



Horizons Journal

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix
February 2016



Love is Powerful

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray

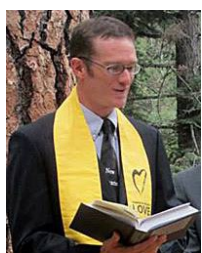
When I was about seven years old, I asked my mom, “What is God? Do you believe in God?” Growing up a Unitarian Universalist, I was encouraged to ask these questions. It was the answers that were never so clear. To my question, my mom told me, “I do not believe in God, but if I did, I’d believe that God is Love.” I didn’t know it at the time, but my mom was quoting the Gospel of John, where the writer explains that if we don’t love one another then we can never know or love God, because “God is Love.”

After that conversation, I took on my mom’s atheism, but also her commitment to the principle of Love as a guiding force in how we are called to live. This month, our theme is Love and we will explore what it means to be a People of Love. When

I say that phrase, “a people of love,” it sounds a bit silly, or frilly—as if we might be awash in a pink hue from our rose-colored glasses. However, that is not how I heard it when my mom spoke of love. The phrase “God is Love” is a reminder that Love, as a religious principle and practice, is a powerful thing. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose theological and political foundation was love, said that we do ourselves a grave disservice when we separate love and power. He said:

Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.

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That Nasty Inner Voice

Emrys Staton

Ministerial Intern

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare. — Audre Lorde

Have you ever said “I love you” to yourself? Or written yourself a love letter? Sound odd or awkward?

I know I’ve done the opposite quite a bit, what’s referred to as negative self talk. You know, when a voice in your head says, “You can’t do this, you’re going to fail, give up now!” I hear myself saying many things like that to myself, inside my head (and sometimes out loud) and I don’t find it all that odd. It seems normal, if not expected.

I wonder, then, what it would take for that voice in my head pop up throughout the day saying,

“Go on, you amazing, talented, and smart person you.”

Therapy, meditation practice, and self-awareness have helped me notice and track the pre-recorded messages that I tell myself throughout my day. The scale is heavily tilted towards the side of the un-affirming and negative—that’s the auto-pilot mind that, without awareness and attention, continually berates me. I have to admit it, I’m verbally abusive to myself, and have been for some time. It’s like my internal version of the online comments that you know you should never scroll down and read.

A few years ago, I was at a self-care workshop hosted by Chris Crass, a well known Unitarian Universalist author and speaker who regularly tours the country to offer presentations on racial justice—

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Singing on the Side of Love

Benjie Messer

Music Director

Reggae star Ziggy Marley, eldest son of legend Bob Marley, has a song on his first solo album called *Love Is My Religion*. In an interview in 2006, when asked whether love is the organizing principle of Rastafarianism, Ziggy answered:

It's not about Rastafarian faith, it's about love... after searching for God and spirituality all my life, I've finally come to that determination, and I think it's a true one, that if we should have a religion, it should be love.

I imagine Ziggy means that if people are going to agree on anything, it should be to care about each other. The Dalai Lama agrees, saying, “There is no need for temples, no need for complicated philosophy... our own heart is our temple, the philosophy is kindness.”

For Unitarian Universalists, love has surfaced as a central value to anchor our unusual faith. One of the Unitarian Universalist Association’s most popular campaigns is “Standing on the Side of Love.” You may have seen the yellow t-shirts that have served as the uniform for this movement at justice actions for many years—I believe there are still some on sale in our office. The campaign’s latest project, “Thirty Days of Love,” asks congregations to spend this month contemplating how love’s power can stop oppression, with particular attention to the racial disparities highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement.

One of my favorite hymns on this topic is “Love Will Guide Us,” which sets secular lyrics to the old Baptist hymn “I Will Guide Thee.” These new lyrics directly substitute “love” for the “I” of the first-person Baptist Jesus, and they are very direct, saying that love is what will guide us through our dark nights and help us change the world. I look forward to singing this hymn together, and meditating on how love can indeed guide us in our lives.

