

The Unitarian
Congregation of
Taos
November 2020
Bulletin Board



Sun., Nov. 1	Service: Day of the Dead (<i>Día de los Muertos</i>), on Zoom Marsha & Chuck Fawns
Sun., Nov. 8	Sharing Circle: <i>The Now</i>
Sun., Nov. 15	Special Service: Screening of <i>Nurturing the Spirit of Life</i>
Sun., Nov. 22	Sharing Circle: <i>Gratitude</i>
Sun., Nov. 29	5th Sunday: <i>Anchor of Hope</i> Joe Mazza

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.

A Great Deal of Work Before Us
Rev. Munro Sickafoose

As I write this article, we have no way of knowing the outcome of the upcoming election for President of the United States. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are leading in the polls, but polls have been known to be wrong, and prediction is a difficult business. This is arguably the most important election in a generation, and much is at stake. Whatever the outcome, there will still be a great deal of work to do. Work to repair the damage to our country and its institutions, work to prepare for the uncertain future that looms ahead of us. Work that should have been done decades ago, work that we should have been doing all along, work that our leaders should have been leading us in.

We trust a little too much in those who lead, and forget — again and again — the old lesson that those with power are to be watched like hawks and kept in check. Let us heed the words of abolitionist Wendell Phillips. On Jan. 28, 1852, he gave a speech to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, in which he said, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty; power is ever stealing from the many to the few.” He went on to say: “The manna of popular liberty must be gathered each day or it is rotten. The living sap of today outgrows the dead rind of yesterday. The hand entrusted with power becomes, either from human depravity or esprit de corps, the necessary enemy of the people. Only by continued oversight can the democrat in office be prevented from hardening into a despot; only by (uninterrupted) agitation can a people be sufficiently awake to principle not to let liberty be smothered in material prosperity.”

But, like humans do, we thought the future would look like the present, and the future that showed up was not the one we wanted. Woulda, coulda, shoulda,

as the saying goes. There is no time for regret now. The present does not look like the past.

And the future? The changes and challenges are going to be coming thick and fast in the next decades — climate change, the end of empire, migration stresses — to name just a few. Regret and recrimination are luxuries we can no longer afford. Being disorganized and unprepared are luxuries we can no longer afford. The old virtues of discipline and solidarity will be needed more than ever, and the lessons of the past kept fresh in our minds and hearts. Our vigil has only just begun.

Annual UU Day of the Dead Service
Marsha & Chuck Fawns
November 1 (via Zoom)

“Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical, and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.”

—Rabbi Dr. Earl Grollman

“Nothing that grieves us can be called little; by the external laws of proportion, a child’s loss of a doll and a king’s loss of a crown are events of the same size.”

—Mark Twain, “Which Was the Dream?”

This year’s *Día de Los Muertos* service will provide an opportunity to honor and mourn together the special people who have died, as well as all the opportunities and activities we have lost in the past several months because of the virus.

Using Zoom in our usual service format, an altar and inspirational readings will prompt our sharing. The major portion of the service will consist of together honoring all we have lost.



Nurturing the Spirit of Life
Screening of Sally Savage's Film
Sunday, November 15

In lieu of the Fall Harvest Feast, this year on Zoom, we'll screen the film that will remind us of what we would normally celebrate in November: Our connection to one other. After the screening, please feel free to share your own experiences of UCOT, how you first started coming, the friends you've made, the important things you've learned. You can watch the trailer on our website at utaos.org. It's right on the home page next to the stained-glass chalice.

SHARING CIRCLES

The Now
November 8

Eckhart Tolle has devoted his career as a spiritual teacher almost entirely to issues of living in the present moment. He writes this in his book *Stillness Speaks*:

"To have your attention in the Now is not a denial of what is needed in your life. It is recognizing what is primary. Then you can deal with what is secondary with great ease. It is not saying, 'I'm not dealing with things anymore because there is only the Now.' No. Find what is primary first, and make the Now into your friend, not your enemy. Acknowledge it, honor it. When the Now is the foundation and primary focus of your life, then your life unfolds with ease."

On November 8, we'll have the opportunity to share with each other our own experiences of living in the present moment, the Now. Alternatively, we can share that we are often caught up in thoughts of the past and future, which, Tolle says, do not exist.

