP form on our website](#) or at the Membership & Connections Table on Sundays. Questions about joining? Contact our Membership Committee Chair, Gwen Sawyer, at gandg10@comcast.net.

Looking to Volunteer? Become an Usher!

First Unitarian is one of the bigger UU churches in the country, and it can be tough to find your smaller community within it. Volunteering is a great way to meet other people and feel involved! Our Sunday mornings need ushers for both services. Training is provided! Contact Sue Spaven at spaven@swcp.com.

General Assembly 2023

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.

Join us this year from June 21 - 25, online or in-person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Registration is open at <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>. Register early to secure the lowest rates. Volunteer opportunities and financial support are available.

Those church members interested in being one of First Unitarian's delegates at General Assembly should send a message to our Director of Congregational Life, Laura Magnusson at LMags@uuabq.org before February 17 or after May 1.

Community News

We Have Adopted the 8th Principle!

Dear First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque,

As your new Church President, it is my great pleasure to write that our congregation adopted the 8th Principle at our annual meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2023.



This is an important step towards becoming a Beloved Community that will embrace cultural differences and a diversity of social identities in all of our church practices.

Nearly 300 UU churches have adopted the 8th Principle nationwide. This phenomenal widespread commitment will hopefully lead to the adoption of this principle by our denomination.

And we must keep the momentum going! Church delegates from our congregation will attend UUA's General Assembly in June, where the 8th Principle will be on the agenda for adoption by our denomination.

At our church, the Board will continue to explore ways for us to move forward on this spiritual evolution. Most importantly, we will be requesting your feedback and engagement, as it will be the responsibility of each member and friend of this congregation to lean into our values. In the words of Mary Oliver, "Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable."

En Comunidad,
Dámaris Donado, Co-Chair, 8th Principle Task Force

African-American History Exhibit Continues

February is Black History Month, a nation-wide celebration of African American history and accomplishments. Start your celebration with a visit to the current African-American History exhibit in the Social Hall! Created by historian and law professor Dr. Sherri Burr, the exhibit provides a comprehensive view of 400 years of African-American history in a single location. If you haven't seen it yet, don't miss it.

If you would like to see it again, please do! Composed of many images taken from history and document excerpts that provide context, the exhibit is worth a second look. Images taken from prints, drawings, and news clippings from the days of legal slavery provide a compelling view of our country's racist past, which arguably continues to this day. Images of historical figures like Harriet Tubman

and Frederick Douglass are also on display. Most images may be purchased.

The exhibit can be viewed on Sunday mornings, and on select weekdays, co-hosted by the Arts & Aesthetics Committee and the Widening the Circle Group. Contact Peggy Roberts at docpegasus@gmail.com for weekly dates, or keep an eye on the Broadsheet and Order of Service calendars. Arts & Aesthetics Committee representatives are available during exhibit hours for sales of prints.

To celebrate Black History Month in the wider Albuquerque community, [visit Black History Events and Programming for a schedule of events.](#)

Announcing the 2023 Change for the Future Recipients

The Change for the Future program takes designated funds collected from our Sunday Offerings and distributes them to four different nonprofit groups each year, each awardee for three months during the year. The following organizations received the most votes at our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2023.

Casa Q provides safe living through housing, services and advocacy for LGBTQ+ youth, thinking long-term to build resiliency, self-determination and self-efficacy for every young person that needs us.

<https://www.casaq.org/>

Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women's mission is to stop violence against Native women and children by advocating for social change in our communities. They provide support to other Native advocates working in domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and sex trafficking in New Mexico's tribal communities. <https://www.csvanw.org/>

Libros for Kids is a non-profit gifting program in partnership with the Imagination Library that mails free books to children from birth to age five in participating communities in the Albuquerque area. The purpose of Libros for Kids is to improve literacy in Bernalillo County. <https://www.librosforkids.org/>

Seed2Need is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to reducing hunger in our community by growing fresh fruits and vegetables and donating it to local food pantries. Seed2Need has donated over 725,000 pounds of produce since the project began in 2008. <https://seed2need.org/>

Religious Education



From Our Director of Religious Education

Piglet: "How do you spell 'love'?"
Pooh: "You don't spell it... you feel it."