In the first verse of “Love Is My Religion,” Ziggy sings, “I don’t condemn, I don’t convert. This

is a calling, have you heard? Bring all the lovers to the fold, ‘cause no one is gonna lose their soul.” I can’t think of a more appropriate lyric for a Unitarian Universalist service. It echoes our message that all are welcome at the table, and that love is a calling worthy of basing a religion on. Our country rock band, the Dissidents, will be playing “Love Is My Religion” at our multigenerational Valentine’s Day service on February 14, along with lots of other love songs. I hope that you can join us, and that the music helps you to notice and remember the love you give and the love you receive. □

— LOVE —

Love is not a feeling; it is a great power, an Intelligence to which we are all heir and have been forever called.

— Anne Hillman

The theology of love must seek to deal realistically with the evil and injustice of the world, and not merely to compromise with them.

— Thomas Merton

Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.

— Dalai Lama

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.

— Jalal ad-Din Rumi



State of Our Vision Glen Lockwood

President, UUCP Board of Trustees

In the spirit of the season, I thought about having this article—really a bit of Board news—take a “State of the Union” flavor. Don’t worry... I couldn’t make it work. I also didn’t use this month’s theme (Love) to frame Board news and updates—not that it couldn’t be done, but elsewhere in this edition of Horizons, you’ll find some inspiring and thought provoking articles, and maybe even poetry, focused on Love.

So... I’m just going to dive right in.

As you may have heard from me and other current or recent Board members, the Board’s work is focused on the future of our congregation. Rev. Susan and our excellent staff (professional and volunteer) execute and enable the daily “business” of UUCP: programs, committees, activities, etc....

The most notable thing we’ve been involved with recently has been creating and supporting a Vision Task Force. I wrote in October about the purpose and progress of the Vision Task Force and what they had shared with the Board at that time. Since then, the Task Force continued its work, the Board and Task Force had some productive conversations and again, the Task Force went back to work. They have a final product. The Board unanimously approved their description of our Vision and it was presented at the Council meeting on January 9th—a nice bit of serendipity, as it was at the Council meeting in January 2015 that their process started. The Council was roundly supportive and enthusiastic—especially when Rev. Susan talked about some of the possibilities for evolving our ministries.

The Vision Task Force will present the Vision at the January Congregational meeting (1/31 at 10:20 in the sanctuary). I don’t want to spill the beans now, for those of you that receive and read this before the meeting. I will say that I am most anxious to begin having conversations with everyone that are focused on our future—on how we might expand our influence for each other and for our community and how the Vision might call us into

that future.

What kinds of changes might our Vision enable and what kinds of changes might we be called to make in order to grow in this vision of our future? The Board is especially looking forward to talking with the Congregation about growing and strengthening our ministries for children and families, for pastoral care and for justice.

Please look for opportunities to engage with the Vision Task Force and the Board, your committees and Small Groups, and even your coffee klatch to see how this new Vision might launch us into our future. In June, we’ll be voting to adopt this Vision, and then putting it to work for us.

There’s more that we have been doing—each month we focus on a specific topic, either from the Strategic Plan, our work plan, or our own study, and devote the largest time slot in the meeting to diving deep into that one topic. Sometimes that results in more study. Sometimes it shapes our actions or what we measure or pay attention to going forward. The Board welcomes your observation of these conversations. Watch Horizons, Compass and the Order of Service for the planned focus area of each meeting (generally on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm—social time begins at 6:00). We do make time at the beginning of each meeting for visitor comments and then we get to work.

You can bet that we’ll also be devoting some time in most meetings to discussing progress on how the Vision is sitting (or maybe even running or flying) with the Congregation.

Thanks for making our community vibrant. Thanks for sharing your individual vision and thanks especially for joining us in creating and supporting this shared Vision. □



What is Love?

