



# Horizons Journal

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix

October 2017



## The Courage to Be Transformed

Reverend Margret A. O'Neill

Among the symbolic items I have scattered around my office is a couple of working models of Optimus Prime, my personal favorite among the characters known as Transformers. Transformers are action figures and cartoon characters, giant fighting robots called Autobots who, in the grand tradition of superheroes throughout time, adopt a disguise when they are not being heroic. They hide their true identity by presenting themselves as cars or trucks, speedboats or motorcycles, moving among us undetected. They came to Earth from outer space to battle our enemies, fighting those called the Decepticons who want to destroy humanity and take over our rich

resources. When the Decepticons threaten, the Transformers rapidly move into their superhero mode, fearlessly transforming to meet the need in that moment, taking on the challenge to live into their true purpose.

Transformation is all around us. The caterpillar dissolves in the chrysalis to become a butterfly; mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent changes more than his clothes in the phone booth to emerge as Superman; a car or a truck unfolds into a robot to defend humanity—every common thing, it seems, holds the hidden possibility to become something amazingly more. There is a risk in choosing to transform, and courage is required if we are to dissolve, to change our form, to emerge from our

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## We, the People...

Karin Quinn

Member, Board of Trustees

In his 1957 book *Profiles of Courage*, John F. Kennedy wrote:

*For in a democracy, every citizen, regardless of his interest in politics, 'holds office'; every one of us in a position of responsibility, and in the final analysis, the kind of government we get depends upon how we fulfill those responsibilities. We, the people, are the boss, and we will get the kind of political leadership, be it good or bad, that we demand and deserve.*

As our congregation at UUCP begins the transition to a new and unknown future in terms of our search for a new minister, it has begun to dawn quite abruptly on the Board of Trustees that this shift of leadership means that word so many of us dread: *change*. We are not just magically going to be gifted with a Reverend Susan lookalike minister. In fact, we

won't be gifted with anything, and we will definitely have a different, and maybe very different, minister. What will we demand and what do we deserve?

On the Board, with the help of our expert interim minister, Reverend Margret O'Neill, we have quickly begun to realize that this two-year transition period will involve the commitment from the whole congregation and, in particular, from the staff, the Board, and new committees formed who will deliberately work toward defining or redefining our identity and being in active search for a minister who will be a good fit for UUCP. This work has now actively begun at our Board Meetings.

In light of our theme for the month of October—*Courage*—I thought I would share some attributes of courage according to *Psychology Today*. One of these is "expanding your horizons; letting go of the familiar." This is exactly what the Board, and UUCP as a whole, is facing as we begin this transi-

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## Learning to Surf (the Musical Waves)

Benjie Messer

Music Director

Every year, people who have felt stage fright for the majority of their adult lives decide to sing in choirs. They sit in the choir that first evening, surrounded by seasoned singers, with no idea of how to read music, not much understanding of verbal musical directions, not used to hearing their own voice in that situation, and completely terrified. Through a miraculous amount of courage, they ignore their fear and sing, even if only quietly, or only sometimes. And the next week, many of them go back to rehearsal and sing again, and the next week, and the next.

Over the next few months, as they learn music almost through pure repetition, they get used to the feeling and the sound and the rhythm of rehearsals, when they need to pay attention and when they can relax, and their fear lowers slightly. By the end of the first year, the fear may have receded enough that they can enjoy listening to their own voice in a way they haven't before, noticing how it sounds with other voices, its unique color and weight, what the center of their range feels like compared to the top and the bottom, what it feels like to try to sing together with the person on their right or on their left.

Over the next few years, they may begin to play with vocal technique for themselves, to feel and hear the difference in their mouth between vowel shapes, or to notice the effect of warm-ups. They may learn the basics of reading, which signals in the music scream Watch Out! and which ones are like a single price on a long receipt, something that they can assume is Taken Care Of (until it's not). Most of them will learn to love the feeling of being swept up by the music, that moment that surfers must feel after paddling and watching and waiting, of suddenly and unexpectedly being lifted by a powerful wave that you have no control over, something much bigger than yourself.

After five years of singing, they may learn to appreciate the hidden relationships and attitudes that make choirs work or not work, and that make them different. Does the director lead with criticism or joy, with insight or confusion? Do rehearsals have a feeling of relaxation or urgency, of renewal or routine? When do members of the choir work together and when do they rub against each other, personally and musically, and when they rub, what does the director do? Is the singer who always sings just a little louder than everyone else simply ignored, or criticized, or moved to a back corner, or coached, or featured for their gift?

