

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
November 2022
Bulletin Board



- Sun., Nov. 6 Service: *Día de los Muertos*
Marsha & Chuck Fawns
- Sun., Nov. 13 Sharing Circle: *Futuring Towards Death*
- Wed., Nov. 16 Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.
- Sun., Nov. 20 Service: *A Special Homecoming*
Rev. Jeanne Montclair
- Sun., Nov. 27 Sharing Circle: Open Topic

The First Smooth Stone
Rev. Munro Sickafoose

James Luther Adams was the foremost UU theologian of the 20th century. He helped frame liberal religion with the metaphor of five smooth stones, a metaphor that comes from the Biblical account of David picking five smooth stones for his sling before going up against Goliath.

For Adams, the first smooth stone is that revelation is continuous. Our understanding is never complete, or final, and we should always be open to new ideas and new information.

Being open to new ideas and new information can sometimes turn into a fascination with revelation for its own sake, in the negation of previous revelations for the next new thing, the latest fashion in attitudes or thought towards a particular subject. And in doing so, we are tempted to abandon past truths rather than build upon them. That's dangerous path to follow, I think.

We must always be willing to submit our ideas to critique and rigorous analysis in order to make them better. Most of us can agree that this is a good principle all around, useful for individuals and groups of all sizes and kinds. Lately, though, it seems that more and more of us – not just UU's, but our society in general – are choosing to only accept ideas and information from narrower and narrower sources, usually only from within our party or tribe or faith. And the truth is that there are truths to found everywhere. For many years, I've half-jokingly said that on Mondays I'm a libertarian, on Tuesdays I'm a conservative, Wednesdays I'm a liberal, Thursdays I'm a socialist, Fridays I'm a communist, Saturdays I'm an anarchist, and Sundays I take the day off from the whole thing like the good Lord intended. The point being that there are good ideas and insights to be had from all points on the political and social spectrum and we need to be open to all of them, no matter where they come from.

Truth is not the exclusive purview of our tribe, and when we think it is, we have dropped that first smooth stone.

Day of the Dead
(Día de los Muertos)
Marsha and Chuck Fawns
Sunday, November 6

"Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical, and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve."

– Rabbi Dr. Earl Grollman

"Nothing that grieves us can be called little; by the external laws of proportion, a child's loss of a doll and a king's loss of a crown are events of the same size."

– Mark Twain, "Which Was the Dream?"

This year's Día de Los Muertos service will provide an opportunity to honor and mourn together the special people who have died, recently or long ago. We are meeting in person to create an altar of photos and items representing those we are honoring. The altar, inspirational readings, and songs by the Threshold Singers will prompt our sharing. The major portion of the service will consist of together honoring all we have lost, so please bring altar items even if you would rather not speak to the group.

A reminder to account for the time change that takes place at 2 a.m. on the day of the service. If you forget, you'll arrive an hour early!

A Special Homecoming Service
Rev. Jeanne Montclair
Sunday, November 20

A sense of belonging is vital to our well-being. Discovering our interconnections reveals that isolation is a state of mind – not a reality. Giving thanks for all that we belong to on this wide wild Earth increases our understanding of our interdependence.

We will use this opportunity to welcome members who have joined, or wish to join, the Unitarian Congregation of Taos. A ceremony will

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follow the homily. If you are not yet a member, and would like to be, please contact Be Scott (finaleyes@icloud.com) before November 20 to let her know you would like to be included in the “in-gathering”.



SHARING CIRCLES*

Futuring Towards Death
November 13 • In Person

“Death is the ultimate unknown that we are forever avoiding; it’s the ultimate groundlessness that we try to escape.”

– Pema Chödrön

“Shrinking away from death is something unhealthy and abnormal, which robs the second half of life of its purpose.”

– Carl Jung

“I experienced a deep intimacy as we met as two human beings pondering our mortality.”

– Amy Schaffer

Halloween and Day of the Dead have just passed, both ways in which we humans shuffle shyly towards a relationship with Death. As we age, the opportunity to become more intimate with death increases. This can enrich life, but it can also bring up fears and doubts. Will I just disappear when my body dies? Or is there an afterlife? Will I see my loved ones? Or is the last breath the end?

What practices or experiences help you be at ease with the approach of death? What remains challenging about your relationship to death? Let’s share our feelings, fears, and experiences related to mortality and immortality.

Open Topic
November 27 • In Person

Using a virtual “talking stick,” each person can speak in turn, sharing whatever is in their hearts or minds in the moment.

We will meet in person at the Bent Lodge for both Sharing Circles. Masks are optional.

UCOT Men’s Group

November 20

The UU Men’s Group will meet Wednesday, November 20, 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).

Music Committee News

Gael Minton

On November 20 we welcome back live music with a duet of harpists Julie Hawley and Katie Cosgrove!



Beatrice Rana

Our beloved pianist Martha Grossman from time-to-time plays for us the Aria and a variation from Bach’s Goldberg Variations, written in 1741. Readers, you probably have your favorite Bach compositions and performers. One of mine is [Beatrice Rana](#), who, at age 23, recorded the [Goldberg Variations](#) to great acclaim.

Rana’s notes to her 2017 Goldberg disc are enlightening, with reference to Bach and da Vinci as “two of the most inventive, unsurpassed minds in the history of humanity.” She speaks of the Aria (the basis of the 30 variations) and the repeat of it at the end as a “conclusion of a linear journey or a return to the starting point, like an infinite magic circle. The awareness of the futility of it all and the subsequent attempt at purification in the Aria led me to this final reflection: ‘just as humanity needs spirituality, so spirituality needs humanity.’”

Enjoy this music and perhaps reading of Bach tenor David Gordon’s [The Little Bach Book—Notable Details about the Life and Times of Bach \(2017\)](#).

Another Opportunity to Lift the Burden of Medical Debt

Following is a letter from the Taos United Community Church, which organizes the effort to donate to this good cause.

Dear Friends,

Once again, we are inviting all spiritual communities and individuals to contribute to year five of the Taos Medical Debt Relief Project. Whatever we raise together will be used to purchase and forgive uncollectible medical debt owed to Holy Cross Hospital by our neighbors in Taos County. Last year, 12 spiritual communities raised enough money to purchase and forgive more than \$2,100,000 of Taos medical debt. This year, we are hoping to do even more.

Last year, the contributing spiritual communities included:

B'nai Shalom Havurah
El Pueblito United Methodist Church
First Presbyterian Church
Living Word Ministries, Questa
Neem Karoli Baba Ashram (the Hanuman Temple)
Open Heart Sangha
St. James Episcopal Church
Taos Bilingual Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Taos Mountain Sangha
Taos United Community Church
Unitarian Congregation of Taos
Unity of Taos

Thank you!
Valerie Holsinger
Taos United Community Church

If you would like to donate, please send your check to UCOT, P.O. Box 510, Taos, NM 87571. Write in the memo line "Medical Debt Relief." Joe Mazza, our treasurer, will then write one check from UCOT for the full amount. Donations need to arrive in our box by Nov. 10 so we can send a check to Holy Cross by Nov. 20, 2022.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

7 Ty Minton
7 Stephanie Yoder
12 Diane Ainsworth
18 Jane Starks