Gratitude
November 22

The late Oliver Sachs, in his last book, one he wrote with the knowledge that he would die within a few months, writes: "My predominant feeling is one of gratitude. I have loved and been loved. I have been given much and I have given something in return. Above all, I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure."

On November 22, let's share with each other what we are grateful for. And if you have a "gratitude practice," let us hear about that as well.



Anchor of Hope
Joe Mazza

Special Music by Becky Reardon
Sunday, November 29

What is hope? Wishful thinking or something more concrete?

Where do I find it? Is it something to be acquired?

What are its benefits? Are there any?

How do I apply hope to my everyday life in a practical way?

Tune in on Zoom for this special fifth-Sunday service to get the answers!

From your Zoom app, type in this Meeting ID: 881 3872 4059. If you'd rather join through your browser, look for the Zoom link in the weekly email on the Thursday before the service.

Music Committee News



We continue to enjoy sharing with you the musical delights of Martha Grossman's piano preludes and postludes at our Sunday services.

Medical Debt Relief Program

Dear UCOT Friends:

Last year UCOT was one of nine religious congregations in Taos that supported a Medical Debt Relief Project at Holy Cross Hospital. \$240,000 in debt was erased, a great help to struggling families.

This program will happen again this year. Our Charitable Giving Committee has allocated \$200 for our contribution, but we think many of you might want to contribute to this effort as well. If you would like to do that, please send a check made out to the Unitarian Congregation of Taos and mail it to me at 810 Dillon Lane, Taos, NM 87571, by October 22, and I will give this money to TCC, which is heading up this effort.

Thank you!

Bette Myerson and Mimi Owensby

UCOT 2021 Pledge Drive

October is the month for the Congregation's annual pledge drive. By now you should have received a pledge packet in the mail from Bette Myerson. If you did NOT receive a pledge packet and wish to make a pledge for 2021, please call Bette at 758-3376 or email her at bette@taosnet.com.

Because of the limitations of social distancing placed on us by COVID-19, we will not do in-person contacts for the pledge drive. Instead, you will receive a telephone call from one of the Congregation's pledge volunteers to answer any questions and to ask you for your pledge for 2021. In addition, this is an opportunity for you to provide feedback, comments and concerns about the Congregation as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 era. The Board will review each of your comments and questions as a first step in responding to them.

As you know, pledge income is the most important source of revenue for the ongoing operation of the Congregation. It allows the Board and the Finance Committee to plan for the upcoming year. At this point, we expect to continue meeting for services and circles virtually, into 2021, until our health authorities can realistically and confidently allow for in-person faith community activities. Despite the limitations of social distancing, I hope that you continue to see UCOT as an important and needed part of your lives during this time of stress and uncertainty. That said, I also hope you will renew your pledge for 2021. Thank you in advance for your continued support of the Congregation.

Please return your completed 2021 pledge form to Bette Myerson in the envelope provided in your pledge packet.

Finally, if you have questions that are not answered during your conversation with the pledge drive volunteer, please call Barbara Scott at 758-4846 or me at 758-9675.

Bob Aubrecht
Chair, Finance and Stewardship Committee

Post-Election Gathering

By the time you read this, hopefully all of you will have voted or made plans to vote. But the results of America's presidential election may not be known for some time. There could be irregularities, voter suppression, vigilantism, court cases, or chaos sown by the White House itself if the current occupant refuses to acknowledge electoral defeat. The times for our democracy are uncertain, and many of us are feeling anxious. Reverend Gary Kowalski invites you to join him in a post-election conversation on Wednesday, Nov. 4, at 7 p.m., where we can join to find mutual support as we reflect together on the outcome of the 2020 election. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5757701789>

Board Succession Barbara Scott

A couple of months ago, the UCOT Board organized a search committee of four to find someone to replace me as president at the end of my second two-year term. We asked a few people we thought would be a good fit, but no one could make the commitment. I'm grateful to say that Bob Aubrecht agreed to step back in for a two-year term.

He had a few stipulations, including that we find someone else to head up the Finance and Stewardship Committee. The board agreed with that and the other couple of stipulations, and members will have a chance to vote for Bob, along with the rest of the board, at the Annual Meeting on the last day of January 2021. Thanks to the members of the search committee: Bob, Chuck Fawns, Joe Mazza, and Mary McPhail Gray.

I'm grateful that the congregation will be in Bob's capable hands when I step down.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 7 Stephanie Yoder
- 12 Diane Ainsworth Stillers
- 18 Jane Starks