

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
December 2022
Bulletin Board



Sun., Dec. 4	Service: <i>What Keeps Us Warm?</i> Rev. Gary Kowalski
Sun., Dec. 11	Sharing Circle: <i>Peace & Peacefulness</i>
Sun., Dec. 18	Service: <i>Soul and Solstice</i> Rev. Munro Sickafoose
Wed., Dec. 21	Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 24	Service: <i>The Origins of Christmas</i> , Rev. Jeanne Montclair (6 p.m.)
Sun., Dec. 25	Sharing Circle: <i>Open topic</i>

On My Mind
Rev. Gary Kowalski

Almost twenty members of our congregation showed up on November 7 for a discussion of the UUA's proposed revision to the Principles and Purposes of our association. It was great to see so much interest in thinking about our faith's foundations – what is central to our religious identity and what is peripheral or (to borrow a phrase from Theodore Parker) what is permanent versus what is merely transient.

Opinions were mixed. At least one person liked the new language (which you can read [here](#)), while most were ambivalent or unhappy with the draft, which gives scant mention to the democratic process or to the historic sources that have shaped us over the past two centuries. There is still an opportunity for you to share your own reactions with the Article II Study Commission that is recommending these changes, through an online form you can access [here](#).

Several attendees felt that, whether we retain our present Principles or adopt a rewrite, it will remain important to talk about the role that race has played in our UU past and that it continues to play in our own lives and modern society. "The color line," which W.E.B. Du Bois predicted in 1903 would be the defining problem of the twentieth century, is still very much with us in the twenty-first.

Many of us have participated in diversity and anti-racism trainings, trying to discern how our unconscious assumptions and biases may have been formed through inherited privilege. One group of congregants including Robert Silver, Mary McPhail Gray, Bette Myerson, and Chuck Doughty helped to organize a multiracial dialogue among Taoseños that met for two years, breaking bread and building better understanding among folks who seldom mingle. More initiatives like this are needed.

Yet in many ways it is harder now to talk about race than it was a generation or two ago. Where do we begin without giving offense or reinforcing the very boundaries we are trying to overcome? Regardless of the difficulty, we need to risk it.

I want to thank those in the congregation who are reminding us that Unitarian Universalism aspires to be an inclusive and justice-making faith. What are your ideas for living more deeply into a tradition that has included such trailblazers as Parker, who harbored fugitive slaves in his congregation while writing sermons with a loaded pistol on his desk? In a hurting and divided world, we are called to talk, yes, and then to act.

What Keeps Us Warm?

Rev. Gary Kowalski

Sunday, December 4, 11 a.m.

Probably you have seen videos that show [a flock of starlings in synchronous flight](#). Together, thousands of individual birds resemble an amoeba, a single-celled organism with its own will and dynamism. Are human societies like a flock of blackbirds, self-organizing systems that can generate a life that is larger and more purposeful than might be apparent from the dystopian randomness that meets the eye? This morning Gary summons a message most appropriate for the coming cold days. Even in the hardest and most difficult of seasons, an emergent wave of cooperation and common cause could be rising. A talkback will follow the service, and members are invited to join Gary and Dori at Hunan restaurant afterward at 1:00 p.m. to extend the conversation.

Soul and Solstice

Rev. Munro Sickafoose

Sunday, December 18, 11 a.m.

Here in the northern hemisphere, the winter solstice marks the beginning of the return of the light, and the springtime to come. That return is through the depths of the cold and dark, the time of the soul in the yearly cycle. Our souls need particular attention this time of year. Let us tend them together on this day!

The Deep Spiritual Significance of The Holy Family and the Origins of Christmas

Rev. Jeanne Montclair

Saturday evening, December 24, at 6 p.m.

“Hope for a truly cosmic faith is kindled and fanned into full flame” (Tom Harpur) as we acknowledge the truths in our shared religious history. By probing the depths of belief our deep connections to our planet and the entire human family is revealed.

SHARING CIRCLE*

Peace & Peacefulness

December 11 • 11 a.m.

