

The Unitarian  
Congregation  
of Taos  
June 2022  
Bulletin Board



- Sun., June 5 Service: *A Most Personal Decision*,  
Rev. Gary Kowalski (in person)  
Sun., June 12 Sharing Circle: *Spiritual Knowledge /  
Spiritual Belief* (on Zoom)  
Wed., June 15 Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.  
Sun., June 19 Sharing Circle: Open Topic (in person)  
Sun., June 26 Service: *Radical Joy for Hard Times*, Rev.  
Munro Sickafoose (in person)

**On My Mind**  
**Rev. Gary Kowalski**

What did we learn from the pandemic? Not much, in my opinion.

We witnessed people at their best and worst. In the beginning, folks were hoarding toilet paper. A public health emergency turned into a political fist-fight. Nurses, grocery workers and first responders coped with high risk jobs, often gracefully and courageously. Researchers rose to the challenge of producing vaccines in record time, only to find anti-vaxxers refusing to get the jab.

I suspect that I had the virus early on, before it was even on people's radar. The symptoms appeared one night in the form of spiking fevers, violent chills and joints aching so terribly that I simply wept with no relief. I was sick for two days and then it was over. What did I learn from that?

Not everything that's bad occurs for a reason or to teach us a lesson. I know some people think otherwise. But I am of the opinion that random stuff happens, and the evolving mutations of a coronavirus are a prime example of that.

Yes, adversity can build character. Suffering can instill compassion. But a million Americans died. Psychiatric caseloads surged. Addiction rates skyrocketed.

Have I been edified or enriched in any way from these last two years? I hope that someone learned something. But mostly I feel tired and older, not much smarter or wiser.

I refuse to say anything good about this pandemic. Covid, you were a lousy teacher.

—Gary



**A Most Personal Decision**  
**Rev. Gary Kowalski**  
**Sunday, June 5**

Unitarian Universalists have a long history of advocating for reproductive rights. How do we respond to the draft of *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women Health Organization*, which makes it appear that the Supreme Court is soon to undermine this most personal decision of when and whether to start a family? This morning Gary offers some thoughts and invites women who are willing to share their own stories of why they decided to end a pregnancy, either anonymously or with identities attached. Please call or email Gary, (505) 257-5014, gary.kowalski@gmail.com. A talkback will follow the service.

*We will meet in person for this Service.*



**Radical Joy for Hard Times**  
**Rev. Munro Sickafoose**  
**Sunday, June 26\***

Times are hard, and it looks like they're fixing to get harder. What's a body to do? In these troubled times, making beauty is an essential act of survival. Bringing joy is a radical act of liberation in the face of hardship. These things are uniquely human and powerful.

*We will meet in person for this Service.*

*\*This Service, while normally on the 3rd Sunday, will be on the 4th Sunday this month.*

## SHARING CIRCLES

*Spiritual Knowledge / Spiritual Belief*  
*June 12*



Animism is the Western academic definition for “religions” that “believe” all things “in the natural world” are alive. Yet people whose spiritual practices are being described as “animism” will tell you they know and experience the life of all things. Most Western Christian traditions hold that animism is essentially superstition. Which spiritual approach resonates more with you and how does it support your life?

*Open Topic*  
*June 19\**

Using a virtual “talking stick,” each person can speak in turn on whatever is in their hearts or minds to share with others something relevant to them in the moment.

*\*The first Sharing Circle of the month will continue to be held on Zoom, but the second will be held in person. The open-topic Sharing Circle, which would normally fall on the 4th Sunday, will be held on the 3rd Sunday, this month only.*

**UCOT Men’s Group**  
**June 15**

The UU Men’s Group will meet Wednesday, June 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](#).

### **Music Committee News**

Gael Minton is spending time on her beloved Swan’s Island in Maine this month, so her regular column will resume in July.

The exciting news to share this month, is that UCOT pianist Martha Grossman will be playing in-person as we resume our Services at the Bent Lodge on June 5. How wonderful it will be to hear and see her play live and up close!

