

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
December 2020
Bulletin Board



- Sun., Dec. 6 Service: *Beloved Community*, on Zoom
Rev. Gary Kowalski
- Sun., Dec. 13 Sharing Circle: *Control* (via email)
- Wed., Dec. 16 Men's Group, 4:30 p.m., on Zoom
- Sun., Dec. 20 Service: *Reasons and Seasons*, on Zoom
Rev. Munro Sickafoose
- Sun., Dec. 27 Sharing Circle: *Resilience* (via email)

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.

On My Mind

Americans don't seem to agree on much: whether to stand or kneel during the national anthem, whether to preserve old monuments or tear them down, whether to wear masks or defund the police. We've just survived one of the most divisive elections ever. We're split between red states and blue, urban and rural, Fox and MSNBC. Social media amplifies our differences. Even the pandemic—a common enemy that should be a catalyst for unity—has left us fractured and on edge.

Yet we have more in common than we think. Who doesn't like Ray Charles and Aretha Franklin? Who doesn't hate robocalls or TV ads for adult diapers during dinnertime? Because we're all wary of phishing scams and hackers, we all want to protect our privacy and security online.

By growing majorities, most people want to decriminalize marijuana and other non-harmful drugs. Nobody wants a return to prohibition. Most folks think there's a realm of personal discretion where we should be free to make our own choices about how we pray, who we sleep with, what we do for amusement, and how we fritter away our time.

Beyond our mutual loathing of busybodies, we also share some collective aspirations. Most people love their children and see the value of safe neighborhoods and decent schools. There's widespread agreement that potable water and breathable air are fundamental rights. While pessimistic about the programs' future, most people appreciate Social Security and Medicare. We love our National Parks (and based on visitation numbers we may be loving them to death). Last year, despite everything, Republicans and Democrats were able to agree on a First Step Act that aimed to reduce the number of federal prisoners behind bars.

And we share some cultural crossroads (points of meeting and divergence). If this year is anything like last, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe in Massa-

chusetts—those who greeted the Mayflower 400 years ago—will be bringing potluck dishes to their community center for feasting and dancing on Thanksgiving. And here in New Mexico, unless Covid forces a change of plans, there will be dancing open to the public in the Pueblos on December 25th.

Most of us—the vast majority—will find reasons to be grateful in this holiday season. The culture wars will pause for the Christmas Truce. And we will not take offense at an imaginary slight but will be happy to respond with neighborly good cheer to whatever glad greeting (Feliz Navidad or Happy Hanukkah) may come our way.

—Gary

Beloved Community Rev. Gary Kowalski Sunday, December 6

Drawing on sources from both the Biblical and Enlightenment traditions, the vision of Beloved Community has inspired change agents like the late John Lewis and Martin Luther King Jr. But what is the Beloved Community? Is it actually attainable or an unreachable ideal? Where do we see it taking form in today's deeply divided world?

See your weekly email for the Zoom link.

Reasons and Seasons Rev. Munro Sickafoose Sunday, December 20

A well-known sacred text begins: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Which raises the eternal questions: What is the season? And what is the matter at hand?

See your weekly email for the Zoom link.

SHARING CIRCLES

Control

December 13

As infants we slowly learn to control our muscles, to walk, to talk. Rules and schools impose controls over us; we are told to control our tempers, use self-control in eating and drinking. During this sharing circle we will explore such various aspects and questions as:

- When have you felt most in control of your life?
- What behaviors, attitudes do you find important to control?
- What societal controls do you most resent?
- In what areas of your life do you wish you had more control? and more.

Resilience

December 27

Resilience can be defined as the ability to endure difficulty and come through it unharmed or even stronger. It includes aspects of courage, calmness and a refusal to give up. It is a quality that makes us stronger.

Polly Young-Eisendrath, PhD, professor and psychologist, wrote in her book *The Resilient Spirit* that "... the capacity to be resilient, to respond to difficulty with development, is rooted in many diverse factors, but it consistently depends on one thing: the meaning you, the individual, make of where you are."

What does resilience mean to you? Share an experience past or present that has tapped your own resilience. What did you do to get through the experience? How has it changed you?

UCOT Men's Group

December 16

The UU Men's Group will meet Wednesday, December 16 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. To receive a Zoom invitation, contact Dennis Scott at bridge4fun@mac.com.

Season's Greetings!



Music Committee News



Join us in celebration of Beethoven this December, the 250th anniversary of his birth on the 16th. Perhaps we can find some much needed heart, mind and soul salve in his music. Beethoven very specifically believed in the healing power of music, as discussed in Maynard Solomon's (2003) *Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination*. Grief, consolation, feelings of new life and reconciliation were a few of the emotions accompanied by physical symptoms that Beethoven addressed. Personally, he is known to have said that the *Cavatina in String Quartet Op 130* always moved him to tears, both joy and sadness. Beethoven was also a master of the scherzo/joke and his scherzos surprise and bring laughter always!

May you find the healing power of music and laughter in this last month of 2020.

Donations Needed

A Note from Mary McPhail Gray

Taos Behavioral Health is starting to serve more needy families. We can take good warm clothing and linens that would help families with few possessions. For questions, contact Mary McPhail Gray at 575-779-3126, McPhailconsulting@gmail.com.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Mimi Owensby
- 9 David Owensby
- 12 Don Keefe
- 20 Martha Grossman
- 23 Emily Gillispie
- 26 Gary Kowalski