



# Horizons Journal

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix

November 2016



## Balancing Expectation & Acceptance

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray

After graduating college, I went on a pilgrimage to India. This trip was inspired by a Religions of India class and my own call to ministry. My friend who had returned from India a few months earlier recommended I go “without any expectations.” This was some of the best advice I received. There was very little on that trip I could have predicted or expected—India was so very different than what I knew of the U.S. By leaving expectations behind, I was able to welcome each experience as it came without disappointment or frustration, simply acceptance.

Letting go of expectations creates a foundation of acceptance for what is. But we should not confuse acceptance with resignation or giving up. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “You have to accept

whatever comes, and the only important thing is that you meet it with the best you have to give.”

I deliberately chose this theme of Expectation and Acceptance, knowing that November would be the month of major political election in the U.S. It seemed appropriate to some of the mental and spiritual space we might be in as a people heading into these elections.

There are a lot of expectations around this election. And it is not just about outcomes, but what comes next. Already there are fantastic expectations—both positive and negative depending on one’s point of view—about what each outcome of the Presidential election could mean. However, I caution us in getting lost in expectations, either fears or hopes. It is too easy to think that all will be well or all will be lost depending on the outcome.

*Continued page 12*



## Good Enough

Vince Waldron

Member, Board of Trustees

When asked to write about this month’s theme of “expectations and acceptance,” I had mixed reactions. Acceptance? Yeah, that sounds nice. Just saying the word makes me relax. Acceptance is about letting go, being okay with things as they are, giving up on the urge to change that which is unchangeable. Accepting that people are truly and deeply different. Accepting the inevitable. Accepting myself, with all my flaws. Ahhh...that feels good. What a relief!

But there is just one problem. Over the course of my life I haven’t excelled at the acceptance game. Actually, I really stink when it comes to acceptance. And why is that? Well I think it has to do with *expectations*, the other half of our theme. So I spent some time this week mulling over the topic of expectations and why they sometimes get in the

way of acceptance, at least for me. Maybe you have had some similar thoughts.

I think the main problem for me is one of *unrealistic* expectations. And here I mean expectations for myself. I am turning 57 years old this month and yet I still find myself overestimating what I can and “should” do. At work, too often I say “yes” when I really should say “no.” I find myself taking on more projects than I really need to, pretty much assuring that I will end up working more hours and incurring more stress than is really necessary. “Why is that?” I wondered. Maybe it all goes back to being an oldest child, with all the feelings of responsibility that can come with that family role. Or maybe it is because I tend to grow bored with the status quo. I really *enjoy* new projects and I *like* being in the lead. And let’s face it, there are certain rewards to be an overcommitted person.

*Continued page 13*



## Making Space for Anticipation (and Cookies)

Katie Resendiz

Acting Director, Children's Ministries

Advent is special. It is one of the few holidays that stretches out over not just days, but weeks. We have the luxury of living into it and pulling out of it exactly what we need. It offers both observance of life's darkness and reminders of the warmth and light. It doesn't require extensive shopping lists, meal plans, or invitations. Advent lets us sit with who we are, how we are being, and how we will begin. It is a season of waiting and finding comfort.

In the Christian tradition, Advent is a time of expectation and preparation for the Nativity of Jesus. Beginning the fourth Sunday before Christmas, the liturgical celebration often includes the lighting of a candle each week until the strong glow of four herald the birth of Christ. It is a time of slowly building excitement that culminates in one of the faith's biggest celebrations.

Many people have found new meanings in the Advent season . . . or used it to rediscover even older observances. Pagan communities note the return of the Sun in the form of longer daylight beginning on the winter solstice. The expectation of Advent takes on an air of peacefulness and assurance, knowing that after the darkest days, the light will always return. It gives observers a chance to come to terms with the ups and downs of the past year and prepare to let go and move on.

A Christmas-celebrating, humanist friend, who takes her New Year's resolutions very seriously, refers to December as "Waiting, Celebrating, and Becoming." She sees Advent as her time to prepare for the year ahead. In her case, this means making great lists and plans of her goals for the year, her resources, and her challenges. December 25<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> is a time for parties, parties, parties, and then she buckles down with all sincerity on January 1<sup>st</sup> (in a truly Arizonan way, she begins each year with a rigorous New Year's Day hike).

