



Horizons Journal

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix
June 2016



To Share Our Strength in Fellowship

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray

The Rev. Kok-Heong McNaughton writes: “I am but a drop of water. Alone, I would disappear, dried up by the scorching sun or sucked up by the dry, thirsty earth. But together we can wear out stones. Carve out the Grand Canyon, make streams and rivers, and find our way to the sea.”

These words remind me of both the intensity of the heat and sun at this time of year, but also a piece of our congregation’s covenant *to share our strength in fellowship*.

What is strength and what makes us strong? Historically, we often celebrate courageous individuals and the actions they took, but that rarely reflects the whole story. History celebrates Rosa Parks’ courage in refusing to give up her seat on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama. What is not often retold is that Parks was a leader in the NAACP in

Montgomery. Her act was not an isolated act of courage. It was planned and organized. She was acting with the support and efforts of community. Parks was also not the first to take this action. Previous efforts had been made, but this one was successful. It kicked off the Montgomery Bus Boycott which led to the desegregation of buses—and eventually public services—in the U.S.

The story that history is made by courageous individuals can disempower people and movements. When history remembers only the individual, not the communities, strategists, and families that are part of the story, we are led to believe “we could not be like those leaders.” Or, we may think that our individual voice, gifts and vision are all that is needed to make change. The truth is, *strong* is what we make each other. Love, relationship, community,

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The Strength of Inclusion

Benjie Messer

Music Director

I often listen to a series of recorded lectures which are included twice on each CD—first at the originally recorded speed, and then again at a slightly slower speed. The slower speed is included for people for whom English is not their first language, but I enjoy listening at the slower speed too. I find it enjoyable and relaxing to take more time with the information presented.

This is just one example of how making a change for the sake of accessibility can ultimately be better for everyone. Another example is closed captioning or subtitles on television networks and films. Conceived as an experimental technology to reach out to the deaf community in the early 1970s, closed captioning didn’t become common until the mid-1980s, and wasn’t included in all televisions

until 1993. Today, subtitles not only include the hearing-impaired as viewers, but they also help us to learn others’ languages, to play video games in silence while our housemates are asleep, or to watch television in noisy environments such as bars and airports.

I say all this because I’m excited to announce that as I write this in early May, I’m finishing an overhaul of our sanctuary’s hearing assistance system. We have a new transmitter, ten new receivers (Hearing Helpers), lots of new headphones and earphones, and a battery-charging station by the usher desk so that our receivers’ batteries will always be fully charged. We also have a neck-worn loop for those who have T-coil hearing aids. If you have hearing loss and have given up on understanding our services clearly, please ask an

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usher for a Hearing Helper at your next Sunday service! I hope this not only helps to include our hearing-impaired, but helps everyone else relax in the knowledge that if and when we lose our hearing, we won't lose our community.

If any of you have friends or family that you'd like to invite who are deaf and understand sign language, please let me put you in touch with Lois Leader. Lois is a UUCP member who generously translates some of our services into sign language. You can coordinate with her directly about when she'll be in our services.

Hearing is only one aspect of accessibility, of course. Another important one is sight. We do our best to describe everything in our services verbally, so that we're never relying purely on visual cues that would leave out members and visitors who can't see. I was recently reminded not to refer to our hymnals only by their color, because it's confusing to our many members who are color-blind. For those who are blind or losing their vision, we have both large-print and Braille copies of our hymnals available.

Our front steps would require a major renovation to be accessible to those who have difficulty with mobility, who can't walk or can't walk easily. But the three entrances from our upper parking lot are free of barriers and steps, and are thus the paths of choice for those using wheelchairs, walkers, canes, etc. We have spots in the sanctuary for wheelchair users and their companions, and we also have an area of the sanctuary (the far left) designated as "scent-free" for people who are sensitive to chemicals and strong odors.

