

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
March 2021
Bulletin Board



- Sun., Mar. 7 Service: *Welcoming the Stranger*
Rev. Munro Sickafoose
- Sun., Mar. 14 Sharing Circle: *Journeys* (via email)
- Wed., Mar. 17 Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.
- Sun., Mar. 21 Service: *Liberated Louisa*
Rev. Gary Kowalski
- Sun., Mar. 28 Sharing Circle: *Journeys* (on Zoom)

Stitches
Rev. Munro Sickafoose

The earliest known sewing needle—with a sharp point and a hole in the other end for sinew—is a 50,000-year-old bone needle from Siberia. It's hard to imagine now the significance of this technological breakthrough. It meant that different furs and hides could be stitched together to create fitted clothing and shoes, as well as bags and pouches for carrying tools and supplies. It also meant that things could be repaired, be stitched back together, an important ability in a world where everything was handmade and precious. A set of bone needles were critical survival tools. Eventually, humans began to use needles to stitch up wounds. The earliest records of surgical suturing date to 3000 BC in ancient Egypt, and the technology has evolved from there to stainless needles and sterile threads that dissolve when their work is done.

Things stitched back together are never quite the same. The stitches and patches are more or less visible, depending on the skill of the tailor. The sutured wound scars, a record of the trauma to skin and muscle and organs. They form a record of our encounters with the world, our accidents and mishaps and mistakes. A record of being repaired and repairing that which we need and that which we love. The old cherished sweater, more darned than original. The scar tracks across an abdomen, where a life was saved.

Some things, of course, cannot be stitched back together quite so easily. Broken minds, broken relationships, broken social contracts, the aftermath of violence. We sew with invisible needles and threads on invisible wounds, praying that our repairs will take, and hold long enough for healing to take place. Healing takes time, and wholeness is not seamless. To repair is divine. We are all patchwork, repaired time and time again. And the scars and the stitches are our beauty and our strength and our way forward.

Welcoming the Stranger
Rev. Munro Sickafoose
Sunday, March 7

How do we navigate our values in a time of xenophobia and extreme tribalism? What does our hospitality look like? How deep does our generosity extend to those not of our tribe? There are no easy answers. As one of my teachers used to say, don't simplify, complexify.

See your weekly email for the Zoom link.



Liberated Louisa
Rev. Gary Kowalski
Sunday, March 21

Greta Gerwig's film adaption of *Little Women* grossed over \$200 million after its release a year ago last Christmas, demonstrating the enduring popularity of its plucky heroine. The author whose own coming-of-age inspired the character of Jo March, and who desperately aspired to overcome the poverty of her childhood, would have been pleased. In honor of Women's History Month, Gary celebrates the life and work of Louisa May Alcott, whose personal tribulations, trials and triumphs of the spirit were even more inspiring than those of her fictional alter-egos.

See your weekly email for the Zoom link.

SHARING CIRCLE

Journeys

Sunday, March 14 & 28, 11 a.m.

“Life is a journey, not a destination. Learn to enjoy the ride.” –Abhi Rajal

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines journey as “something suggesting travel or passage such as the journey from youth to maturity or an act of traveling from one place to another.”

Life is a journey filled with lessons, hardships, heartaches, joys, celebrations and special moments that will ultimately lead us to our destination, our purpose in life. The road will not always be smooth; in fact, throughout our travels, we will encounter many challenges. Some of these challenges will test our courage, strengths, weaknesses, and faith. Along the way we may stumble upon obstacles that will come between the paths that we are destined to take. In order to follow the right path, we must overcome these obstacles. Sometimes these obstacles are really blessings in disguise, only we don't realize that at the time.

What has been your journey? Was it an epic trip from which you came home a changed person? Or has your journey been a story in your life; an anecdote which highlights who you are. Join us as we share our journeys.

UCOT Charitable Giving Committee

A big thank you goes to the congregation from the Charitable Giving Committee for approving the two motions that were made at the Annual Meeting on January 31. Thanks to a unanimous vote by the members present, \$2,200 was added to our budget to reimburse Committee members who need it to help supply food for our Little Food Pantry. Please remember to send your \$60 pledge to Joe so we can balance the budget. If you indicate “Charitable Giving Committee” on your check, we will get an accurate count of support. Your generosity is much appreciated.