For those who celebrate Christmas, the addition of Advent observance can help calm the rush and bluster of the holiday season. This makes Advent an especially useful season for families with "excitable children" . . . and excitable adults. Advent can be observed as a time of calm each day, a moment set aside to be present, quietly at home. A chance to connect with family, a moment to journal, or even specific time to pair up the socks, before heading out into the world of sleigh bells ringing, lights on houses, Santa at the grocery store, and cookies, cookies everywhere.

A season of expectation, of holding off, of mellowing can balance out some of the emotional expectations of the holidays. With so many gatherings, giftings, and decorations in the weeks leading up to December 25<sup>th</sup>, there is constant social energy to be happy and excited. Advent can be a reminder to acknowledge the dark times and to create space to sit with sadness, frustration, or resentment. It provides a time for reflection, not stewing but feeling, remembering, and learning from these emotions.

Derived from Latin, the word "advent" signifies an arrival or coming into a state of being. As a holiday, "Advent" can be a deeply magical and reflective preparation for celebration. It is unique in that it calls us to make way for the new, but the observation requires almost no accoutrements. It gives us a simple time to wait, to expect, and accept what comes next.



## Ideas for Advent:

- A traditional chocolate calendar counts down the days, gives a sweet treat, and provides a moment's pause to think about the coming celebration. A variation on this can be choosing a food item that is a special treat (maybe one that tends to be an overindulgence) and make a point to enjoy it once a day for the season. A daily mug of hot chocolate or slice of *gjetost* quickly becomes the mark of the season.
- Set aside a time each day to try a new journaling exercise. It is a good time to experiment with using the same writing prompt over multiple days (or even the whole stretch of Advent for that matter). A quick three minutes to list and reflect on all the times you've had to wait that day and what it felt like. A page of drawing and words about the things in life you accept, what are you okay with? Or each day write about someone in your community.
- Un-binge! Find a show on Netflix that you love and . . . don't watch it all at once! Watch just one episode a day let the drama draw out, avoid spoilers, let yourself rush home to see the next episode, make yourself turn off the TV at the end of that episode. Anticipation!
- Clear the calendar. For the four weeks of Advent, consider canceling as many of your regular obligations as you can. Yes, I'm saying don't go to your normal volunteer gig (let them know first, of course), don't have your normal Friday pizza and movie, maybe even let your cleaning schedule slip. Use the time to go to a holiday concert, go to a party, but know that you have made space and time to go. Make specific choices about where you spend your time—rather than having to say “the holidays are so busy,” we can say “I did all these wonderful things.”
- One minute: on the first day of advent, spend one minute sitting in silence. The following day sit for two. Each day increase the minutes by one. You won't sit for more than a half hour and on Christmas day, it can be nice to sit for the full time before launching into a day of celebrating.
- Make space! A number of families in our UUCP community use Advent as a time to make room for the gifts that will come with the season. That may mean asking each family member to find one item to give up, give to charity, or give the old heave-ho.
- Consider joining the Children's Ministry Committee's efforts. The CMC is looking for 7 homes to host Advent donation boxes. Each night of Advent a small donation such a new toiletry or gently used blanket is placed in the box, which will be returned to UUCP on Christmas Eve and the items gifted to one of our partner organizations (email Katie for more information, [KatieResendiz@phoenixuu.org](mailto:KatieResendiz@phoenixuu.org)). □

## — ACCEPTANCE —

You are imperfect,  
permanently and inevitably  
flawed. And you are  
beautiful. — Amy Bloom

*Most things will be okay eventually,  
but not everything ... Sometimes  
you'll put up a good fight and lose.  
Acceptance is a small, quiet room.*  
— Cheryl Strayed



## The Three Fates of Today's Society

Emrys Staton

Director of Pastoral Care & Justice Ministries

Many of the world's religious, spiritual, and philosophical traditions try to provide insight into why things unfold the way they do in our lives. Basically, whether or not we have free will and to what extent our personal agency provides any control over life events.

One of my favorite examples of this comes from classical Greek literature. The Moirai—or The Fates—held a special role of influence over human life. The Fates were conceived of as three individuals using a metaphor of thread. One was the spinner of the thread, one measured out the length, and the third made the final cut.