## **UCOT Opens Bent Lodge for In-Person Services on June 5**

The Unitarian Congregation of Taos Board of Trustees decided last month to begin in-person Services starting the first Sunday in June, on June 5. It’s a mixed blessing, as some of you still feel uncomfortable meeting in person, but the board feels we are best served by being together in community and not just in a virtual one. Although we’ve had our loyal members and friends who have regularly attended on Zoom, it’s time to take the plunge. Those of you who have not attended on Zoom can now rejoin your friends and once again hear some great sermons by Gary, Munro, and Jeanne, as well as music by Martha.

We’ve settled on a few guidelines for reopening, as follows:

- For June and July, masks will be required for everyone. The Board will review that policy at the end of July.
- A greeter will meet you at the entry door to hand you a printed order of service and will have a supply of N-95 masks on hand in case you forget yours.
- We recommend that all attendees be fully vaccinated and boosted.
- All exterior doors will be kept open during Services and Circles, and the heating/cooling system will be put on the fan setting.
- People in the same household may sit together, while others will be socially distant.
- Hymns will not be sung, since singing is known to increase the risk of spreading Covid. Martha Grossman will continue to play the prelude and postlude for our Services, and we can’t wait to hear her in person again!
- All announcements will be made by the lay leader from the podium. If you have an announcement, please type it up to give to the lay leader before the service begins.
- Joys and Sorrows will be shared without a mic from the speaker’s seat.
- No streaming at first, but we’re investigating the use of either streaming or Zooming for all Services. We anticipate we’ll be doing that by August at the latest, and maybe even July.
- No coffee or snacks for now, but an informal social hour will be held after the Service. Please continue to be mindful of social distancing.
- The Board will continue to monitor Taos County COVID-19 data for any changes in the guidelines.

*(Continued on next page...)*

If we've missed anything in this letter, please let us know so we can answer your question and share it with the rest of the congregation.

We are very much looking forward to seeing you all in person on June 5!



### UCOT Treasurer's Report

January 1, 2022, through March 31, 2022

	<u>Income</u>	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Regular pledges	\$6,954	\$11,376
Total income budget	\$7,633	\$12,172

	<u>Expenses</u>	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Total	\$8,577	\$6,642
Net operating expenses.....		\$5,530
Centinel checking account, 3/31/22.....		\$92,447
Total short- and long-term reserves.....		\$92,447
2022 operating reserve.....		\$15,000
Net long-term reserve.....		\$77,447

A donation button has been added to the weekly email as well as monthly newsletter. It is meant primarily for those visiting the website or on the email list who are not members or regular attendees of UCOT who wish to donate. Please let me know if you have any questions about this. Thank you again for your amazing faithfulness and generosity!

Sincerely,  
Joe Mazza, UCOT Treasurer

### Sharing Circles to Meet in Person Starting June 19

To satisfy the needs of as many members and friends as possible, the Sharing Circle Steering Committee made the decision to offer a hybrid platform for sharing. We will continue to meet via Zoom for the first Circle of each month (the second Sunday), and we'll meet in person out in the courtyard at the Lodge for the second Circle of the month (normally the fourth Sunday, except for this month). The Zoom Circles will continue to have a topic and facilitator, while the in-person Circles will be on the order of the sharing stick, with each person sharing what is on their mind that Sunday. The meetings are always fresh and relevant.

Since we're meeting outside, there will be fewer guidelines than for services:

- Maintain social distancing.
- Masks are not required since we'll be outside. But if you're more comfortable wearing one, by all means please do.

### Ready, Set, Go. Your Personal Wildfire Action Plan

UCOT co-minister Gary Kowalski served as a Santa Fe County volunteer firefighter. He recently addressed the UU Congregation of Santa Fe on the topic of Fire Safety. Watch the video of his talk [here](#).

### Help the Fire Evacuees

Volunteer: [Taos Connects](#)

Donate: [Taos Community Foundation](#)



### JUNE BIRTHDAYS

15 Michael Martinez  
16 Carol Doughty