

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
September 2020
Bulletin Board



Sun., Sep. 6	Service: <i>Voyagers</i> , on Zoom Rev. Gary Kowalski
Sun., Sep. 13	Sharing Circle: <i>Open-mindedness</i> (via email)
Wed., Sep. 16	Men's Group, 4:30 p.m., on Zoom
Sun., Sep. 20	Service: <i>Ancestral Ways</i> , on Zoom Rev. Munro Sickafoose
Sun., Sep. 27	Special Presentation: <i>The Natural World</i> , on Zoom

Because of COVID-19, the Unitarian Congregation of Taos has suspended services and sharing circles for an indefinite length of time. We will be meeting online via Zoom for abbreviated services.

Shake, Don't Bake
The Reverend Munro Sickafoose

Things are pretty stressful and weird right now, and that shows no signs of letting up anytime soon. We're all stressed about our health, the health and well-being of our families and friends, and the health and well-being of our communities and our nation. Even if we are relatively well off, our economic well-being is in question, as the economic fallout from the novel coronavirus grows and spreads. The virus has impacted every aspect of our lives, and the resulting instability and uncertainty about the future is greater than anything we've seen in long time. Psychologically, it's an invisible and amorphous threat.

Evolution has wired us for fight or flight when we perceive a threat — like a predator or a wildfire. But we can't flee this threat because there's nowhere to go. We can't "fight" something like a pandemic, except collectively, and that isn't working very well. The third option is to freeze, and hope the predator doesn't notice you. But you can't stay frozen in place for long. All that emotion and stress and energy has to go somewhere, and if it can't, we end up even more anxious, more agitated and irritable, even depressed. It leaves us feeling overwhelmed, powerless, at the mercy of unseen forces — baking in an oven of stress, anxiety, and isolation.

We're all experiencing it; it's a normal response to an exceptional situation. So what can we do about it? *Breathe!* Deep, slow breathing for five to ten minutes will bring down your heart rate and blood pressure, making you calmer and less irritable. *Next, make a conscious effort to overcome social isolation.* The virus has isolated us from each other physically, sometimes socially or psychologically. Even if you are in a relationship or have kids at home, your social sphere has shrunk, and this takes its toll on social animals. Try to connect with someone outside your bubble every day. *Resist the urge to doomscroll* — endless scrolling through the news and social media — and

reading bad news. Use social media sparingly and purposefully. Go on a news diet.

SHAKE! That's right, shake. Get up, stand up, and shake your arms and legs and feet and hands. Do the hokey-pokey. Don't let all that anxiety and stress take root in your body. Shake it all out. Then go put on your favorite music and dance. Dancing is good for body, mind, and spirit — so don't bake, shake. Move your mind, your spirit, your body... but wait, aren't they all connected?

Sunday, September 6
Voyagers
The Reverend Gary Kowalski

"At a certain season of life, we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house," wrote Thoreau. This past summer, the world was again racing toward Mars, with the United States, China and the United Arab Emirates all en route. Is the red planet to be our next colony, with a potato patch and aquifer instead of a beanfield and a pond? Whether or not the latest probes find definitive proof of life, they satisfy a cosmological itch: to feel that we are not only voyagers but homesteaders in the starry realm.

See the weekly email for the Zoom link.

Sunday, September 20
Ancestral Ways
The Reverend Munro Sickafoose

Our ancestors survived many of the same things we are now facing—or we wouldn't be here! What can we learn from those who came before us? Many things, some of them unexpected. Join us as we explore what times past can tell us about times to come.

See the weekly email for the Zoom link.

SHARING CIRCLES

September 13 *Open-mindedness*

This is an era of polarity in so many arenas — politics, environmentalism, capitalism, socialism, science, religion, justice, and masking in the time of COVID-19 just for starters. In this atmosphere, it can feel downright dangerous to open one's mind. We are more inclined to look around for evidence that we are right than open our ears and minds to another's point of view to see if we can enlarge our capacity for new ways of understanding. Open-mindedness takes into consideration some of our other recent topics — risk and judgment. Try to notice until September 13 occasions in which you intentionally open your mind and those in which you either automatically or intentionally close it. Jot it down so you don't forget it, then share it with us in the online sharing circle.

September 27

Special Presentation on the Natural World

Beloved Taos singer/songwriter Becky Reardon and Florida writer/naturalist Susan Cerulean will blend their art forms in lyrical homage to wild birds and the Earth, with prayer for their continuance.

Susan Cerulean's *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird: A Daughter's Memoir* (2020) trains a naturalist's eye and a daughter's heart on the death of a beloved parent from dementia. At the same time, she explores an activist's lifelong search to be of service to the embattled natural world, especially to declining wild birds.

Becky Reardon's songs celebrate and explore our relationship with the natural world and our place in it. Her latest album, *Here*, reminds us to speak not only for endangered rivers, but for all beings whose flowing is threatened. And her song "Earthly Orphans" is inspired by Albert Camus' philosophy that in the absence of God, we find meaning in our common humanity and in loving one another.

This program will be held on Zoom in lieu of a Sharing Circle.



Music Committee News

We hope you enjoy the music we are now including in our Zoom services and especially as we welcome Martha back!



UCOT Men's Group, September 16

The UU Men's Group will meet Wednesday, September 16 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. To receive a Zoom invitation, contact tsurguine@gmail.com.

Taos County Imagination Library

A Note from Caryle Zorumski

I want to say a special thank-you to everyone for the continuous support of the Taos County Imagination Library. Enrollment dropped a bit as the virus isolated people, but I am happy to report that registrations now are increasing again. This season's support is appreciated even more, because the state contribution for the coming year has been reduced by a third under the revised New Mexico COVID budget. Even so, we are sending a free book every month to more than 700 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Thank so much for helping make this happen.



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

17 Linda Aubrecht