This whole process is amazing, but today I'm thinking about the courage of the new folks who sang with the UUCP choir for our recent Ingathering service, when I invited anyone in the community to join us, with no need to commit for the year. Many of them have indicated that they plan to come back this week, and the next week, and the next. I'm so excited to have them with us, and I hope that some of them learn to love surfing the musical waves at UUCP as much as I have. □

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## Community Night Dinners

This year, we continue our Community Night tradition. Join us at 6:00 PM in the Johnson Room for food and friendship. A donation of \$5 per adult, \$2 per child under 10 years old, or \$10 per family covers the cost of the meal.

Community Night is not a potluck. Instead, each week features the talents of the fabulous cooks in our congregation. If you'd like to contribute as a Sous Chef (sides, salad, or bread), please sign-up in advance.

If you enjoy contributing, but are unable to commit, bringing a dessert or fruit to share is welcome. If you'd like to join, but have dietary restrictions or preferences, you are welcome to bring your own meal.

If you have questions about Community Night, contact [JanineGelsinger@phoenixuu.org](mailto:JanineGelsinger@phoenixuu.org).

### October Menu

- 10/5 - Beef Stroganoff or Mushroom Stroganoff, with roasted brussel sprouts, fall harvest salad, and homemade "Red Lobster" cheddar biscuits, from Chefs Teri and Donna Talbot, and Sous Chefs EV Girod, Robin Stewart, and Janine Gelsinger.
- 10/12 - Indian Food Night: Yellow Curry with Chicken, or Vegan Potato Subji, with basmati rice, naan, and mango lassis, from Chef Robin Stewart, and Sous Chefs Alisa Phillips and the YRUU and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Youth.
- 10/19 - Zuppa Toscana (choice of sausage or vegetarian), with quinoa salad, mixed greens salad with balsamic dressing, and homemade cranberry bread, from Chef Julie Talbot, and Sous Chefs Cherie Stafford, Robin Stewart, and Joan Gale.
- 10/26 - Beef Stew or Vegetable Stew, with salad + bread, from Chef Ruth Crowley + Sous Chef Linda Vance.





## Courage Takes Flight

Emrys Staton

Director of Pastoral Care & Justice Ministries

In a recent meeting at the congregation, we did our personal check-ins on the topic of courage. One person shared they were re-reading the *Bhagavad Gita*, and reflected on the way courage and heroism are demonstrated in that classic Indian text. Another talked about the courage it took to ask for a divorce, but how it felt like desperation at the time. Another recalled an elementary student who defined courage as facing your fears, despite the student being taller and stronger than all their classmates. I began to wonder, is courage really something we can see—and therefore cultivate—in ourselves, or does it require an outside observer?

Courage comes in many guises. What may seem like a courageous act to some might have felt more like desperation, stubbornness, fear, foolishness, or just pure adrenaline to that person in the moment. I find that a person rarely sees themselves as courageous. Rather, we notice and define things as courageous that we witness in others. It's a matter of observation and interpretation.

I was thinking about the hawk, our thematic co-sponsor for October, and began to wonder about

*...invite us to think about the times when we are the hawk, the times when we are the small birds chasing the hawk away...*

how courage, or at least the perception of it, is really dependent upon one's identity and, specifically, one's position of power.

Hawks are powerful and adept hunters with great eyesight, sharp talons, and strong wings. Red tails, Cooper's and Harris's hawks are the most common of these sub-species of raptors in the Sonoran desert (eagles and vultures are close relatives). I love watching them soar, and keep my own eyes peeled for them perched on telephone

poles and saguaros. But watching them swoop down upon less-athletic pigeons or doves, I would hesitate to say that a hawk is courageous.

Reflecting more, I remember the first time that I saw some smaller birds attacking and chasing a hawk away from their nest site. More nimble and clearly agitated, the smaller birds squawked and flew right around the hawk's head, pestering it enough to leave the area. Now *that* strikes me as an example of courage. However, watching a hawk face off with a rattlesnake (look it up on YouTube), where the power differential appears more equalized, I would put my wager of courage back onto the hawk.