I could go on and on about accessibility—I haven't even touched on how Katie Resendiz has made our children's programs useful to all—but I'm out of space. Please ask the ushers for hearing assistance if you need it—and when you hear those little earphones on the people near you, please appreciate that our community is stronger with all of us included. □

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, June 5, 11:45 AM

All members are invited and encouraged to attend the Congregation Annual Meeting. At the meeting we will adopt a budget for the 2016-2017 year, elect leaders to the Board of Trustees, UU Foundation Board and the Nominating Committee. We will also be voting on the proposed Vision from our Vision Task Force:

To be a Spiritual Community for Our Time
Theologically Diverse
Radically Inclusive
Justice Centered

The 2016-2017 budget will be emailed along with the 2016 Annual Report to members during the week leading up to the congregational meeting.



Strength through Generosity

Emrys Staton

Ministerial Intern

I grew up in a print shop, and spent many years in the industry, so despite the rise of digital media, I still appreciate being able to read things printed on paper. For the past several years, I've tried to maintain a subscription to one publication in particular: High Country News. HCN offers coverage of the Western U.S.—specifically around environmental and economic issues.

As I read through an issue last fall, I came across a short bit on the back page sharing the observations of a biologist from Yellowstone National Park. For the past 15 years, Rick McIntyre has been observing the packs of wolves who live in the park, noting interesting behaviors. McIntyre described how an alpha male had displayed the typical strength we normally think of when we think of an alpha male wolf: protecting and fighting. But over time, he also saw the moments where the pack leader played with the pups, and specifically gave attention to runts and weaker pups—actions that defied the logic of “survival of the fittest.”

Ever since Darwin's published observations have popularized the notion of “survival of the fittest” via competition, observers of nature have offered mountains of evidence showing how survival and resiliency are more closely tied to collaboration, generosity and kindness.

Recently, scientists have discovered ways that even trees and plants communicate, share resources, and help each other succeed. Long-term studies of entire ecosystems reveal amazing systems of collaboration and mutual care, which then relate to a key measurement of strength: resilience over time.

The next month, High Country News ran a cover story that exemplified these biological traits in human society. The article highlighted a ranching cooperative in southeast Arizona that was modeled on the collaborative ranching practices of the Masai people in Africa. The Malpai Borderlands Group not only includes the managers of several ranches, but biologists, law enforcement, and now, researchers from the ASU-based Human Generosity Project.

Studied over time, the Malpai ranchers have not only been able to continue operating successful ranches in conditions of scarcity, but they have also successfully worked with conservationists on water issues and protecting endangered species.

When I started to read more about the Human Generosity Project, I immediately thought of our community at UUCP. What are the ways we already exemplify generosity and sharing in the congregation? How could we do more?

When I read our final line of the covenant, “to share our strength in fellowship,” this is where my mind and heart go. I've already seen the remarkable generosity of our community—internally as we made our \$500,000 stewardship goal this spring, and externally, as measured by the more than \$80,000 we've given away since 2010 through the Share the Plate program. Plus countless other non-monetary acts of sharing and generosity—many that take place quietly and unknown to the community as a whole.

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I'm excited to be able to stay at UUCP past the time of my internship (this would have been my last month) to continue being part of a strong and resilient community. And to look for more ways to deepen our systems of support and sharing.

Generosity and sharing makes us happier, healthier, and stronger. From what I've experienced at UUCP, and what I've learned about our past, we can certainly describe ourselves as a “Human Generosity Project.” That's what I believe a good religious or spiritual community should strive to be. □



Healing through Connection & Community

Katie Resendiz

Acting Director, Children's Ministries

Lately, I've been thinking about how children experience "strength" and what that word meant in my own childhood. I remember the president's fitness test; pull ups, push ups, and sit ups. Up, up, up all counted and calculated into a score to show who was strong and who was not. (My ballet brain was always annoyed that my perfect execution of 24 entrechat did not prove me "strong" but rather "graceful.") The World Wrestling Federation dominated the TV and my peers reenacted dramatic chair-smashing and bicep flexing antics. The news told us how strong our country was, holding the Russian bear at bay. "Strength" meant bodies, meant physical prowess, and it meant size.