The power of the Fates was so great that even the all mighty god, Zeus, could not rescue one of his sons from an impending death in battle. The Fates were not necessarily malicious or evil, they were just a known fact of life. We must all meet our inevitable fate.

In Unitarian Universalist theology, we don't rely on any of the concepts of divine intervention in life. Our early break-away from traditional Protestant Christian doctrine had a lot to do with rejecting John Calvin's teaching of predestination. And as we embraced more scientific discovery, what seemed to be mysterious causes of death, such as disease, natural disasters, and political strife, now had rational and predictable explanations.

But I do think that the concept of fate is still applicable; however, I see it based in our socio-political context in U.S. society. The three "fates" that I believe are most influential are capitalism, patriarchy, and colonial racism.

I pick these three in agreement with black feminist author bell hooks, who always speaks of oppression as the "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." She does this to say that no one form of oppression—classism, racism or sexism—is necessarily more important or influential than any other, but that instead they all overlap and build off each other.

In the same way that the Greek Fates literally spun the quality and measured the length of one's life, the trio of oppressions play a similar role in their impact on people's lives. Living in poverty, being a person of color, and/or being a woman (or LGBTQ) all impact your access to society's benefits, and will therefore influence your life.

But unlike the classic Greek literature, we do have the means to challenge and overcome the systems of oppression. We see it in the incredible movements and protests of the past and of our current day. It's definitely not easy to overcome the "fate" prescribed by the dominant culture, but it is possible.

As we engage this month's theme of Expectation and Acceptance, we can keep working on developing our resistance to racism, sexism, and economic exploitation. We can and should expect and dream for a more just and equitable world, while also being honest with how much oppression still exists in our society. We accept reality of oppression, but don't accept it as unchangeable.

I believe that the organizing efforts that are slowly challenging and overturning systems of oppression are impressive. While the Greek god Zeus wasn't powerful enough to save his son, our communities can develop and wield the power necessary to change the world.

So let us keep developing our faith as UUs in the lens of justice, participating in social and political movements that challenge the fate of systemic oppression. Our expectations of an equitable and just society, a healthy planet, and opportunities for vibrant life should guide us towards the movements that make those things possible. Our refusal to accept the status quo and the norms of a society still steeped in racism, sexism and classism give us a unique theological and philosophical perspective that is relevant to the real world, with real people living real lives. In other words, resisting oppression makes us a religious community for our time. □



## UUCP Live Auction

Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

UUCP Sanctuary

*Volunteer - Donate - Connect!*

<http://www.phoenixuu.org/events/2016-auction/>

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**You** have to accept whatever comes,  
and the only important thing is that you meet it  
with the best you have to give. Eleanor Roosevelt

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## Pathway to Membership

**Thursdays, November 3 and 10, 6:45PM**  
*after Community Night Dinner*

The Pathway to Membership program is a two-part class that invites you to meet with other people considering membership, hear more from ministers and leaders about what it means to be a member, ask questions, learn about the history of Unitarian Universalism and UUCP, and ends with an invitation to join by signing the membership book and pledging your support. There is no pressure to join. We recognize membership is a commitment and we hope people will take their time before joining.

To register, stop by the Welcome Table in the lobby, or contact Janine Gelsinger at 602-840-8400 x 204 or [JanineGelsinger@PhoenixUU.org](mailto:JanineGelsinger@PhoenixUU.org).





## Finding Your Voice

Benjie Messer

Music Director

What does your voice sound like? Is it soft or loud, high or low? Is it delicate or rough, clear or husky, careful or carefree? How do you love to use your voice, and how do you hate to use it? How does it sound to you, and how might it sound to others? Are you surprised when you hear a recording of yourself? Do you smile when you hear it, or do you flinch?

Each of us has an incredible, unique voice. Most of us don't think of ourselves as having a "wonderful voice"—and we're wrong! Our voices really are wonderful. Many years ago, I studied singing technique with a classical voice teacher for six months, and found that when I used the technique she taught me, my voice was incredibly loud. At one point I asked her, "Why am I so loud? Can I sing quietly?" She answered, "That is your instrument. Don't be embarrassed by the instrument you were given." (She also suggested that eventually I might develop the ability to sing with proper technique and also change my volume, but in six months of weekly lessons, we never got that far.)