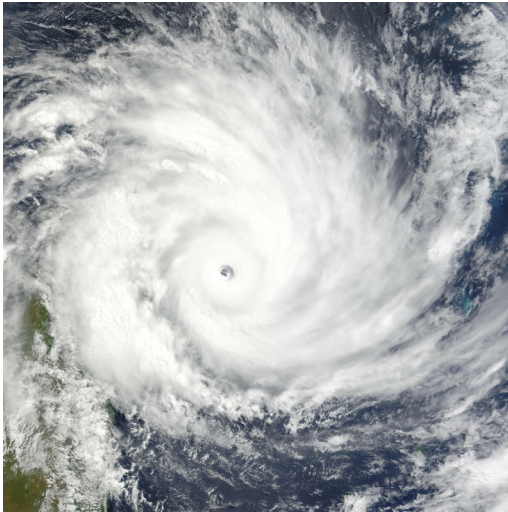
Courage, as a virtue, is related to the power differential or the odds stacked against you. What would be courageous in one context could easily be just posturing or bullying in another.

Some say that for the virtue of courage to really be authentic, it must be rooted in love, even vulnerability. I would add in other virtues that help maintain humbleness, such as gratitude, compassion, and reverence.

In order to be a people of courage, we need to be balanced by humility. Just the thought of saying out loud, "I'm a courageous person," carries an egoistic vibe. Greek mythology is great at portraying a character who we are inclined to root for as a courageous underdog, but once they've gained power and strength, the courage morphs into pride and hubris, and we witness their inevitable downfall. We know the tune, so it's a matter of how we learn from it to avoid pitfalls in our own lives.

I look forward to more conversations about how courage shows up in our lives, and invite us to think about the times when we are the hawk, the times when we are the small birds chasing the hawk away, and the times when we are the outside observer, the ornithologist seeking the elusive call of courage that inspires us live more boldly in our world. □





## Hurricane Recovery Funds

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) have partnered to support communities affected by this season's devastating storms. Contribute here: <https://www.uua.org/giving/areas-support/funds/hurricane-harvey-relief-fund-and-resources>.

The Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice is organizing volunteers to help with disaster relief efforts associated with Hurricanes Irma and Harvey. If you would like to volunteer, fill out their online form: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4623138>.

## UU Leadership Schools

Leadership schools offer a learning experience that can be transformational. Schools range from whole weeks to long weekends to online versions. Each school has its own culture and format, some offered by regions and some offered nationally.

Find out about different Leadership School options at <https://www.uua.org/leadership/schools>.

*(image courtesy of UUA)*



*Committed to the full inclusion of people with disabilities*

Unitarian Universalists are committed to welcoming and affirming people of all abilities. Nearly 50 million people in the U.S. (1 in 5) have a disability—visible or invisible, public or private. For everyone, whether having a disability or not, the environment in which we live, learn, play, sing, work, meditate, reflect, and pray must feel welcoming in order for everyone to grow and thrive.

The Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) is focused on welcoming, embracing, integrating, and supporting people with disabilities and their families in our congregations. Learn more about ways to make your environment and community more accessible and inclusive at <http://www.uua.org/accessibility>.



## Labels: One Person's Slander, Another's Strength

Katie Resendiz

Director, Children's Ministries

Identity is a topic I've mentioned in this forum before, but I think it bears a closer examination within the context of Courage.

Sometimes, labels and titles are met with resistance, especially in terms of identity. We say things like "I don't want to be put in a box" or "I am more than just my label." In working with youth this summer, I entered the strange and amazing world of Instagram and found myself immersed in the language of #hashtags.

For those unfamiliar, hashtags are a way to add data to the data of social media. Think of it as adding sticky notes to textbook pages. On Instagram, they allow for the individual to give the photo and often the people in the photo a label.

In my first days on Instagram, I saw how hashtags are a tool of self naming. Empowering the individual to claim, reclaim, celebrate, and announce their own identities. Words to be proud of, words to aspire to, words to narrate a particular way of being.

I found a few particularly amusing and/or interesting:

#UUKids  
#UUGA  
#UUPride  
#MakeStuff  
#SiblingLove  
#UUCP

It's actually this last one that got me thinking about courage and identity, two issues that our congregation takes on this month. You see, #UUCP not only marks photos related to our own beloved Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix, but also a number of other UU communities that share our acronym. The letters of "UUCP" mean something slightly different to them, but I got to thinking, the overall culture and feeling of "UUCP" is probably shared across all of those communities.