Katie Resendiz

Acting Director, Children's Ministries

In preparation for this month's theme I turned to some of our congregation's wisest assets. I asked each of them: "What is love?" What follows are the responses of 10 UUCP community members, age 2 to 17 years old and some thoughts they inspired.

Also included are suggestions for 10 list topics. Beginning on February 4th, I will be making a daily list of 10 things I love. I'll do this for 10 days and by Valentine's Day, I hope to have a little collection of loveliness and to have explored a bit, the nature of love. Consider this your invitation to join me. While the quips of kids are light-hearted, I expect the reflection and consideration for each list to actually be quite difficult and a little bit of an adventure.

"When you want to be around someone."

This is such a clear expression of the sense of joy that comes from being in the company of a particular person. Love can be as easy as enjoyment. It reminds me of children first meeting on the playground and within minutes asking "Do you want to be my friend?" At some age, we become bogged down in the possibilities of multiple definitions. What kind of love, who is loving, is it real love, etc. It all gets very complicated and we start to shy away from love. There are now even entire movie and television plot lines that hinge around "When is it okay to say I love you?" *When you want to be around someone* suggests a return to the yes and no checkboxes of notes passed in elementary school.

List 10 people who you like to be around. Who makes you smile? Who do you look forward to seeing? Who do you meet up with and then later think, "Well, that was fun."

"Sissy!"

This, from a toddler, refers to his older sister. When I asked him, "What is love?" I didn't expect much of a response and certainly not one that made

sense. Yet, he immediately yelled "Sissy!" and when I decided to ask him again later, his answer remained consistent. We hold love in our hearts for the people that surround us every day and the people who care for us.

List 10 people who you enjoy helping. Who do you take care of? Who do you turn to when you're in a pinch?

"You."

Being told by a seven-year-old, "You! You are love. We are all love!" can be a bit breathtaking. I don't think he meant to be quite so profound, but I like to think about the truth of it.

List 10 things about you that are lovely, lovable, and wonderful.

"The Doctrine of this Congregation."

I'll be sure to give her an "A" on her Sunday School report card. (No, we don't give Sunday School report cards, but if we did . . .)

List 10 ways that we show love at UUCP. What are the loving acts we do within UUCP? What do we do outside of the congregation that shows the greater community our commitment to love?

"Even if you don't want to..."

Yes! This incomplete thought was an answer to my question just before running off to go play. But, yes! It is the part of "love" that is the most challenging. Love calls us to do things for others "even if you don't want to." The small moments of sacrifice—sharing the last chocolate, turning up the heat for someone when you're already too hot, making sure everyone has a seat even if you have to stand. We've been told that love is a verb, but sometimes we forget to look for the actions.

List 10 times someone has showed you love in little ways. What favors have you asked for? Does someone else do your least favorite task? What littlest things have other people done for you?

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Calling Enthusiastic & Dedicated Members! Nominating Committee

The UUCP Nominating Committee is beginning to plan for our upcoming elections in late spring for the UUCP Board of Trustees, Foundation Board, and Nominating Committee. Could this be the opportunity you are looking for to get more involved in achieving the mission of our congregation? Here are a few facts to get you thinking:

- The UUCP Board works closely with the Minister and is responsible for the strategic management and oversight of the congregation. The term of office is two years.
- The Foundation Board oversees the congregation's endowment and promotes legacy giving. The term of office is three years.
- The Nominating Committee recruits candidates for the Boards and itself. The term of office is two years.

All three groups serve important roles in maintaining our congregation's vitality and advancing its mission of building religious community, growing in spirit, sharing journeys, and advancing justice.

Primary qualifications include commitment to UUCP and its mission, creativity and energy, and the ability to communicate well with congregation members. We need people of all walks of life and perspectives.

Serving is rewarding and a way to deepen your connection to the community.