It's been 2,000 years since the Prince of Peace was born, and many centuries more since one was prophesied in Isaiah. And yet war continues to destroy. Can there be an expectation of peace in any lifetime or is it unattainable? Who *is* the Prince of Peace? Maybe it's each one of us contributing to a field of peace. Come share your feelings about peace and about what it means to be peaceful.

Open-Topic Sharing Circle

December 25 • 11 a.m.

We will have a Christmas Day Sharing Circle with an open topic. Feel free to share Christmas stories from bygone days—or anything else you have on your heart and mind.

UCOT Men's Group

December 21

The UU Men's Group will meet Wednesday, December 21, 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 (bridge4fun@mac.com).

21st Annual Interfaith Peace Chanukah

December 18

Join us, Sunday, December 18, at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom. UCOT will be represented among many other faiths to light candles, pray and sing songs of peace. No charge for this event. Register [here](#) to receive the Zoom link. For more information, contact Bette Myerson, 575-758-3376, or see Taos Jewish Center website, www.taosjewishcenter.org.

Get Connected to UCOT!

Hello! I am Sara Sautter, your new Membership and Connections Team Leader. In this role, I'll be following up weekly with visitors to help them feel welcome, learn about UCOT, and find a way to become connected to the congregation.

I'll also help existing members get reconnected to UCOT. Many of us have become disconnected over the pandemic years.

We know that it's volunteers who make our Sunday worship, Sharing Circles, Fifth Sunday Forums, and fellowship hum. And beyond Sunday, we connect when we care for others and when we play together.

Connections help us truly belong to our congregation. Here are a few ways to connect at UCOT. Click on the name of each group for more information or to join. Paper copies of sign-up sheets will be available at Sunday Services at the Bent Lodge. And thank you for being a part of UCOT.

- [Caring Team](#) Check in on members in need. Help as requested.
- [Charitable Giving Committee](#) Select organizations to receive contributions from UCOT collections.
- [Sunday Coffee and Tea Team](#) Make coffee and tea for Worship Sundays. Manage the weekly [Snack Sign Up](#) Sheet.
- [Food and Fun Team](#) Organize potluck lunches after church or other fun stuff.
- [Membership and Connections](#) Welcome new members and help them get connected to UCOT.
- [Men's Group](#) Meet up with other UCOT men for fellowship.
- [UCOT Book Club](#) Read and discuss books of all kinds.
- [Sunday Programs: Worship Team](#) Help plan and organize our Sunday worship services on the first and third Sundays of each month.

New UU Principles?

There is still time! You have until the end of November to share your thoughts about the proposal to replace our current statement of UU Principles with all new language. You can read the revision and find an online feedback form to share your thoughts with the Article II Study Commission [here](#).

Music Committee News

Gael Minton



On the weekend of Nov. 5-6, the acclaimed duo of Suzanne Teng (flutes) and Gilbert Levy (percussion) performed at the Harwood Museum as part of the Taos Chamber Music Group's 30th anniversary season. With no intermission it was an hour and a half of beautiful sound, unusual harmonies and wild and serene rhythms.

The concert included pieces from around the world with many of the flutes Suzanne plays. Suzanne and Gilbert live in Santa Fe and have seven CDs of their music.

On the program was a meditative piece with an invitation from Suzanne to hold something/someone in mind as we listened. Here is a link to [Suling Improvisation](#).

The concert ended with a rousing performance of Fertile Crescent. Here is a link to a [2013 performance with the Mystic Journey band](#).



Dinners for 6 – Sign Up for January

Get to know UCOT members in an intimate setting through *Dinners for Six*, where six people (three couples, or two couples and two singles) are put together randomly for three dinners, one at each "pair's" home. That way, everyone gets to host once, and everyone gets two opportunities to be hosted. The host sets the main course, and others bring side dishes or desserts. The date for dinners is set by each group, and the meal plan is worked out among the six individuals. Some hosts decide to choose a restaurant instead of entertaining at home.

If you're interested in adding your name to the next round of *Dinners for Six* (starting in January 2023), email organizer Nancy Schultz (j3h3s3@aol.com) by December 15.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