We like to think of Unitarian Universalism as

a catch-all, accepting every and any individual and their beliefs. But the work each of us does toward and the values we give the seven principles unites us. We have icons of our UU identity; the obvious ones the chalice, the covenanting process, shared rituals like water communion; the undeniable ones, the desire to question, the option to pass, the acceptance of tie-dye as a formal wear. I would someday love to sit down with all of you and make a list of "what are the things that tell us this place is UU? That show us a person getting out of their car at Fry's just might be UU? (Maybe they don't know it yet!)" (Come on, we all know it will be the "coexist" bumper sticker and cloth bags.)

If we are to build a Unitarian Universalist identity, these principles can also give us courage for brave acts.

According to the Pew Research Center, we are found in the category "Unitarians and other liberal faiths in the 'Other Faiths' Tradition."

Meanwhile, 67% of our state identifies as Christian and 27% are unaffiliated/religious "nones." The children of our UUCP community attend schools with these peers. The faith of their peers colors the interactions on playgrounds, the timbre of classroom life, and we know for certain in Arizona, it even dictates the curriculum the children are provided.

One of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders recently showed me a string of texts between her and school mate. The boy had included in a string of insults: liberal. While my first response was to shout "Why are you talking to someone who is sending you a string of insults?!?!?" I held back and listened for her question. She wanted to know why she should be insulted for being called a liberal.

We talked through her definition of *liberal*: reproductive rights, racial justice, equality in democracy. After a few more examples, her mood shifted from annoyed to enraged.

"Whoa child, what's made you ramp up?"

"HE'S INSULTING MY RELIGION!"

I was confused and scrolled again through the texts looking for a slander against Unitarian Universalism, prepared to be impressed by this middle schooler's specific knowledge. I found none.

She explained, "He said liberal, but those are all things I get from church! My whole church! You can't insult someone's religion. I think there is a law against it!!!!" She was indignant.

Her UU identity was her strength in the battle. Same goes for the kids this year who marched in the women's march, showed up for the anti-Trump rally, and have supported their DACA classmates.

Just as we hope our children go out into the world upholding and practicing the values of our faith: kindness, democracy, environmentalism, wisdom, justice, peace, and compassion. We know that other families send their children to school each day cloaked in the beliefs and structures of their own faiths, sometimes similar to ours, sometimes very,

very different.

If we can learn to feel pride and ownership in the sentence "I am UU," we give our children an identity, a label to choose, that is not just a sense of belonging, but also a tool to do brave acts. Try these:

- What ideas do you share with your UU community that you do not see reflected in the media, in local politics, in education?
- Complete this sentence: "My congregation supports me when I choose to ..."
- What aspects of UUCP show you that you are on the right path?
- What brave thing have you done? How can your UUCP community show you its pride in your courage? □

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**"Children's Worship"** reminds us that our youngest community members come to UUCP for the same reasons we all do. They are here to explore and deepen their spiritual experiences in the world.

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*Continued from "The Courage..." page 1*

disguise to become our possible selves.

Transformation is a change of state, a change in function and presence; it is metamorphosis, shapeshifting, alchemy; it is the butterfly, the flying superhero and a robot facing a powerful enemy. To transform is the true nature of anything and everything; we are all transforming, transformers and transformed in cycles and processes both within and beyond our control, responding to a changing world, to our own internal changes, to whatever it is that calls to us to go deeper, higher, wider in our passion, our love, our commitment. Through the deep genius of transformation, everything in our world holds more possibility than we know.

A member of a congregation I served once asked, rhetorically, "Why would you join a church if you did not want to be transformed?" In our Unitarian Universalist faith movement, we can find ourselves transformed, transforming and transformers, and I believe that transformation is the truth at the core of our identity. It is a rallying cry calling us into who we might be, how we choose to make our place in the world. Transformation is at the center of our Unitarian Universalist faith movement; yes, to be transforming and transformed is our covenant and our call.

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The Rev. Marisol Caballero provided reflections on courage and on white supremacy in the opening of the 2017 UUA General Assembly, saying, "Courage recognizes that growth insists on a willingness to be utterly transformed. Courage does not ask us to stop trembling, it asks us to find ways to incorporate our trembles into our dance."

A transitional time, in a culture and in a congregation, is ripe with the potential for transformation, both individually and collectively, as we leave behind that which we have known and enter the space of creativity for something new to emerge. It is my privilege and pleasure to serve as minister and facilitator for this congregation in this time of transition, to explore what transformation might be in store as we live together into the true purpose that lies at the heart of our faith commitment. As we explore and discover together, let us be open to all that may emerge. □







## 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, Unicare Coordinator, at [unicare@phoenixuu.org](mailto:unicare@phoenixuu.org).