That was a lesson in self-acceptance for me, and one that I wish to pass on to you. Don't be embarrassed by the instrument you were given! Most of us have negative feelings about our own voices, ways that we don't sound like we think we "should." Some of us were teased about accents, speech impediments, lisps, voices that were low or high or soft or loud. Some of us simply learned to be quiet, because we were expected to be seen and not heard. These feelings stop us from noticing and using our voices in all of their beauty and power.

When I taught elementary school choir, I often demonstrated in falsetto, to give the children a chance to giggle in embarrassment, imitate me, and find their own voices. This was particularly helpful to the boys, who often expected to be able to sing pitches well below what they could actually do. And leading our congregation's choir, I'm learning more

and more about how much our voices continue to change over time. If a singer's voice becomes softer, lower or rougher with age, they can keep sounding louder, higher or clearer for a little while by pushing and straining, but ultimately, they'll hurt their voice. Just as with the young boys, if older singers can embrace and accept their new voice, rather than expecting to sound different, they can continue to sing beautifully and without strain.

Our voices are intimately connected to how we see ourselves, and singing together, as we do every Sunday morning, allows us to practice self-acceptance in a very concrete way. Don't be embarrassed by the instrument you were given! Both literally and figuratively, I hope our congregation is a place where you can find your unique, wonderful voice. □

## Community Thanksgiving Dinner

*November 24<sup>th</sup> • 6:00 PM*

Join UUCP members, friends and extended families for a community Thanksgiving dinner.

We will provide the essentials— turkey and stuffing— and all are invited to contribute a dish, salad or dessert to the meal.

More information and sign-ups will come in Compass and Sunday announcements.



## Unicare News

Please lift up in your thoughts those in our community who share their transitions, sorrows, celebrations and wishes—that they may find strength in your love and friendship. For more information, or to get involved, contact Vicki Myers, our UUCP Unicare Coordinator, at [unicare@phoenixuu.org](mailto:unicare@phoenixuu.org).

### Remembrances

- The mother of Anne Byrne, who was our Director of Children's Ministry for many years, passed away suddenly in October. We wish her fond memories and healing.

### Transitions & Healing Wishes

- Healing thoughts go out to Gretchen Manker as she recovers from a fall that resulted in multiple fractures.
- We send our Get Well wishes to Colin Brodd, recovering from a blood infection that required hospitalization.
- Wishing Anne Jackel a speedy recovery from recent appendicitis surgery.
- Our spiritual support to those members who traveled to Standing Rock, ND to protect the waters of the Missouri and the sacred indigenous area.

### Celebrations

- Happy Trails to Ileana Salinas and Celso Mireles as they join the UU Justice Ministry Borders trip to Tijuana. Their U.S. Immigration-approved cross-border trip will also allow them to visit with family they have not seen in many years.
- Congratulations to Duke Plattner and Susan Morris on the October marriage of their daughter Katie.
- Welcome Hanna Beth Montgomery—the lovely and healthy new addition born September 30<sup>th</sup> to Sarah and Mat Montgomery.
- Happy 50 years of wedding joy to Don & Wanda Lamm.

## Small Group Ministries

Build connections by joining one of UUCP's Small Groups!

**2nd Wednesday Group:** 1:00-2:30pm in Annex B

**Parents of Young Children:** 10:45-11:30am, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Annex D

**Young Adults:** 6:45-8:15pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in Annex C

**Sunday Potluck Group:** 5:30-7:30pm, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, hosted offsite

**Friendship Village Group:** Details Online

**Beatitudes Group:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 9:30-11:00am at Beatitudes Campus

**Men's Group:** 6:30pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays, hosted offsite

**Addiction Ministry Group:** 7:00pm, Fridays in Annex C

**Drop-in Group:** 7:00pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays in Annex C

Descriptions and registration info is online at: [phoenixuu.org/small-group-overview](http://phoenixuu.org/small-group-overview). □



## The Work of Being Genderqueer

Sky Williams

Minister's Assistant

When I was younger, I always talked about who I wanted to be when I “grew up.” My aspirations were professional or relational. I wanted to be a veterinarian or married to someone who could cook well or both.

Now that I’m 22 instead of 12, I say, “I’ll be different when I become a *real* adult” (because my culture has a very long and unclear transition from childhood to adulthood). My aspirations are often domestic or personal. I’ll clean all of the dishes every day and I will never again have a hopelessly cluttered work or home space.

