

The Unitarian  
Congregation  
of Taos  
September 2021  
Bulletin Board



Sun., Sept. 5	Service: <i>Small but Mighty Voices</i> Rev. Matthew Pargeter-Villarreal
Sun., Sept. 12	Sharing Circle: <i>Purple Mountain Majesties</i> (via email)
Wed., Sept. 15	Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.
Sun., Sept. 19	Service: <i>The Question Box</i> Rev. Gary Kowalski
Sun., Sept. 26	Sharing Circle: <i>Purple Mountain Majesties</i> (on Zoom)

*On My Mind*

Rev. Gary Kowalski

This month Americans remember and mourn the victims who died twenty years ago on September 11, along with the heroes and first responders who sacrificed themselves to save others. Nearly everyone can recall where they were when the planes hit the towers and, for many, the incomprehensible images (this can't be happening!) are etched into the brain. For a brief moment, Americans of all regions and classes were united in an experience of shared humanity. The world was appalled, and our nation enjoyed the support and sympathy of people everywhere.

Then we were told to go shopping. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan obviously had a role in the attacks, but a tapestry of lies launched an assault on Iraq that (along with Afghanistan) would kill almost a million people. Torture and black ops prisons became U.S. policy. In the name of national security, the NSA began monitoring the emails of every American citizen. Whistleblowers were deemed traitors. Establishment media like *The New York Times* printed White House fictions as plain news. Trust was broken.

Then came the financial crisis. Wall Street insiders and bond ratings agencies (Moody's, Standard and Poors—the economic grown-ups) peddled junk debt as triple-A investments. Fortunes were made for a few. Homes and savings and pensions were lost for millions. Too big to fail entered the lexicon. Too little to matter was the unspoken corollary. Harms were incalculable. No one was prosecuted. Trust was broken.

Now we suffer from a trust deficit. Conspiracy theories go viral. Anti-vaxxers command wide audiences. Figures like Supreme Court Justices, once seen as impartial and above the fray, are obvious political shills. Clergy are little better. The rise of the “nones” and declining influence of organized religion are indicative of a nation whose faith in institutions is wavering.

Like reputation, trust once lost is hard to rebuild. All the more important, then, to be true to one another

and to remember how, twenty years ago, for one passing moment, there were no strangers in our land but only neighbors, those helping and those in need of help. How firefighters ran into unimaginable danger. How people lined up to give blood. How vigils for peace and interfaith prayers arose in communities everywhere. How no one danced or celebrated (those lies would come later) but how grief brought us together, bonded in our mutual fragility. In our brokenness lay our greatest strength. —Gary

*Small but Mighty Voices*

Rev. Matthew Pargeter-Villarreal

Sunday, September 5

The average UU congregation is between 50 and 100 members. Many fellowships throughout the country are even smaller than that. As wonderful as a small group of committed individuals can be, it can also often give way to disagreements and petty squabbles. This Sunday, join in for a conversation on how we can harness the power of small congregations—to make sure that they can not only survive, but thrive as well.

*The Question Box*

Rev. Gary Kowalski

Sunday, September 19

Do you have a question that's been nagging at you? A moral dilemma? A relationship issue that never quite gets resolved? A recurring dream in need of interpretation? A curious thought about religion, or philosophy, or the meaning of it all? This is your turn to write the sermon or, at least, have the minister respond to whatever's on your mind. Please send Gary your questions or suggested topics at least one week prior to his talk. Email him at [gary.kowalski@gmail.com](mailto:gary.kowalski@gmail.com).

See your weekly email for the Zoom link.

## SHARING CIRCLE\*

### *Purple Mountain Majesties*

Sunday, September 12 & 26, 11 a.m.

“Purple Mountain Majesties” evokes color, mass, spirit. This phrase from the revered patriotic song “America the Beautiful,” the song which I have mistakenly referred to as our nation's national anthem, has captivated the imagination of America since it was penned by Katherine Lee Bates in 1893. The poem and the line I have cited, was inspired by a cross country tour Bates took, fulfilling speaking engagements on social justice issues, which brought her from her home in Massachusetts to where her view included Pikes Peak, CO. Purple mountain majesties – evoking time of day, grandeur, the sacredness of nature. What do these words inspire in you? In your inner eye? In your heart of hearts?

