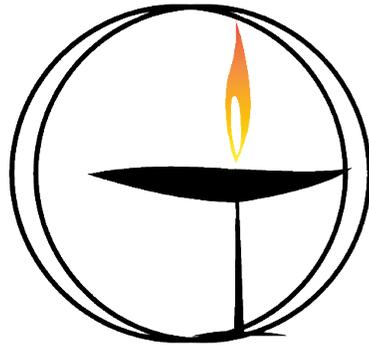


The Unitarian
Congregation of Taos
October 2018
Bulletin Board



Wed., Oct. 3	Women's Group, 6:00 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 7	<i>Blessing of the Beasts</i> , The Rev. Gary Kowalski
Sun., Oct. 14	Sharing Circle: <i>Presence/Attention</i>
Wed., Oct. 17	Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 21	<i>Living in the Sky</i> , The Rev. Munro Sickafoose
Sun., Oct. 28	Sharing Circle: <i>Karma</i>

Services & Circles begin at 11 a.m. at the Masonic Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, at the intersection with Gusdorf Road.

On My Mind

The Rev. Gary Kowalski

One of the great achievements of America's founders lay in separating church and state. The "Father of the Constitution" James Madison in particular believed that churches supported by the government inevitably became feeble and corrupt, their pastors more bureaucrats than visionaries, their parishioners more zealous for subsidies than for real gifts of the spirit. Churches and synagogues independent of the state, voluntarily supported by their members, would be stronger and more authentic in their religious commitments, knowing it was up to them to make their light shine unto the world.

Madison was right. Thanks to his reasoning, the United States today is not only the most spiritually diverse nation on the planet, it is also among the most generous in supporting its religious institutions, with gifts totaling well over \$100 billion to people's chosen mosques, temples, zendos and chapels in the last calendar year.

The amount that Dori and I pledge is small compared to that, about \$2,400 annually, divided between the Unitarian Congregation of Taos and the churches we attend near our home in Santa Fe. But we know that financial support is the lifeblood of Unitarian Universalism. There is no official government creed or nanny-state to do it for us. Without our individual support, our congregations cannot thrive.

For shorthand, I often define our faith as "the democratic method applied to religion." We believe in freedom of conscience and in racial and gender equality. We embrace pluralism in opinion, custom and culture. We believe in shared decision-making,

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Letter from the President and the Treasurer

Whether it's an NPR affiliate or the Unitarian Congregation of Taos, fall is pledge-drive time.

Immediately following last year's annual meeting, six of our members — Bob Aubrecht, Dianne Frost, Sally Savage, Jim Schultz, Bette Myerson, and Emily Gillispie — volunteered to form a Stewardship & Finance Committee. They have been meeting regularly since that time.

Their first goal was to determine the best way to make the most of our reserve fund, which was just over \$62,000 at the time. Based on research through the UUA, the committee proposed reserving at least six months worth of budgeted operating expenses, or roughly \$17,000, for emergency use, leaving an actual reserve fund of \$45,000.

They identified six possible uses for the remaining funds:

1. Do nothing with the current net reserve.
2. Significantly expand our outreach program.
3. Hire a part-time congregation administrator.
4. Recruit a part-time minister.
5. Acquire land and construct a building in the future.
6. Earmark the net reserve for one of the three options above (3, 4, and 5) but delay funding to a future date.

The Board of Trustees elected for now to take small steps and do a hybrid of #3 and #6. The Board also proposed eventually hiring a part-time religious-education director. While we have enough funds to hire a part-time administrator, we couldn't promise that our current reserve would be sufficient for more than a year if we were to hire a minister or an R.E. director. We feel it is important to have our administrative assistant's and others' help with

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On My Mind

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with respect for minority rights. And yes, we believe in separating church and state. For while Madison was not quite a Unitarian, his revolutionary compatriots John and Abigail Adams, Mister Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and other famed figures like Paul Revere were among our religious forebears. They had their flaws and staggering moral blind spots. But they also bequeathed to us a tradition of debate and dissent that now allows us to critique and remedy those flaws, to build a more perfect union.

This fall, the Unitarian of Congregation of Taos will be asking for your monetary support. When your fellow member calls, please be as generous and bold as those who founded this voluntary religion of ours. Help our democratic light shine!



Amigos Bravos – Water Is Life

Margot Coleman

One of the organizations elected by the community Outreach Committee to receive donations from members and friends of the Unitarian Congregation of Taos is Amigos Bravos. Formed in 1988, it is a statewide water-conservation organization guided by social justice principles and dedicated to preserving and restoring the ecological and cultural integrity of New Mexico's water and the communities that depend on it.