Over the coming weeks and months, look for more details about our progress. In the meantime, please contact any Nominating Committee member or email gaezzell@gmail.com for more information, including detailed job descriptions for each of these positions.

Your UUCP Nominating Committee: Gary Ezzell (chair), Ellie Anderla, Charlotte Carl-Mitchell, Julie Smart, Jim Sorgatz, and Lydia Yanak. □

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY NIGHTS

Every Thursday, 6:00 PM

Prepared meals, vegetarian options

*Suggested donation: \$5/adult, \$2/child under 10, \$10/family
or bring your own sack supper or potluck dishes*

6:30 PM

Chalice Kids, Activities and Small Groups available:

February 4: **Variety Hour** with Benjie Messer

February 11: **Thoughtful Leadership Forum** with Kim St. Clair

February 18: **Open (Drop-in) Small Group** with Mike Sheffer

February 25: **Immigration Small Group Justice Ministry** with Bill Lace

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"Baby don't hurt me."

Clever teenager, thought you could distract me with the traditional music of my people! ("my people" being '90s era middle schoolers) . . . don't hurt me . . . no more.

List 10 songs with the word love in them that you actually like. Don't list any Justin Bieber songs.

"When you are physically or emotionally attracted to someone and want to take care of them."

This response was spoken slowly after a moment of consideration. She wanted to be sure each word was the correct word. This definition was delicate and challenging. The respondent, a third grader, was clearly worried she might get the answer wrong. Her tone hinted that there are times when one wants to take care of someone, but cannot.

List 10 things you love but are apart from. Who haven't you talked to in a long time? In what groups do you no longer participate? What interests have you sublimated?

"Something we do on Valentine's Day."

The first grader's response, said with more than a little "Well, duh." We've developed holidays to celebrate emotions; Thanksgiving for gratitude, Halloween for fear, Birthdays and Christmas for joy, and Valentine's Day for love. And maybe that is how it should be. There is something sacred and very special about pure emotions. Love, especially, is given power over decisions and regarded as a thing with will of its own. "She did it for love." "Love will see them through." Valentine's Day gives us a chance to celebrate and encourage love.

List 10 ways to encourage love on Valentine's Day. Is there a small favor you can do? Can you help someone make Valentines cards? Can you reach out to an old friend? □

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specifically encouraging us all to become more vocal anti-racists activists. At the end of his presentation, he assigned homework. Two things. The first was to write what he called a "love letter" to someone in our life who helped open our mind. A combination love letter and thank you letter. And send it to them. While it sounded awkward, it felt doable. Then he shared the second assignment: to write a love letter to ourselves.

In my mind, I heard the instructions of the assignment, and thought, yes, this is an intriguing idea. I can see why both assignments are important ways to share love and affirmation throughout social justice movements. Especially since we are confronted with so much pain and loss. We literally have to learn the skills of showing that we care for each other and ourselves. Intellectually, it was a good idea. Emotionally, it seemed nearly impossible.

I never wrote either letter. Then in the past year, I have started writing emails and sending cards to people who I appreciate. It's funny how I have struggled even to write a short paragraph to someone, an acquaintance or a stranger, just to say "thanks" and "I appreciate what you're doing." I'm afraid I'll sound creepy or weird. (Again, it's that internal voice saying, "You're being creepy," and "They're going to think you're weird.")

Now, I think it's time to tackle that second assignment, from three years ago. The love letter to myself.

I would offer both of these assignments to you, too. For Valentine's Day, set aside some time and write, as best you can, a love letter addressed to a person who helped open your heart and mind. Then, write a love letter to yourself. I'd love to hear about how it goes for you! □

You yourself as much as anybody in the entire universe deserve your love and affection.

— Mahatma Gandhi

Continued from "Love is Powerful," Rev. Susan, page 1

This is the form of love that is a foundation of our Unitarian Universalist tradition. This love is not sentimental or anemic—it is the powerful kind of love expressed in our justice initiative “Standing on the Side of Love” and expressed each week, when we read our covenant, which begins “Love is the doctrine of this congregation.” This view of love is not one of mere emotion. It is a key teaching of how we will see and treat others in the world.