–Mimi Owensby

UCOT Men's Group

March 17

The UU Men's Group will meet Wednesday, March 17, at 4:30 p.m., via Zoom. To receive a Zoom invitation, contact Dennis Scott at bridge4fun@mac.com.

Music Committee News



Zenzile Miriam Makeba March 4, 1932-2008

This month it is time to celebrate Miriam Makeba for her music and long journey from Sophiatown/Johannesburg to exile in America, Guinea and Belgium. She was finally welcomed back to South Africa after 30 years in 1990 by Nelson Mandela. Her life is quite a story. Read more about it [here](#).

Gael Minton of the Music Committee, chose 4 links for your enjoyment: a [1988 interview](#) after her autobiography was published, and 3 of her signature songs: “[Pata Pata](#),” the “[Click Song](#),” and “[Under African Skies](#)” with Paul Simon in 1987.

“People say I sing politics, but what I sing is not politics, it is the truth,” and “I look at an ant and see myself: a native South African, endowed by nature with a strength much greater than my size so I might cope with the weight of a racism that crushes my spirit. I look at a bird and I see myself: a native South African, soaring above the injustices of apartheid on wings of pride, the pride of a beautiful people.” –Miriam Makeba

A Message From Our New Treasurer

Greetings! As many of you know, Bette Myerson retired from 9 amazing years as the UCOT Treasurer, effective January 31, 2021. We are so very grateful for her service, and I have some big shoes to fill!

I want to communicate a few important items as we go forward in 2021. The first one is that you please send any pledge amounts, plate donations or any other monies for UCOT campaigns to the UCOT post office address which is: P.O. Box 510, Taos, NM 87571.

Another item is that with whatever monies you send, please indicate if it is a pledge, plate offering, etc. This will help make the accounting process easier and more accurate.

One last item, is to let me know if you have decided to increase your 2021 pledge by whatever amount you can afford and what your new pledge is, to offset the \$2200 dollar increase to

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the Charitable Giving committee budget for the Little Food Pantries Program that was discussed and voted on at the Annual Meeting. You can email me (joem.mazza@gmail.com) with that information, or include it in a note with your pledge money when you mail it in. Please let me know if you have any questions.

It is a sacred honor and privilege to serve the UCOT family as your new Treasurer. Blessings!
-Joe Mazza

The President's Corner

As I listened to the presentations and discussions during our virtual UCOT Annual Meeting on January 31, 2021, I was so impressed by the resiliency and determination of this Congregation during all the stresses of the COVID-19 experience. We have gradually learned how to maintain and even enhance the connected experiences and relationships of the Members and Friends of the Congregation. It has been a process of continuing those relationships even when we have been unable to meet physically for services, Circles, and Board and Committee meetings. Zoom technology has been important but also weekly emails, monthly newsletters, and lots of phone calls have allowed us to create a space for the Congregation.

It appears that we will have several more months in which our UCOT relationships will be based on the adaptations of the past year. Given the rollouts of effective vaccines and the gradual improvements in public health environments—both local and national—we MAY be able to return to physical events later in 2021. The timing of those returns will depend on the guidelines and protocols from the State of New Mexico and perhaps from the CDC and other public health agencies. The UCOT Board will stay current as these guidelines evolve during 2021. To apply a phrase we have heard from several sources in recent months – “Help is on the way”. We need to continue the attitudes of persistence and resilience we have used to get us this far, knowing that the relationships and connections within the Congregation have been important elements for each of us.

Lastly, we have come to realize UCOT's responsibilities within the Taos community are perhaps more important during COVID-19. We will need to continue to respond to those needs in ways which are appropriate to our size and resources.
-Bob Aubrecht

Summary Notes **UCOT Annual Meeting, January 31** **by Margot Coleman, Secretary**

The meeting was opened at 11:05 a.m. by Dennis Scott, who performed the Chalice lighting.

2020 Reflections

Barbara Scott reflected on the past year and all challenges the church has dealt with regarding the COVID-19 restrictions, and our congregation being unable to meet in person. Thanks to the Board, many of these issues have been met so that Services and Sharing Circles have continued, thanks to email communications and Zoom. The church was also able to present Sally Savage's video, *Spirit of Life*, to the Congregation via Zoom during the Fall Harvest Service.