I am still young, but even now I’m getting the sense that life doesn’t always go the way you think it will. In college, I was certain that I was going to be a physics and political science double major. College happened. I found that dance was actually the field that I needed, and that needed me.

One of the biggest surprises in my life was when I started edging into a genderqueer identification. This identity felt like something I had to dip my toe into, then run away from, then slowly and cautiously come back to. Repeat this a few times, and you get a sense of my journey. Now, though, this identity feels like it’s written on my skin. Like it’s just naturally a part of who I am.

Thinking back, though, I did a lot of work to get to where I am now. And I still do a lot of work to understand and accept my gender identity. I work to listen to myself. To understand where I am at any given moment. I do the work of reminding myself that I can wear dresses and still be true to my identity. That a form of gender expression may not work for some trans people, but it does work for me.

I work to research what it means to be trans and learn more about this gender family I find myself in. I work to remember how and why I changed my name and pronouns when people challenge me about my gender expression. Sometimes, I work to not just give up and stop this exploration.

However, I don’t and didn’t do my gender work alone. There were a number of indispensable

partners on this journey. When I was at a high school UU camp at DeBennville Pines, I was a diehard fan of the stories an older transman camper wrote. Being trans for him was complicated and hard, but normal too. Then in college, one of my friends transitioned from female to male. My background gave me the ability to be there for that friend. He later returned the favor in a big way by calling me he/him pronouns and letting me try on that identity.

Not all of my companions were trans, either. I took a class on disability studies my senior year of college. Our professor had us make nametags that we used for the whole semester. Her nametag system allowed me to try out the name Sky in a new setting and see if I liked it. Her respect for my name test also really helped.

One of my closest friends took awhile to get on board, but when he realized what I needed he did his best. I remember him telling me that his conversations would take interesting turns as he used he, she, and they pronouns for me in the space of one conversation because I wasn’t sure which set fit best. Another close cisgender friend told me that she practiced my new name and pronouns in her head so that she would use the correct ones.

These spaces were such oases because they gave me the freedom to explore. The people around me did the work of accepting me. They accepted my messiness of identification. They accepted me when I needed something they weren’t expecting and weren’t used to. Their work created space where I could focus on finding clarity in my own journey instead of constantly having to ask for acceptance.

The UUCP staff just went on a staff retreat. One phrase that came out of that retreat was, “your chaos is welcome here.” My gender identity often feels chaotic, in both the best and worst senses of that word. One thing that spectacular chaos inside me has taught me is that acceptance takes work, especially when the chaos to be accepted defies my own, and my community’s, expectations. □



## Annual *Pet Service*

Thursday, November 17, 7:00-8:00 PM  
(after Community Night meal)  
Johnson Room

This special Thursday evening all-ages service honors the pets in our lives and our families. Pets are welcome on leashes or in terrariums or carriers. Photographs of pets are also welcome, including those unable to attend and those we hold in memory.



## New Photo Directory

UUCP has partnered with Lifetouch to produce a new Members & Staff photo directory. All members and staff are asked to participate by signing up for a photo shoot November 9-12. There is no purchase necessary to participate, though if you wish, there will be many options to purchase photographs and packages. Please sign up ASAP as slots will fill up fast. For more information visit the photo sign up table during coffee hour or visit [www.phoenixuu.org](http://www.phoenixuu.org). Hosts are needed to help make sure the photo shoots go smoothly. Hosts volunteer for three-hour shifts on the photo shoot days and help:



- Welcome families and answer questions
- Complete check-in paperwork
- Communicate any outreach programs in conjunction with the photography event
- Verify current roster information for each family and update if necessary.

To sign up and volunteer, contact Heidi Parmenter, Business Administrator, at 602-840-8400 ext. 202 or [heidiparmenter@phoenixuu.org](mailto:heidiparmenter@phoenixuu.org) to sign up and volunteer.