-A. A. Milne

Greetings!

Love shows up in so many different ways. This month, our theme is Love, and our children's lessons help us find all the ways that love shows up in our lives. Helping kids find all the ways that love is present helps them to feel safe and, well ... loved!

One of the ways love shows up is from, and for, our church community. We welcome people who want to share that with our children. If you enjoy children, games, crafts, and stories, and the idea of building community across all ages, get in touch with me or Alana! Our contact emails are on this page, and we can be found all around the campus.

Children's Love lessons will focus on:

Love for Self

Love for Family and Friends

Love for Community

What do you really LOVE? Favorite things, Show-n-Tell.

Expect age-appropriate picture story books, movement activities, crafts, songs, and games!

Do you love interacting with older children—10,11,12 years old? A 4th and 5th grade class is forming, and I'm building a teacher team for this group. I need at least 4 people who can alternate teaching from 10:00-11:00 on Sundays until the end of June. What an interesting age this group is, as they are on their way to becoming youth.

Mia Noren

Director of Religious Education, Credentialed

Dre@uuabq.org

Youth News

February is often considered the month of love, so it's fitting that it's our theme. The youth will explore it as we talk and think about love for ourselves, love for family and friends, love for our community, and by asking what we really love.



We'll hear from some folx who live along the margins of society and their perspectives on the complexity of relationships and layers of identity; and, we'll write love letters to objects we have a deep affection for, even if it might be considered unusual. To do this, we will listen to and take inspiration from Pablo Neruda's poem, "Ode to My Socks." Pablo describes the joy and feeling of the wool socks that were knitted for him, even calling them "heavenly" and "so handsome."

Love does come in many shapes and forms, and I hope we encounter a new form that allows us to feel more deeply loved than we already do.

Alana Rodriguez

Youth Programs Coordinator, RE Assistant

youth@uuabq.org

Register Your Family

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, and provide access to our RE Facebook pages. [Click here to register your family](#) or scan the QR code.

Young Adults

The Young Adults affinity group meets every Sunday to offer space to partner in church community life, build friendships, and contemplate religious themes together. Join us from 12:30-1:30 pm in the Arnold room (we ask that masks be worn) or online via Zoom/Discord. This group is geared towards those ages 18-35 years old and anyone who feels being in this group would deepen their belonging at First U. This year, we are planning to grow our community presence with more youth ministry, and we are excited to welcome new and familiar faces.

On the 1st and 3rd Sundays in February we will discuss texts and art considering themes of love and antiracism, participating in the church's theological themes and actions this month. On the 2nd and 4th Sundays we will join together for games, crafts, and music to take space to rest and find joy.

For more information, please find us on Realm at Groups > Affinity Group > Young Adults, or text Ollie Bradstreet at 207-391-9127.

Adult Faith Formation

Circle of Trust

Looking for a way to meet people and connect more deeply? You're invited to check out Circle of Trust, a welcoming space for deep listening and deep sharing. Circle of Trust is based on our church's Covenant Group program, but with flexible attendance. We meet the 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings 6:30–8:30 pm on Zoom. The February dates are the 9th and the 23rd. February topics are "Play" and "Love" (the February church theme). Preparation materials distributed for reflection before the meeting. For information, the Zoom link, and materials, contact Lea Ann Boone at lboone133@gmail.com.

Sunday Explorations

This month's theme is The Path of Love. Join our discussions and meet new and long time members of our congregation. We will gather in hybrid fashion—onsite in the Arnold Room and via Zoom at 10:00.