Financials

Bette presented the year-end statement for 2020 and the proposed budget for 2021. She mentioned that because we don't meet in person, plate donations are down and asked the congregation for help in this area. Bette, who is stepping down as Treasurer and passing the baton to new Treasurer Joe Mazza, asked those who are sending pledges to send them to the UCOT post office box 510, Taos, NM 87571. The Financials and budget forecast were accepted as presented.

Charitable Giving

Mimi Owensby presented the report on the Charitable Giving Committee, which included the organizations it no longer supports, and the new organizations added to the list. She also explained a major new plan started last year called the “Little Food Pantry,” which members of the committee are personally supporting. The cost of keeping the Food Pantry stocked is about \$2,200 per year, and she asked that the congregation help in this new endeavor by increasing their pledge donations by \$60 per year. A motion was made to support the Little Food Pantry and to ask the congregation to increase their pledges by \$60. The motion was accepted as presented.

By-laws

Chuck Fawns presented the changes to the by-laws. There was one clarification requested, regarding the appointment of a new member of the board prior to the annual meeting, and it was agreed to change the wording. It was also suggested that we add ‘Universalist’ to the name of our Congregation and it was decided to consider that at the next Board meeting.

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Fifth Sundays

Gael Minton presented information on the Fifth Sunday programs, which will start in May with the topic *Land, Water & Forests in Taos*. There are two further fifth Sundays, in August and October. She said that the presentations will be designed on the Chautauqua method, and she and her committee are excited about the planning process.

Earth Day Planning

Chuck Doughty presented information regarding Earth Day Planning and Climate Action Week. He and his committee are waiting on a packet of information from Interfaith Power and Light.

Sharing Circles

Barbara Scott then shared the information regarding the new format for the sharing circles. It is a hybrid program that includes an email correspondence on the second Sunday of the month and a Zoom meeting on the fourth Sunday of the month. Both sessions will focus on the same topic.

Stewardship and Finance Committee

Bob Aubrecht spoke about the Stewardship and Finance Committee report and how the pledge campaign was virtual this year. He also explained why the surplus is no longer in CDs and is in the church's checking account. The Committee is looking for a local credit union to place the money if interest rates improve.

Bob then discussed an opportunity for a second UCOT CARES. It will depend on stimulus checks, which are expected, and will mirror the original UCOT CARES program. The original target was about food insecurity and this would be the same this time. However, Marjorie Luckey spoke up and said that what is even more urgent for our community is homelessness. There are 90 students who are homeless and 140 families on the waiting list for housing. The Board will discuss priorities at the next Board meeting.

A motion was made to carry forth another UCOT CARES, and the wording was changed to help with critical humanitarian needs. The motion was carried as presented.

Presentation of New Board

Barbara presented the new Board for election: Bob Aubrecht, President; Mimi Owensby, Vice-President; Margot Coleman, Secretary; Joe Mazza, Treasurer; Dennis Scott, Member at Large; and Chuck Fawns, Ex-Officio Member. The members were elected as presented.

Bob Aubrecht then recognized Barbara and Bette. Barbara has been President for four years, and Bette has been Treasurer for nine years. They are both stepping down. The Congregation is donating \$100 each to a charity of their choice.

Looking Ahead

Bob then discussed the upcoming year and the most likely scenario that we will continue to be virtual until the majority of the population has been vaccinated. Bob also recommends that everyone read the weekly email so that we all know what is happening with church services and sharing circles plus anything special planned.

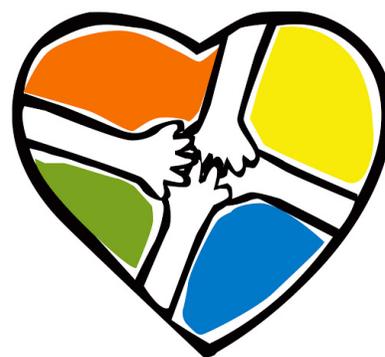
Mary Gray asked the members to send cards and or emails to Bette and Barbara to thank them for all they've done. It was suggested that there might be ways to enhance services on Zoom. This suggestion will be added to the next Board meeting.

Closing

Joe Mazza then closed the Annual meeting with a reflection by James Morison, *Share Your Glorious Light With the World*, and by extinguishing the chalice at 12:40 p.m.

2021 UCOT Member Directory

If you'd like a digital copy of the *Winter 2021 Members & Friends Directory*, email Rachel Cohen (rachelucot@gmail.com) with your request and she'll email you a copy.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

22 Jim Schultz