### Remembrances:

Sylvia Sharma shares the passing of her father, Frank Lemus, who died last month after 99 years. The Sharmas and many relatives and friends recently memorialized and celebrated his long life.

Valerie Demetros appreciates the thoughts of peace as she traveled to Minnesota in late September to scatter the ashes of her husband who recently died.

### Healing Thoughts & Transitions:

We continue to send wishes for a full recovery to Bill Parker, who is in rehab at the healthcare center at Friendship Village as he continues his recovery from a broken leg. Bill welcomes the get well wishes.

Dale Fisher continues his steady recovery from recent heart surgery. As of this writing, he is at home and making great progress. Dale appreciates the kindness and thoughts from his UU community.

We wish them both a full and speedy recovery. Please keep in your thoughts those you know who continue to heal from illness, injury, or loss. Your thoughtfulness and love means so much.

### Milestone Celebrations:

Congratulations and Happy 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary to Bob and Allison Bertrand!

Kathleen and Vince Waldron celebrated their 31<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary in September.

Colin and Tanya Brodd share their joy in announcing that Aidan's adoption was final in late August. Welcome to the family, Aidan.

If you're not on the Unicare e-Group list but interested in participating in a mealtrain to provide meals to members/friends when needed, contact [unicare@phoenixuu.org](mailto:unicare@phoenixuu.org). □

## Memorial Garden

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

Roger Davy  
Rodney Earl Engelen  
William Frank Hall  
Evemarie Holl Mosher  
Homer M. Sarasohn  
Walter Blake Williamson, Jr.  
Pauline Manker Gay



## Welcome New Members!

Please welcome to UUCP our new members, who joined in August:



Phoebe Dubisch was born in Kingston, New York, and has previously attended The First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. She's currently a high school student at Arizona Conservatory for Arts and

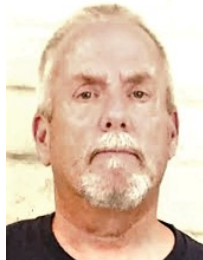
Academics, with a focus in Visual Arts and Acting. She enjoys astronomy, journaling, personality tests, and social justice! Phoebe has attended youth camps and cons through the congregation for the past year and has absolutely loved every single one! She is excited to finally be a member of UUCP and can't wait to see what's in store for her!



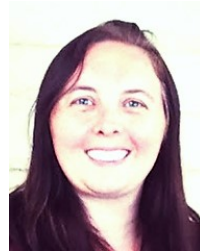
Debbie Beccia lives in McCormick Ranch with her two kids, Jonas and Gianna, who are in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Kiva Elementary School. Debbie enjoys her job as a sales manager with a medical nutrition company. Debbie, Jonas and Gianna enjoy swimming in their pool and spending time with family on weekends. Jonas and Gianna loved Kids Kamp at UUCP this summer and Debbie is grateful to have found a place to develop the spiritual health of her family at UUCP!



Nora Whipple



Chris Glore



Savannah Sanders



Sue & Christina Kinsman Barnes

Not pictured:  
JoAnne Barbanell □

## — COURAGE —

It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.

— E.E. Cummings

*Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."*

— Lao Tzu

It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.

— J.K. Rowling

## Pathway to Membership

**Thursdays, October 19 & 26**  
**6:45pm - 8:30pm**  
(must attend both sessions)

Pathway to Membership is a class that invites you to meet with other folks considering membership, and hear more from ministers, leaders, and recently joined members about what it means to be a member of our congregation. You will have the opportunity to learn about the history of Unitarian Universalism and UUCP, get to know each other in groups, and ask questions.

The class 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 and fill out the registration, register on the UUCP website, or contact Janine Gelsinger: [janinegelsinger@phoenixUU.org](mailto:janinegelsinger@phoenixUU.org).

## Construction Update!

The Construction Team is making steady progress toward the capital project that was designed last year to improve functional access to our main building and parking lot, to replace our aging air conditioning system, and to improve the patio area. In August we interviewed well qualified contractors, and the construction team selected Porter Construction to serve as general contractor for the renovation project which will begin later this fall. Porter Construction has extensive knowledge of our campus and we have an established positive relationship with the project manager.