Meeting ID: 842 4289 2753

Passcode: 041625

February 5—Recognizing the Types of Love; the Paths of Love. The Greeks named six types of love: eros, sexual passion; philia, deep friendship; ludus, playful love; agape, love for everyone; pragma, long-standing love; and philautia, love of the self. Understanding these different types leads us to identifying paths, not only a path of Love. Angela Merkert, facilitator

February 12—Common Sense Aging and Wellbeing
This session will focus on a holistic approach to aging well. The major components that influence aging that will be discussed include: diet, exercise; preventing falls; emotional and attitudinal perspectives; spiritual broadening as a way to ameliorate pain and encourage a sense of peace; and how our environment impacts us. Asia Negron-Esposito, facilitator.

Asia has an MS in Gerontology/Adult Education and has trained to administer nursing homes in New York. She is currently leading AARP workshops and has pearls of wisdom and experience to share.

February 19—Embracing Love. From Rumi: "Your task is not to seek for Love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it." How do we hold ourselves back from sharing Love? What are the barriers that we create—no matter which of the types of love we consider—often out of (mostly unfounded) fears? Angela Merkert, facilitator

February 26—"Justice is what love looks like in public," according to Dr. Cornell West. What does it require to expand and strengthen this love? What is required to "live in love" in the striving toward creation of a Beloved Community? As UUs, what sustains us in this quest to strengthen just actions in our community, our society?

Angela Merkert, facilitator

Upcoming Spring Classes

UU 101 - Principles and Sources

Saturday, March 11, 10:00 am–noon, in person

Want to learn a little more about the basics of Unitarian Universalism? Rev. Bob LaVallee will lead a review of the principles and sources and how they can help us live a life aligned with UU values. Despite being a two-hour class, there will be lots of time for fun and conversation. To register, email Rev. Bob at blavallee@uuabq.org.

Creating Theology Together

Join Rev. Bob LaVallee to engage with and name your UU theology and identity. What do you believe? Why do you believe it? Creating Theology Together is a new curriculum that recognizes the value of cultivating our individual theologies and credos—as celebrated in the "Building Your Own Theology" curriculum—but extends beyond the individual to clarify what shared values and beliefs ground our larger faith community. Moreover, what values and beliefs ground our faithful actions in the larger world? Saturday course dates and times are below. To register, email Rev. Bob at blavallee@uuabq.org.

April 1: 10:30–3:00 pm

April 8: 10:00–Noon

April 22: 10:00–Noon

April 29: 10:00–Noon

Wisdom Circle: Medicare & Health Plans

Saturday, February 18, 10:00 am–noon on Zoom.

Given the virus surge and the cold weather, in February we gather on Zoom again, this time to address the state of affairs in our U.S. healthcare system and learn about insurance options. Cheryl Romanek will provide a brief overview of the evolving Medicare/private insurance environment and facilitate a discussion on how to handle the annual avalanche of information and ads. She'll fill us in on (1) what needs to be considered to achieve our best individual care outcomes, and (2) how the decisions we make affect the sustainability of Medicare for subsequent generations. Everyone welcome.

To join the meeting, [click this link](#) or enter

Meeting ID: 357 672 5682 / Passcode: 583863

Info: Jerilyn Bowen, mettajib@gmail.com.

Connect and Serve

MONTHLY READS

The **Bread, Wine, and Book Club** will meet **Friday, February 10 at 7:00 pm**. Our book this month is [Sea of Tranquility](#) by Emily St. John Mandel. Email Martha Beyerlein for more information at martha.beyerlein@comcast.net.



The **Third Monday Book Club** will meet **Monday, February 20 at 9:30 am** in the Arnold Room. The book is [The Island of Sea Women](#) by Lisa See. Please contact Joyce Etheridge at 509-308-5523 for further information.

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

Earth Web Update

The 60-day NM Legislative session is underway and First Unitarian's Earth Web is working to get the Green Amendment and other climate bills passed. This session we are focused on ensuring clean land, air, water, and energy. Thanks for filling out post cards after Service! It is very important to hear directly from constituents. We hope to do it again. The website <https://nmlegis.gov/> is a great place to find out in real-time how bills are doing. Quick, bookmark the site!