## *November 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

6:30 PM Chalice Kids, Adult Faith Development, Small Groups, and special events:

### *November 3:*

Pathway to Membership (Part 1), 6:45-8:15 PM

AFD: Coming of Age for Adults, 7:00-8:30 PM

### *November 10:*

UUCP Photo Shoot for Photo Directory, 10:00 AM-8:30 PM

Pathway to Membership (Part 2), 6:45-8:15 PM

### *November 17:*

Women's Ritual Group 6:45-8:30 PM

Pet Blessing Service 7:00-8:00 PM

Drop-in Small Group 7:00-8:30 PM

### *November 24:*

Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner, 6:00-8:00 PM



HANDMADE ITEMS BY UUs  
SUNDAY BEFORE & AFTER SERVICES

*Continued from "Balancing..." Rev. Susan, page 1*

These expectations distract us from the reality that no matter the outcome, we still face urgent issues that will not be solved with one election.

The work remains of trying to bring change to the criminal justice system, of really embracing change that will sustain the resources of our planet, of creating policies that will address economic inequality and the cost and quality of education, to name a few. An even larger question is how, given the global context of our shrinking world, we will welcome and work together across borders.

Interestingly, the expectations we hold (and the assumptions that follow) shape our outlook on how to address these issues. Do we expect the world to be safe and people kind—or is our expectation that the world and other people are harsh and dangerous? Do we see the resources of the world as abundant or do we live in fear of scarcity? What kind of expectations do you project on the world and how does that shape your experience? How do our expectations affect or distort how we see each other? What would it mean to let those expectations go and instead cultivate the capacity to just meet whatever comes with openness, seeing it as it is?

Elections are of critical importance, but it has also been said that elections are but one note in the symphony that is democracy. So, may we all remember: whatever the results, the work remains and let us, as Roosevelt counsels, meet what *is* with the best we have to give. □

## Memorial Garden

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*friends whose ashes were interred  
in our Memorial Garden  
this month in past years  
are still remembered*

Alvena Isobel Cranmer  
Rose Elfenbein Egeland  
William Harold Gooding  
Barbara Lusby Hise  
Richard Charles Malmleaf  
Elizabeth Wright McNeal  
Robert Sheldon Oliver  
Joan Lee Oliver  
Walter R. Pepper  
Shirley R. Sarasohn

## — EXPECTATION —

Whatever it is you're seeking  
won't come in the form you're  
expecting. — Haruki Murakami

*I prayed for freedom for twenty  
years, but received no answer until  
I prayed with my legs.  
— Frederick Douglass*

*Continued from "Good Enough" page 1*

We get to imagine ourselves as "can do" heroes. And sometimes we even get to be martyrs. *Hey, why am I doing everything around here without any help?*

But, as I have begun to learn, unrealistic expectations are, well... unrealistic. And they come with real costs. One of those is unnecessary stress. And we all know that stress has real and unpleasant consequences, including insomnia, high blood pressure, and even heart attacks. Some of the costs are social. As my spouse Kathleen would gladly verify, I am a less fun person when I am too stressed, mainly because I focus too much on myself and my work. Sure, focus is a good thing at times, but unrealistic expectations push me in the direction of obsession with goals that just might not be achievable given the time and resources that are actually, *realistically*, available. And even if I complete that project or reach that goal, what have I sacrificed along the way? Have I temporarily disconnected from my family? Failed to notice when a friend needed a sympathetic ear? Spent less time reading, or walking in the desert, or just "wasting time"?

For me the answers to these questions are sometimes "yes," "yes" and "yes."

Having confessed all of this, I should also let you know that I am getting better at adjusting my expectations. That is partly because life has a way of humbling those of us who make unrealistic expectations for ourselves. I see now that some of my younger colleagues are much better equipped to guide certain projects. They should take the lead, take their turn in the spotlight. In my personal life, I realized that I wasn't always the Super Dad that I wanted to be. But my kids ended up doing just fine; they seem to love me anyway. And at UUCP, I realize that I just can't say "yes" as often as I want. I just don't have the time. Yet others always step up to help and no one is "guilting" me into doing more.

All of this is to say that I am learning, perhaps somewhat belatedly, that it really is okay to

be a "good enough" employee, worker, and UUCP member. And you might say that is a kind of acceptance. So there you go. Maybe I am better at acceptance than I realized.

This is a year of great expectation at UUCP. Our minister is in the running for the UUA presidency. We are inspired by a new vision statement. An ambitious capital campaign will help make that vision a reality. But our community will also experience some uncertainty in coming months as we contemplate a future that may (or may not) include our beloved Reverend Susan. Rest assured that those of us on the Board of Trustees are committed to making sure UUCP stays on course. But to expect this to be a completely "normal" year would be unrealistic. At times we may all need to be a bit more flexible, a bit more tolerant of ambiguity, a bit more forgiving when things don't go as expected.