On September 8, we met with our architect and her team to get an update on the construction projects. The architect team has been finalizing design details and conducting engineering evaluations (civil, structural, and mechanical) to ensure that our construction plans are correct, to code, and feasible. By October we will have the engineering reports and begin to know the timetable for the projects (HVAC, accessible main entrance, patio and parking lot improvements).

If you have questions for the construction team, contact [construction@phoenixuu.org](mailto:construction@phoenixuu.org).

Construction Team:  
Rev. Margret A. O'Neill  
Heidi Parmenter  
Richard "Duke" Plattner  
Frank Schweiger  
Bunny Hodas  
Dale Fisher  
Dale Wiebusch □

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tion phase. The first task of the Board is to help form a transition team to begin a very structured process to help UUCP let go of (some of) the old, identify who we are and want to become, and dare to widen our vision into new horizons. Furthermore, the Board is having a retreat on September 16<sup>th</sup> during which we hope to finish defining the strategic ends which will set goals reflecting our new vision (voted on by the congregation this past year). These ends will help the UUCP staff to form an implementation plan, the results of which will benefit us all as they service the congregation. In the midst of transition, which all of us began to feel was possible as soon we realized we might be losing our minister in June, these strategic ends became very difficult to agree on. It will take vision and courage to come to a conclusion with them.

Another attribute of courage is "feeling fear yet choosing to act." According to writer Piers Anthony, this includes "being terrified but going ahead and doing what must be done—that's courage. The one who feels no fear is a fool, and the one who lets fear rule him is a coward." Our transition is happening. We cannot prevent it from taking its course. We can just feel the fear, and do it anyway, be in it.

As we embark on the voyage of transition, we know that we will have to meet many challenges, overcome many obstacles and resolve several conflicts. Communication, compassion, and perhaps, above all, courage will be required. Courage to speak, courage to listen, courage to learn, courage to understand, courage to trust, and at the end, courage of our convictions. Collectively, we, the people of this community, are the boss. □

## Complaint-Free Pledge

I commit to looking for solutions rather than problems.

I will speak only positively about other people whether they are present or not.

My world will be about the myriad things I have to be grateful for rather than my relatively small number of problems.

I take responsibility for my words knowing that they reflect my thoughts and create my reality.

I know that happiness is a choice I make at any given moment, and I choose to be happy.





## Reflections on Taking a Complaint-Free Pledge

Pauline Peverly

UUCP Member

I have been discouraged and disheartened by the tone of public and private discourse in our world. It has been an extremely tough year in many respects. I see a harshening and coarsening of society reflected in the media, in politics, in our relations with service people, even in how we treat our loved ones and family. Politics is where the differences have been most overt and most discourteous and disrespectful.

I grew up in a conservative and strong Christian environment. I am now proud to consider myself a liberal, a lefty, a Unitarian Universalist. I know, however, that the people I grew up with are good people though we understand and see the world very differently. The belief system I knew as a young person was very black and white. Issues and people were either right or wrong. I learned in early adulthood that life was not so simple. The world is mostly gray. Even when we're sure we're right, we need to respect those who have different positions and try to understand why they have taken the positions they have.

When I was a new Unitarian in the early '80s, one of the principles that appealed to me was the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. Respecting that principle is hard in practice. It requires tolerance and a belief in the value of all individuals, not just the ones that look like us and have similar values.

I have recently participated in two ASU Osher classes (noncredit classes for seniors) that provided tools to improve our relationships with people not like ourselves. One class was "Living in a Complaint Free World." The direct impact of this class on me has been and continues to be more ongoing. We were asked to take the "Complaint-Free Pledge" and adhere to it for 21 days. Each of us received a purple band to wear on our wrists. When we caught ourselves breaking the pledge, we changed the band to the other wrist and started over on Day 1.

I took this class the last Monday in June. As of this writing, I've made it to Day 9. So much of our conversations with others are negative and hurtful. I am working hard to consider, before I speak, the impact my words have on others. The essence of this pledge is 1) no whining, 2) no criticizing, 3) no complaining and 4) no gossiping.

To create a better society, a better world, I believe we need to soften our stances on many issues. We need to listen with the intent to understand the other person's point of view. The other class I attended was a four-session course on "Civility and Civil Discourse." It presented a structured way to discuss sensitive and volatile topics in a manner that allows opinions on the topic from "strongly agrees" to "strongly disagrees," with three positions between the two extremes. The person in each position relates to the topic based on their own beliefs and values. Knowing why a person believes as they do is the first step to understanding the other person. The object of these structured discourse sessions is understanding. The intent is not to change the other person's point of view. One enters the process though understanding that one's mind may be changed by what they hear.