What does Bates’ journey inspire? She, an unmarried, college-educated woman, raised by a single mother who valued education, traveled across the country in the late 1800’s to speak on labor reform, pens the poem that later was put to music and thereby nominated to be the national anthem, but was relegated second choice to the winning song “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

For information on how to join if you are not already on the Sharing Circle mailing list, contact Dennis Scott at [bridge4fun@mac.com](mailto:bridge4fun@mac.com).



### Support for Medical Debt Relief

Bette Myerson

Please consider contributing, through UCOT, to this [very important program](#). You can do so by sending a check to UCOT at P.O. Box 510, Taos, NM 87571, and our Treasurer Joe Mazza will see that Holy Cross Hospital gets this money to help cancel people’s medical bills. The deadline is October 20. The amounts contributed will go on your year-end letter for tax purposes. Please indicate on the memo line of the check that the contribution is for “medical debt relief” so that Joe can keep things straight. I will be happy to answer any questions. Bette Myerson, 575-758-3376, [bette@taosnetcom](mailto:bette@taosnetcom).

## Music Committee News

Gael Minton

This month we celebrate the life of Jessye Norman, operatic soprano (b. September 15, 1945–d. September 30, 2019).



“Jessye Norman walked through the racism, the ignorance, the nonsense of this world, with her head held high and a voice that came from the angels.” In 2003, the Rachel Longstreet Foundation partnered with Norman to open the [Jessye Norman School of the Arts](#), a tuition-free performing arts after-school program for economically disadvantaged students in Augusta, Georgia. Norman was actively involved in the program, including fundraisers for its benefit.

Enjoy her singing “[Amazing Grace](#),” at a (Sidney Poitier tribute) 1995 Kennedy Center Honors, and “[You’ll Never Walk Alone](#),” 2002.

## UCOT Men’s Group

September 15

The UU Men’s Group will meet Wednesday, June 16, at 4:30 p.m. All who are fully vaccinated are invited to meet in person. Those who wish can join by Zoom. Contact Dennis Scott at [bridge4fun@mac.com](mailto:bridge4fun@mac.com) for a Zoom invitation.



✿ SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS ✿

8 Adela Windsor  
17 Linda Aubrecht

## The President's Corner

Bob Aubrecht

During the past 18 months of COVID-19, one of my challenges has been to reduce the amount of time I spend in various forms of "virtual reality." Between Zoom meetings, emails, online news, and podcasts, I have realized that I am spending a great deal of time in front of a computer screen, with an iPhone in my hand or in front of a large-screen television. Some of that was necessary due to the restrictions and limitations related to COVID-19. As I became more aware of these forms of virtual reality, I needed to find ways to reside in actual reality.

One of my long-time resources has been Edwin Way Teale, a naturalist and a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who spent much of his career exploring and documenting nature in its many forms. Teale was not a scientist or an academic. His principal inspirations were Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, leading him to a career in observing and documenting nature across the United States.

In 1959, Teale bought a 130-acre farm in Hampton, Connecticut, where he lived for the rest of his life. One of his books based on his explorations of Trail Wood was *A Walk Through the Year*. In it he captures each day of the year, from March 21 to March 20, a year later. Each day's entry is based on his journals written over many years but captures his daily walk along the trails and through the woods of Trail Wood.

I first read it many years ago but have returned to it periodically. When you come to the end of these daily walks, they will remain in your mind as sharply defined as experiences of your own. They also have served as an inspiration for me in recent months to take time away from my "virtual reality" in its various forms and spend more time walking along trails with our two Golden Retrievers watching nature in various ways. One day it might be the first blooms of the spring wildflowers in the forest. Another could be listening to the Rio Grande del Rancho after several days of July monsoon rains. The elk are almost never seen, but their hoofprints are the leftovers of their early-morning trips from the forest down to the river for water.

Two thoughts—pick up a copy of *A Walk Through the Year* and use it as a daily form of reconnecting to nature. Each day's entry is about one page of text in paperback form. Trail Wood is located in Eastern Connecticut, so the environment is a forested area typical of much of southern New England.

The second suggestion is to use Teale's approach of a regular, perhaps daily, wander, hike or climb. There are so many easily accessed trails in and around Taos that it is not a problem to have a wandering adventure and simply watch what unfolds around you.

—August 22, 2021

## A Great Send-off for Stephanie Yoder

We had a wonderful send-off for Stephanie at Kit Carson Park on August 13th, with good fellowship, yummy food and about 35 people.

Stephanie moved to Albuquerque on August 15th. If you'd like her new mailing address you can contact her on her new home phone (505) 503-6858. She welcomes visitors, and requests that they call her first.



*Autumn Greetings!*