A year of great expectation leavened with a dollop of uncertainty? That might not sound completely ideal, but it certainly is "good enough." Even for me.

## *Our Vision*

To be a spiritual community for our time:

*Theologically diverse*

*Radically inclusive*

*Justice centered* □

## November Worship Theme: **Expectation & Acceptance**

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

November 6: *The Story I Tell Myself*

Service Leader: Emrys Staton

We often create stories in our own minds to explain, justify, or make sense of what others are doing. In this way, we come accept a false version of things without creating the opportunity to really understand what is going on. If we don't get caught up in these stories, we can be more open to the realities of the world.

November 13: *A Longer View of Time*

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

It could be argued that Americans think about time on a very short horizon. We want it now! This can increase our expectations as well as disappointment. How might a longer view of time help us create deeper acceptance and wisdom for our lives?

THURSDAY, November 17: *Pet Blessing Service*

Service Leaders: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Emrys Staton, Katie Resendiz and Benjie Messer

This special Thursday evening all-ages service (after Community Night dinner) honors the pets in our lives. Pets are welcome, on leashes or in terrariums or carriers. Photographs of pets are also welcome, including beloved pets you hold in memory.

November 20: *Multigenerational Bread Service: A Feast in Community*

Service Leaders: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Emrys Staton and Katie Resendiz

In honor of the feast day of Thanksgiving, everyone is invited to bring a grain-based staple (tortillas, challah, brown bread, muffins, idlis, injera, naan, fry bread, etc.) to share with the community. As we bring gifts reflective of our family traditions, we nurture a greater awareness of the beauty and diversity of our own community.

November 27: *Family Stories of Expectation & Acceptance*

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

One of the places we most readily experience both expectation and acceptance is within our families. Especially around holidays, expectations can be high. What is the balance between expectations and acceptance when it comes to parenting and negotiating family relationships?





UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
PARTNER CHURCH COUNCIL

## **Pilgrimage Opportunities in 2017!**

These pilgrimages are open to everyone. Registration deadlines are approaching! To learn more: <http://www.uupcc.org/pilgrimages/pilgrimage-opportunities>.

### **Pilgrimage to the Philippines – January 31 - February 10, 2017**

*Registration closes: November 1, 2016*

Learn the vibrant culture and history of the Philippines! Experience the Metro Manila area and tropical Negros Island. Meet people who treasure their UU faith and discover our interconnectedness in ways that will challenge and engage you. Engage in projects alongside Philippine UUs to improve their communities and church.

### **NE India & Khasi Hills Pilgrimage – March 12-21, 2017**

*Registration closes: November 30, 2016*

Experience this unique outpost of Unitarianism and the hospitality of the Khasi people. Based in the city of Shillong with visits to significant Unitarian sites of North East India—as well as a working tea plantation, Monolith Park, and two nights in spectacular Cheeripungee Gorge with guided hikes to the Khasi "Living Bridges." Trip will culminate with worship services on Sunday & those with partner churches in NE India may visit those villages for services and home stays where feasible. Optional 7-day/6-night pre-trip "Golden Triangle" extension.

### **Transylvania Thanksgiving Pilgrimage (on a budget) – September 16-28, 2017**

*Registration closes: May 27, 2017*

Beginning and ending in Kolozsvár/Cluj, visit significant Unitarian holy places including Torda, Mészö, Gyulaferhervár & Deva. Explore frescoed Unitarian churches of Székelyderz (a UNESCO World Heritage site) and Homoródkaracsanyfalva, the spectacular 13<sup>th</sup> century castle at Vadjaunyad, the Saxon capital of Transylvania, Sibiu, the medieval walled city of Sighisoara/Segesvár, and the Saxon fortress church at Biertan (Segesvár & Biertan are both UNESCO World Heritage sites). Spend Transylvanian Thanksgiving weekend with your partner congregation or in a beautiful Unitarian village with other pilgrims. Optional 4-day/3-night pre-trip Budapest extension, and 6-day/5-night post-trip extension to Maramures & the Painted Monasteries of Bucovia.

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