This equation, of bigger equals stronger and more powerful played out daily. For many of my classmates and many children still today, the most real experience of strength and unequal power was in their own homes. It sounds too dramatic to say "many," but the Arizona Child Welfare Report shows that in a six-month period in 2015, 1,651 substantiated cases of child abuse were investigated by that state department. This number doesn't include all the cases that go unreported.

The single most transformative factor in building resilience in children is a stable positive relationship with an adult.

Physical abuse of a child is appalling, but the risk isn't only to the child who is hit. Beyond being direct victims of physical abuse, children are further weakened by the violence they witness, substance abuse and addiction of family members, division within the family, and neglect. Coping with toxic

stress affects brain development, socialization, and mental health. Yet, our American Narrative would have us believe that once that child turns 18, graduates high school, "gets out of this town," they can easily escape the history and hurt of a difficult home.

The research proves our narrative wrong. Since 1985, Kaiser Permanente's Department of Preventative Medicine has made significant findings about the relevance of trauma during childhood to risk behaviors and health in adults. Adults who had grown up in "difficult homes" have a 20-year shorter life expectancy, despite having no other conventional risk factors. Constant activation of the fear system turns survival on its head. Living in a state of fight, flight, or freeze becomes health damaging rather than life saving.

In an attempt to evaluate this effect, the concept Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) was developed. The Arizona ACE consortium defines an ACE as growing up experiencing any of the following conditions in the household prior to age 18:

- Recurrent physical abuse
- Recurrent emotional abuse
- Contact sexual abuse
- An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- An incarcerated household member
- Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
- Mother is treated violently
- One or no parents
- Emotional or physical neglect

Quantifying an individual's exposure to childhood trauma is done through a simple evaluation that results in a person's "ACE Score." The higher the score, the greater the exposure to trauma. ACE research has shown time and again, that the higher an individual's ACE score, the higher their risk for multiple health issues. Child abuse has become a public health crisis.

Our covenant calls us to share our strength in

fellowship. How can we as a congregation, our individual ACE scores scattered all along the array, overcome childhood traumas? How do we become strong?

We can work to ensure that children in our community have the resources to face their hardships. The single most transformative factor in building resilience in children is a stable positive relationship with an adult (Michael Ungar, “The Impact of Youth-Adult Relationships on Resilience” is one study among many that have come to the same conclusion). We can individually choose to connect with a child. We can build and support structures that allow for positive, healthy relationships; sit with a kid at coffee hour or at the beginning of service, volunteer for Sunday School, help re-launch the UU Pals program.

We can respond to one another with compassion and learn positive ways to address conflict, remembering that an individual’s mood, social skills, and even long-term health, may be a reflection of childhood suffering. How we choose to interact under stress can have a profound effect on our neighbor’s healing. The National Survey of Children’s Health found that 31% of children and adults in Arizona experienced two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences. Treating everyone with equal kindness is more than just a courtesy.

We can work to increase public understanding of childhood traumas and their impact on health and well-being. In light of our state’s Education and Foster Care Crises, addressing ACEs becomes a matter of social justice. As a community, we can support efforts to implement universal screening in early childhood and family service systems with an eye to providing identification and support for families in need.

The ACE study reinforces something we already know. We are better when we invest in our connections with one another—in our connections we heal each other, in our connections we reject violence of the past, in our connections we are strong. □

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knowing that others support and care for us, gives us courage and strength to keep on moving forward through the joys and sorrows, the fears and challenges of living.

Given this, there is symmetry in our covenant that begins with love (*Love is our doctrine*) and ends in the strength we find in community (*to share our strength in fellowship*). During this month—as we ask “What is strength?” and “How do we develop it in our lives?”—let us think about the ways that community and loved ones have given us strength. The ways we have found ourselves strengthened by community.