Coyote Willow CUUPS this Month

Join Coyote Willow CUUPS for an Imbolc Ritual on Sunday, February 5th, 2023 at 4:00 pm. This will be a hybrid ritual. You can join us either in Memorial Hall or through Zoom. Imbolc marks the mid-point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox; the days are lengthening, and the first signs of spring are showing. This is a time for clearing out the old and welcoming the new.

Join Coyote Willow CUUPS for our monthly Planning and Social Circle on Friday, February 10th at 7:00 pm. This will be a hybrid meeting. You can meet in the Arnold room or join us on Zoom. We will be discussing our upcoming events. You are welcome to join us and get the inside scoop on all the fun we'll be having for the next few months. After business is complete, there will be time to socialize. Join us and get to know us! Please have a candle and source of flame nearby for the start of the meeting.

Email Victoria Rosquist at bboydbabe@gmail.com for more information.

Music Notes with Susan Peck

Find your path to love through music-making at First Unitarian!

-Sol Singers, our pastoral care choir, is a welcoming drop-in group meeting Mondays 5:30 in Memorial hall and on Zoom. All voices, all ages welcome! We hope to start visiting folks in hospital, rehab, and care facilities soon (masked for safety).

-Chalice Choir rehearses 6:30-8:00 Thursdays, in the sanctuary. No audition or music-reading required, just commitment to regular attendance, ability to match pitch and hold your part in 4-part harmony. Chalice Choir sings once a month in worship, and is working on a choral song cycle about singing through the pandemic, to be presented in late March.

-Our String Band gathers on Sundays at 12:15 to play and sing fun multi-generational tunes. All ages are welcome to drop in any Sunday with ukulele, guitar, mandolin, hand drum, and/or voice.

-Spare Parts is our contemporary band. If you're interested in joining for future band Sundays, contact Susan. Band members need to be able to play a variety of contemporary styles (rock, pop, jazz, R&B) and read chord charts.

2023 may be the time to bring back our monthly open mic and chamber music playing group. Do you have suggestions for other musical ensembles at our church? Contact Susan Peck at speck@uuabq.org.

NM Interfaith Power & Light Witness Trip to the Permian Basin March 23-25

Interfaith Power and Light and Citizens Caring for the Future invite you to participate in a trip of witness. We all intellectually understand the devastating effects of fossil fuel extraction on our state, but one has to see it firsthand to grasp the enormity the disaster. The experience includes prayers, reflection, talking with community members, and touring the oil and gas region to see and experience the realities of oil and gas production. Your participation will grow your commitment to systemic change and climate justice. Rev. Bob LaVallee participated in this trip last year and found it to be enormously powerful.

IPL will take care of food, lodging, stipends for speakers, and transportation during the actual experience. Participants will be responsible for carpooling and expenses for the trip to and from the Permian. In addition, participants are invited to make a \$50 donation to defray the costs of food and housing. If you can't afford this, IPL will cover your expenses. To register, email Sister Joan Brown, OSF at joankansas@swcp.com.



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A Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Albuquerque • East Mountains • Socorro
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Albuquerque, NM 87110

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
- DATED MATERIAL -

Sunday Worship Services

Albuquerque

9:00 & 11:00 am in the
Sanctuary

Livestream on Zoom at 9:00

East Mountains

11:00 AM

1 Deanna Ln.

Edgewood

(off Dinkle Road)

Socorro

3:00 PM

Epiphany Episcopal
Church, 908 Leroy Place

Sign Up for Realm!

Realm is our web-based church database, where you can look up other church members, browse church groups and committees to join, look for volunteer opportunities, and even make a financial pledge for 2023. Realm is secure, customizable, and most importantly, easy for anyone to use! You can use it on a [web browser](#), or download "Realm Connect" from an [Android](#) or [Apple app](#) store.