Both of these classes have reminded me of a basic value in our UU faith—the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. The necessary compromise is found in that gray area and starts with this principle.

Activism is very important to Unitarians. I am not advocating a retreat from activism but rather a call for a more respectful approach to others in the process. □





You can pledge to help young adult UUs travel to NE India for the 2018 International Council of Unitarians and Universalists conference!

In 2016 when we helped young adults go to the last ICUU conference, the experience was life-changing for the young adult participants—and it changed the ICUU gathering, too!

Young adults connecting with each other and with our larger faith community is truly transformational.

Your donation will provide travel funds to these young UUs, so please give generously at <https://www.faithify.org/projects/international-uu-young-adults-gathering-2018/>.

Campaign ends October 9.

## Save the Date: 2017 Annual Family Prescott Retreat

November 3-5

Register by October 15

Many Valley Unitarian Universalist members and friends have attended the VUU Prescott retreat over the years. The retreat is great for singles, couples, and families. Join us once again this November, as we enjoy time in the woods at Pine Summit Camp, [www.pinesummitcamp.com](http://www.pinesummitcamp.com).

Located in a beautiful forest, the camp has a mini-golf course, basketball and volleyball courts and an enclosed gym with a rock climbing wall, basketball courts and low-tech game room. People are invited to bring books, board games, and attend workshops. For those interested, there is a Saturday night un-talent show, where singing, skits, and other "talent" are showcased.

Please add this retreat to your calendar and start saving now for this weekend. Cost will be about \$100 per adult for the *whole* weekend. This includes lodging, Saturday meals, and Sunday breakfast and lunch. Questions? Contact Karen Hindhede at [kmhindhede@aol.com](mailto:kmhindhede@aol.com).

## October Worship Theme:

### **Courage / Hawk**

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

October 1: *Courage is Contagious*

Service Leader: Emrys Staton

Witnessing the courageous actions of another, whether they feel it is courageous or not, often inspires bravery in ourselves. Given all the issues we are facing right now in the world, we need a major outbreak of courage to spread and infect us all!

October 8: *Identity*

Service Leader: Rev. Margret A. O'Neill

As we explore the interplay of identities within and among us, we ask: how does each individual find the deep courage to explore the roots and branches of their true identity, and how do we open our hearts to affirm the varied and evolving identities of all?

October 15: *Inclusive Love*

Service Leader: Rev. Margret A. O'Neill

Love is the doctrine of this congregation, and radical inclusion is our vision. We have the opportunity to create the space for our vision of inclusive love to unfold in tangible ways. Everyone has a part to play as we make room for the future we build together.

October 22: *White Supremacy Teach-In*

Service Leader: Rev. Margret A. O'Neill

Understanding and combating white supremacy culture is a theological and practical endeavor for Unitarian Universalists everywhere, as we work to live the principles that guide our faith commitments. Let us join with courage in exploration and experiences to become more awakened to the work that lies before us.

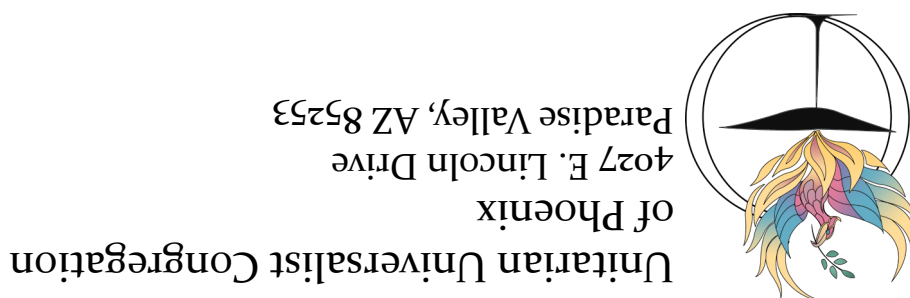
October 29: *Dia De Los Muertos*

Service Leader: Rev. Margret A. O'Neill

At this traditional time honoring our connection with the spirit world, we acknowledge our losses, celebrating the rich heritage and sacrifice of those who have gone before. All are welcome to bring a photo or memento of a beloved who has died to place upon the ceremonial altar. *Multigenerational service.*

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RADICALLY INCLUSIVE  
JUSTICE CENTERED

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