

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
December 2021
Bulletin Board



- Sun., Dec. 5 Service: *Gifts*
Rev. Munro Sickafoose
- Sun., Dec. 12 Sharing Circle: *TBA* (via email)
- Wed., Dec. 15 Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.
- Sun., Dec. 19 Service: *Goodness Happens*,
Rev. Gary Kowalski
- Sun., Dec. 26 Sharing Circle: *TBA* (on Zoom)

On My Mind
Rev. Gary Kowalski

The winter holidays can be fraught. As a minister, you remember all the people who don't have homes filled with kids or carols or loved ones (or who may not have homes at all). I recall one Christmas morning when I'd invited congregants to drop in for season's greetings where I'd planned to read a warmly spun winter's tale. But two days earlier, one of my parishioners had tragically lost his wife. Sure enough, he and his two children were there at ten o'clock, seeking some healing for their raw and aching hearts, while half a dozen others had come seeking eggnog.

I think I read the story as planned, but wish I had just asked those present to simply share a grief and a gladness associated with the holidays. It's a dark season and the unrelenting merriment can feel forced. Nearly everyone old enough to have outgrown Santa Claus will experience some moments of sorrow at the year's end as we remember parents and family no longer with us, as we recall our childhoods that may have been less-than-perfect, and as we continue to cope with the distance and difficulties that covid has made part of daily life. Where are the tidings of comfort and joy? Songs of peace and the little drummer boy blare on the radio, but in the real world, peace remains as elusive as it was two thousand years ago.

It's important to acknowledge and honor the sadness and disillusion that go with Christmas. Light a candle for loss as well as good cheer. Don't blame yourself if you are less than jubilant 24/7. Because until we name the pain, it's hard to join in the celebration.

My mom had a bit of poetry pinned with a magnet to the refrigerator in her kitchen. The lyrics are from Leonard Cohen's song *Anthem*:

*Ring any bell that still can ring,
Forget your perfect offering.
There is a crack in everything.
That's how the light gets in.*

Light comes from unexpected places on this often sorry planet: not just from angel choirs but from a baby's squall. That seems to me to be the message of this season.

—Gary

Gifts
Rev. Munro Sickafoose
Sunday, December 5

We are told that supply chain disruptions could create a holiday shopping nightmare, with hot and trendy gifts almost impossible to come by. This seems to be a distressing prospect for many. But what is a gift, anyway? What does it mean to give, and to receive? And are we any good at it? Loaded questions, not always wrapped up neatly.

See your weekly email for the Zoom link.

Goodness Happens
Rev. Gary Kowalski
Sunday, December 19

Imperial powers strut the stage. Autocrats bluster and inflame the mob. Caught in the cross fires, the displaced and dispossessed struggle just to survive. But out of the lime-light and away from the headlines, decency triumphs and goodness prevails. This morning Rev. Kowalski reflects on the winter of 1940-41 and the small village of *Le Chambon*, where ordinary people with extraordinary bravery brought hope into the world.

See your weekly email for the Zoom link.

SHARING CIRCLES*

TBA

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

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

UCOT Men's Group

December 15

The UU Men's Group will meet Wednesday, December 15, 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.



The Longest Night

A Memorial Service for All We Have Lost

December 21, 5-6 p.m., Taos Plaza

Bette Myerson and Mimi Owensby will represent UCOT to memorialize those we have lost and what we have lost over this past year. The event is sponsored by The Enchanted Circle Interfaith Gathering. There will be interfaith speakers, music and candle-lighting followed by everyone taking part in lighting the Plaza farolitos. The youth group Common Grounds will provide free coffee and hot chocolate. All are invited to join. Click [here](#) for informational flyer.



Music Committee News

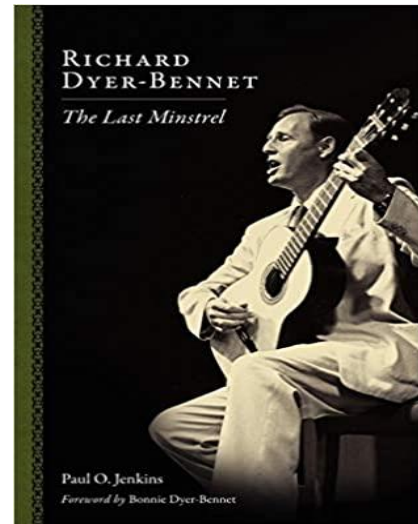
Gael Minton

If you know the musician Richard Dyer-Bennet, you know a spirited, sensitive, lyrical tenor with a passion for relating very directly with his audience. Two of his daughters were at Putney School (Vermont) in the late '50s and early '60s, where he often performed, and that is how I came to hear him. I continue to listen to his recordings and offer [his complete playlist](#) for you to explore.

Take a listen to his performance of [John Henry](#), [The Steel Driving Man](#) and [The Lonesome Valley](#), as well as [So We'll Go No More a Roving](#).

One of Dyer-Bennet's contributions involved performing and recording [Robert Fitzgerald's translation of the Odyssey](#)—with song and commentary—filmed in 1980.

This remarkable musician was born in Leicester, England, October 6, 1913, and died at his home in western Massachusetts on December 14, 1991.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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