It’s not easy to live the doctrine of love. We glimpse what love is through our personal relationships, but the kind of love that King spoke of, or the early mothers and fathers of our own tradition proclaimed, was a love that overcomes fear, that is universal in its reach and that seeks the fullest opportunity for each person.

Gandhi said this form of love was so powerful that, “If a single person achieves the highest kind of love it will be sufficient to neutralize the hate of millions.” That highest kind of love is what King sought to achieve, it is the overflowing compassion for all life that Buddhist teachers today seek, and the love that we speak of as Unitarian Universalists.

But it is important to remember that this kind of love is not something that passively happens to us; it is not a gift we receive; it is actually something we have to develop through effort and practice. It takes discipline. This challenging form of love shapes how we see the world, the value we affirm in each person, and the need for action in the face of injustice.

We develop this form of love, first by choosing communities and companions that model compassion and nurture this powerful form of love in our own lives. Next, we develop our capacity to love by being aware of when we are given to pettiness or prejudice and intentionally trying to open our hearts to love and forgiveness. As one Small Group Facilitator put it, “Whenever I catch myself feeling unloving, I tell myself: I need to grow my heart a few sizes larger.” This kind of honesty and effort to respond to the world and others with love is a key to developing greater compassion in our own lives and living out the challenging words of our covenant.

May we be a people committed to living out this powerful form of love. □



Sunday, February 7

Campus Work Day

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

Clean our sanctuary chalice, Joys & Sorrows bowl,
office chalices/candles, windows, moldings, baseboards,
doors, Memorial Garden Trail and more!

All skill levels and experience welcome—the more
volunteers we have the more we can accomplish!



Ten Years? No way!

Heidi Parmenter

Business Administrator

This month is my 10-year anniversary working here at UUCP. I can hardly believe I am old enough to have worked somewhere for 10 years. I must have started here as a baby (I was 26). What an amazing place this is to grow up, though. I joke with my family and friends outside of the UU world that it's like I have a family with dozens of grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters who all care about me personally and I them. I have had a variety of role models through the years who have all shown me the person I want to be for each stage of my life. In so many ways this community has raised me, nurtured me, and challenged me. The best parts of me were developed in this community. Thank you for letting me share my talents and skills with you all and thank you for all the opportunities you give me to grow. □



A Perfect 10

February 28 at 10:30

Heidi's Work Anniversary

Join us to recognize and celebrate our administrator's ten years with UUCP between first and second services on February 28 on the patio.

If you would like to contribute to a gift for Heidi, contact Geoff Anderla at 602-840-4000 Ext 201 or Geoffanderla@phoenixuu.org.

Unicare News

For more information on significant events in the life of UUCP members and friends, sign up for our Unicare email list at unicare@phoenixuu.org.



In Remembrance:

- Longtime member Max Kaslo passed away in January, just before his 99th birthday. A memorial service celebrating Max's life will be held at UUCP on Saturday, February 20th and 2:30 pm.
- Bunny Hodas remembers her mother, Shirley Hodas, who passed away in December at the age of 97. Shirley was surrounded by loved ones, family and caregivers over her last days.
- Kay Welch's brother, Ken, passed away in December.

Milestone Celebrations:

- Igor and Barbara Glenn celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary New Year's Eve.
- David and Uli Boecker-Grieme celebrated their 21st wedding anniversary on December 10th.

Other News:

- Linda Vance's son, Brian Vance, is undergoing treatment for metastasized cancer in his liver and kidney. Brian is a young man, married and father of two young girls. Linda welcomes the community holding Brian and his family in light and sending positive healing thoughts and prayers.
- The family of Alan Rhodes and Tammy Wheeler-Rhodes is glad to share that Tammy's mother is out of the hospital and in rehabilitation but she appreciates your continued thoughts and prayers during her recovery.