Slowly, a shift is occurring in our society. This turning point is the recognition that in our hyperfocus on individualism, we have come to be increasingly disconnected. Loneliness and isolation are real factors affecting our well being, our health and the quality of our communities and democracy. To this, the strength that is found in fellowship offers a new path—one that I hope we can continue to embrace, walk and celebrate. As summer arrives and some will say goodbye for a time, let us remember that even across distances, we are a community of courage and care, compassion and strength, and strong is what we make each other. □

Should you shield the
canyons from the
windstorms, you would
never see the true beauty
of their carvings.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross



Finding Strength in “Ordinary Magic”

Vince Waldron

Member, Board of Trustees

What great timing! Just days after Celebration Sunday, I am writing on the theme of “strength.” On that memorable Sunday, Kathleen and I settled into two of the few unoccupied seats. There, toward the back of the sanctuary, we could feel waves of energy and love pulsing all around us. If you were in attendance that day, you have no doubt that ours is strong and vibrant community.

The moving testimonies offered during the service reminded me that strength is expressed in so many different forms. I witnessed strength in the quiet, dignified, and courageous voices of our members who must live undocumented. I felt strength in the heartfelt and discerning words of parents determined to raise their kids with UU values. I heard strength in testimony about the challenging but exciting transition to adulthood. I found strength in the description of our community as a source of love, hope, and support for those of us who encounter the darker side of human nature in our work. Tears welled in my eyes so many times during the service that I was actually a little embarrassed. But then I looked around and realized I was anything but alone!

Writing in 2001, developmental psychologist Ann Masten observed that many people experience adversity early in life—family conflict, neglect, or even forms of abuse. Yet most of us manage to mature into well-adapted, productive adults. This kind of resilience is so impressive, yet so common, that she described it with a new term: “ordinary magic.” As I reflected on the Celebration Sunday service, it occurred to me that the strength of UUCP comes not so much from heroic people or extraordinary acts—although our community is graced with many of those. Instead, I think it stems from ordinary magic—the hundreds of little decisions we each make, the seemingly ordinary actions we all take, to sustain our community through good times and times of challenge.

What kinds of decisions and actions? I am thinking of the shy person who is willing to say “yes”

to a call for greeters at the Sunday service. Or the members who choose to have an honest face-to-face discussion about a simmering conflict rather than let it fester. Or the member who decides to chat with a visitor during coffee hour rather than joining a group of familiar faces. Or the family that is willing to move a bit beyond their financial comfort zone to increase their annual pledge. These are acts of ordinary magic that make UUCP an extraordinary community.

As Rev. Susan reminded us on Celebration Sunday, she came to UUCP out of respect for the strength we demonstrated as we recovered from a period of adversity. It is a sign of our continued strength, really an extraordinary compliment, that UUCP’s minister is now a candidate for the UUA presidency. For me, Susan’s candidacy is a source of excitement and pride. And, of course, I also feel sadness at the prospect of losing our beloved minister. But I find great comfort in the knowledge that the strength of our community resides not in the effort of any one person, no matter how gifted. The strength of UUCP stems from the collective commitment of all of us, the practitioners of ordinary magic. □

A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.

Christopher Reeve
(a.k.a. Superman)

SUMMER COMMUNITY NIGHTS

First Thursday of each month

6:00 PM ▪ Potluck ▪ Multigenerational (no Chalice Kids) ▪ Special Activities!

Everyone is welcome!

Thursday, June 2 – *Variety Hour* with Benjie Messer

Thursday, July 7 – *Games Night* with Heidi Parmenter

Thursday, August 4 – *Ice Cream Social* with Religious Education Committee

Thursday, September – *Dance Party* with entire UUCP staff!



Unicare News

Please lift up in your thoughts and prayers those in our community who are mourning or are supporting loved ones through life's transitions. Your love and friendship is a gift.

Milestone Celebrations:

- Ceyshe Napa and Terry Torrey share the joy of their 10-year anniversary.
- Beverly Spiars celebrates being a great-grandparent.
- Joy Delgado and Bev continued their happy news by announcing their engagement to be married.