One of the organization's visions is of rivers so clear and clean that we can bend to our knees, cup our hands, and drink directly from these waters without fear. One of their first victories came in 1990, when they saved the Guadalupe Mountains from all future mining activities. Some of their activities include:

- Broad-based advocacy campaigns.
- Community organizing.
- The creation of effective socio-economically and culturally diverse coalitions.
- Successful legal, regulatory, and legislative campaigns at the local, state and federal level.
- Community water-quality monitoring programs and ecosystem restoration initiatives.

Letter from President & Treasurer

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some of the tasks previously accomplished by board members.

Consequently, we are asking the membership to increase their 2019 pledges to cover these additional expenses. The Board has set a goal of \$36,000 in total pledges for 2019 and has asked the Finance and Stewardship Committee to implement a plan to visit personally with each pledging member to explain our goals and plans and to answer your questions. The Committee has selected the month of October to hold these personal meetings to ask for your support.

As far as the remaining reserve, we felt that it was not large enough to implement any given scenario. But it *is* worth saving toward any one of those goals. To keep our reserve fund growing is to keep faith with those who came before us, who felt it was worth it to invest in this congregation.

Feel free to ask either of us or ask any member of the Finance Committee about this plan. We thank each of you for your continued support of the Unitarian Congregation of Taos as we build for our future.

Barbara Scott, President ~ Bette Myerson, Treasurer

UU Women in October

The UU Women's Group will meet at the Taos Bridge Club (near Enterprise) at 6 p.m., on Wednesday, October 3rd. The group will continue to explore the wisdom found in the brief essays in "Consolations," by David Whyte. Even if you don't have the book, come and be part of contemplating his amazing insights and sharing personal experiences.

Call on Our Ministers in Times of Need

Pastoral care is offered to those in need of emotional and spiritual support. If you are going through a crisis (or even a hard time), feel free to reach out to our ministers — they're here to help:

gary.kowalski@gmail.com, (505) 257-5014
munrosickafoose@gmail.com, (970) 946-2814



*Happy October
birthday wishes to...*

4 Ray Taylor
26 Dianne Frost
27 Michael Burney
31 Marsha Fawns

Silence Is Surrender

Mya Coursey

On August 2 the Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility awarded the Unitarian Congregation of Taos a \$500 grant to 1) increase voter registration and turnout among 18- to 35-year-olds in Taos and 2) *visibly demonstrate UU commitment to social action*. UCoT's Board of Directors and Taos United/Taoseños Unidos (TU) contributed additional dollars to support the Taos Youth Votes (TYV) project.

Since then, UCoT and TU members have participated in the Pride Parade, offered voter-registration assistance at Vista Grande High School and the Regeneration Festival, and published a related "My Turn" in the Taos News. Eleven from the Congregation have volunteered to staff registration events through October 6. Six of those completed registrar training with the County Elections Bureau. Five young Taoseños, some still in high school, are scheduled to join registration events, wearing signature TYV bright-yellow t-shirts with VOTE: SILENCE IS SURRENDER on the front and our organizations' names on the back as sponsors. Marjorie Luckey, Mya Coursey, and Bette Myerson provide administrative support.



You can help accomplish the project's goals of encouraging younger local citizens to register and vote. Simply engage those you meet — cashiers at Cid's or Tuesday Morning, for instance, or the one sitting next to you at Pecha Kucha — and talk with them as you might your child or grandchild about the importance of actively participating in the democratic process.



Music Committee News

Singing practice with Martha at 10:30 a.m.
on the 1st & 3rd Sundays.
All are welcome; attend when you can.

Sunday, October 7 Blessing of the Beasts The Rev. Gary Kowalski

While Emerson advised to "hitch your wagon to a star," this morning you can hitch yourself to some waggin', as we welcome our animal companions to a multispecies celebration of the furry, feathered, and finny Creation. Please bring your pets (being sure that your critters are house-trained and leashed or crated as well as under your control at all times) along with kids, neighbors, and friends. Our freewill offering this morning supports Stray Hearts Animal Shelter and Feral Feline Friends of Taos, who are helping to publicize this event.

Dress warmly! Weather permitting, we will hold our Blessing in the courtyard of the Masonic Lodge, in the Great Out Doors (G.O.D.) Wow!

Sunday, October 21 Living in the Sky The Rev. Munro Sickafoose

Meditations on space, time, and eternity. "It's good to keep things in perspective..."

Upcoming Sharing Circles Presence/Attention, October 14

"Love is attention, and that's all I'll say about love."

— PAULUS BERENSOHN, potter, dancer, philosopher

Is it possible to listen to one another in spaciousness ... without thinking, evaluating, or preparing what we're going to say? Do we always need to have something to say? On this day, we'll practice presence.

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Karma, October 28

Karma means action, work or deed; it also refers to the spiritual principle of cause and effect where intent and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect). Good intent and good deeds contribute to good karma and future happiness, while bad intent and bad deeds contribute to bad karma and future suffering. Do you believe in karma and if so how has it been present in your life?

Group Contacts

Women's Group

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Men's Group

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