Vicki Myers, Unicare Coordinator



UU Day at the Legislature

Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network (UUJAZ)

It's coming! UU Day at the Legislature is an invigorating day of political action, relationship building, and community fun. Participants are assigned teams by their legislative district and offered the opportunity to visit with representatives in an effort to strengthen connections and lift up UU voices in our state. The day also includes opportunities to hear from UU legislators and political allies, create materials for direct actions, and learn about the array of justice work being done by UUs around our state.

In the past year, UU Day at the Legislature has attracted more than 150 participants from Unitarian Universalist congregations across the state. This year, the Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network's day at the legislature is the same day as Center for Arizona Policy (a conservative lobbying group). It is important that our presence lift up equality, kindness, and progress as we work to move Arizona forward.

Monday February 15th 2016

Arizona State Capitol

For more information and to register visit <http://www.uujaz.org/2016-datl.html>

Kids at the Capital

Families are encouraged to attend Day at the Capital. Children may be too young to vote, but they can make a big impression on legislators. The event will include poster making activities, group singing, and a chance for kids to write letters to their representatives. There is also a large park nearby to explore during down time.

Refresh your memory of how legislation works watching some School House Rock with your kids: "I'm Just a Bill" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyeJ5503Elo>.

Talk to your kids about why you choose to vote, what voting day is like, and who you choose to vote for.

Find out what district you live in and who your representatives are (<http://azredistricting.org/districtlocator/>) and take a minute to check out your representative's Facebook page; you're sure to find something interesting.

Register for a free account at iCivics.org and explore their great materials on state government. □

UUCP Annual Spring Picnic

Saturday, February 27, 11:00 am-1:00 pm

Stillman Ramada, McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park
7301 E Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale

All-age event for the young, young at heart, and everyone in between.

Membership Committee will provide beverages, plates and utensils.

Bring a potluck dish (no BBQing, please) and your appetite.

Fun games for kids and kids-at-heart, and musicians are encouraged to bring instruments for a jam session sing-along.

Questions: Contact Jenny Jones at jennjones50@cox.net or 480-206-2189.

February Worship Theme: **Love**

Services bring our community together at 9:30 AM & 11:15 AM

February 7: Love is Our Doctrine

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

Every week, our covenant reminds us that love is the doctrine of our congregation. As we begin this monthlong exploration of what it means to be a People of Love, we'll look at what it means to have love as our doctrine.

February 14: *Multigenerational Valentine's Day Service*: The Most Bestest Heart

Service Leader: Emrys Staton, Intern Minister

This Valentine's Day, utilizing the latest in arterial imaging technology, we will embark on a community-wide search for the most bestest heart.

Share the Plate Sunday: This Sunday's offering will benefit Audrey's Angels.

February 21: To Evolve is to Unscramble Love

Service Leader: Rev. Kaaren Anderson

A reflection on our calling as humans and the wisdom of our UU tradition to change our patterns and practices for good.

We are delighted to welcome Kaaren Anderson, Senior Minister at First Unitarian Church in Rochester, NY. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Clergy Advisory Board chose Anderson to receive The Reverends Betsy M. and Thomas R. Davis Distinguished Service Award for 2011. She is a self-described "crazy home installation artist" who currently makes most of her art with Sharpies and paper. Kaaren is the author of Glad to Be Human and included in the anthology Singing In the Night: Collected Meditations, Volume 5. She is mom to three children and married to Rev. Scott Tayler, Director of Congregational Life at the Unitarian Universalist Association.

February 28: Our Universalist Roots

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

Universalism is the theology that there is no hell. Early Universalists shared a message that no one is outside of the bounds of God's love and forgiveness. Let's explore this history and theology and how it informs the commitment to love and compassion and the foundation of Unitarian Universalism today.



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