Transitions & Other News:

- Tanya Hamilton wishes healing thoughts for her mother Vivien and mother-in-law Jackie as they continue to recover from recent surgeries.
- Jenny Jones remembers her father and honors his life as he passed away in May at age 93.

For more information, or to get involved, contact Vicki Myers, our UUCP Unicare Coordinator, at unicare@phoenixuu.org. □

We Did It!

We met the match and made our Stewardship Campaign stretch goal! We raised \$501,145 with 255 pledges, one-time gifts, and a \$10,000 match for our 2016-2017 ministry.

Thank you to everyone who submitted a pledge form. If you still need to renew your membership you can fill out your pledge renewal form online at www.phoenixuu.org/pledge.

Your generosity will help realize our shared vision to be “A Spiritual Community for our Time: Radically Inclusive, Theologically Diverse, Justice Centered.”



Welcome New Members UUCP Membership Committee

Please welcome new members who joined UUCP during our April Pathway to Membership Class.



Meagan Naboulsi is excited to officially be a member of UUCP. Originally from Michigan, she has called Phoenix my home since 2009. After spending four wonderful years as a middle school science teacher, Meagan now serves as an instructional coach for Teach For America. For fun, she loves to explore new places with her one-year-old son and husband. She looks forward to getting to know our community.



Cathy Kim grew up as a Methodist preacher's kid in Wisconsin, relocated to the East Coast, but has now lived in Phoenix for many years. A retired educator, she helps care for her grandkids and continues endeavors with young people—coordinating gardening and tutoring projects at Maryland School—and enjoys time with friends, reading, music, theater and intercultural interests. She tries to sit quietly on a regular basis, but that's hard. She has been drawn to UUCP by the community's commitment to each other, openness to diversity of people and wisdom, enthusiasm and action for social justice, and encouragement/nurturing of everyone to pursue life's journey with thought, passion and joy.



Jim Tuffin lives in Desert Ridge with his wife, Susan Sheroff. Jim and Susan came to Arizona from New York in 2012. Their daughter, Caitlin Gaspar, was a UUCP member when they arrived. Jim started attending services several months ago and has now chosen the faith for himself.



Aaron Ford moved to Phoenix last year from NYC. There he taught elementary music at the historically progressive Little Red School House and worked as an Orff Music Specialist in the RE arts program at The Unitarian Church of All Souls. Before that he was a member of the Anchorage UU and the Manhattan (Kansas) UU Fellowships. He continues to teach elementary music here in Phoenix.



Ashton Faires and Megan Irwin are engaged to be married this fall. Between the two of them, they have four children—Siddha (9), Dylan (9), Lein (8) and Cody (7)—from previous marriages. Both attended UUCP separately prior to meeting. Megan is an Arizona native who attended University of Washington for her undergraduate degree and University of Arizona for law school. She currently works as a partner in the Phoenix office for Bryan Cave. Ashton was originally from Kansas before moving to Arizona in 1999. He attended Wichita State University for his undergraduate degree and Arizona State for his MBA. Both live in the Arcadia area where their children attend school.



DJ Pritchard, a native Phoenician, has had a varied and eclectic life: from living in communes to the U.S. Army, he has sought to experience and understand life. DJ began his spiritual studies at age six after a family death, riding his bicycle to neighborhood churches and studying a variety of texts. Eventually discovering Buddhism and eastern thought, seeking

social justice and justice for animals in a movement away from species-ism, his philosophy has developed beyond the Buddhist teachings. DJ believes that consciousness is shared and generated through circular rotation and spiral information storage and reality altering devices which we call life. DJ has received teachings from the Dalai Llama, Timothy Leary, and a host of other forward thinkers. He is an NLP Master and trainer, and his mission is to be awake and help others awaken.



Katy Boyd moved to AZ as a very young child, and was raised in UUCP. She was lucky to find a job that paid her to travel, and instilled wanderlust in her daughter, as well. Together they did two huge trips: the first to London and Kenya and the second (with Katy's mother) to Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and Singapore. Katy became a regular at UUCP volunteering with her mother, Sally Boyd, for many functions, most notably food for the auctions and activist events. She has always felt welcome and enjoyed the people she has met here. This year, Katy decided it was time to put her name in "The Book" after a 40-year hiatus. □

*Strength does not come from
physical capacity. It comes
from an indomitable will.*

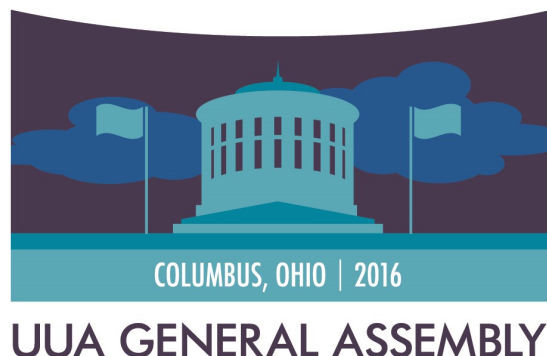
Mahatma Gandhi

**Know a UUCP Friend who
would like a Partner?
Friendship Partners
would like to hear from you.**

Due to life transitions, some of our members/friends are unable to continue their connections to UUCP. If you know of a member or friend who is unable—either permanently or temporarily—to participate in UUCP activities but would like to remain connected to the community they love, we want to hear from you.

Friendship Partners is our UUCP program that supports these Friends who would enjoy being paired with a congregational Partner. Our Friendship Partners will arrange a regular visit, call, or other in ways help maintain contact with those who have shared our UUCP community.

If you know of someone who might be interested in having a Friendship Partner, please contact Diana Ashley, Friendship Partner Coordinator at dianaashley8546@gmail.com or 480-259-5486. □



Off-site Opportunities to Participate in General Assembly!

- Participate in 15 workshops via real-time viewing
- Watch posted video recordings of most workshops
- View live streams of major GA events, including worships, Ware lecture, and bridging ceremony
- Interact with GA via Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Flickr, and the GA Forum on uua.org

All the information you need for off-site participation, including registration, is at uua.org/ga/offsite.

General Assembly 2016

Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect

June 22-26

Columbus, OH

Register at www.uua.org

The faith world is increasingly multifaith. People are crossing borders of religion and spiritual practice to create wholeness in their lives individually and collectively. The labels—Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, theist and non-theist—no longer define who or what we love, or how spirit moves in our lives. General Assembly 2016 in Columbus, Ohio will assemble leaders and communities of many faiths to worship together, learn from one another, and create a new vision of faith that no longer divides us, but connects us to an interdependent future that works for all.

June Worship Theme: **Strength**

Services bring our community together at 10:30 AM

June 5: Strong Kids, Strong Words

Service Leaders: Katie Resendiz and the Children Ministry teachers and students

Words are powerful. The RE program at UUCP has spent the year delving into the meaning of the words our community holds dear. Join the children of our congregation as we travel back through this year's themes. Freedom, Gratitude, Peace, Tradition, Service, Love, Truth, Hope, Covenant, and Strength have led our classes this year. Come listen and watch as strong kids share strong words through reflection, song, and play.

June 12: Redefining Strength for Today

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

Strength is something that we all seek in our lives. And yet there are so many stories and metaphors about strength—some which are harmful or misleading. What are the ways we can look at strength that help give us courage but also flexibility for this divisive time in which we live?

June 19: Strength to Love: How Masculinity is Evolving

Service Leader: Emrys Staton

In the spirit of Father's Day, we'll explore a big shift in society that allows men to live emotionally open lives.

June 26: Talking Resilience into Being

Service Leader: Vince Waldron

UUCP member Vince Waldron explores the idea that resilience is not so much a personal trait, rather it emerges from the social practices and relationships that help us bounce back after adversity.



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