

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
August 2026
Bulletin Board



All programs begin at 11 a.m. unless otherwise stated

Sun., Aug. 2	Service: <i>This I Believe</i> , Be Scott
Sun., Aug. 9	Sharing Circle: <i>Our Troubling Times</i>
Sun., Aug. 16	Service: <i>Giving Your Heart Away, Finding Meaning</i> , Rev. Doug Inhofe
Tue., Aug. 18	UCOT Women's Lunch, 12 p.m., Martyrs
Wed., Aug. 19	UCOT Men's Group, 4 p.m.
Sun., Aug. 23	Sharing Circle: <i>Open Topic</i>
Thu., Aug. 27	UCOT Book Group, 10:30 a.m., SOMOS
Sun., Aug. 30	5th Sunday: <i>Good News Good Planet</i> , Mandy Stapleford

Right Now, It's Like This
Rev. Diana Davies

Tarot and oracle cards are an important part of my personal spiritual practice. I use them as an intuitive tool for better understanding the state of my spirit and discerning the questions that arise in my spiritual seeking.

I tend to use tarot and oracle cards in similar ways, although there are important differences. Tarot is a structured system, with a certain number of cards (78) divided up in a particular way. People can spend a lifetime learning the nuances of each card and how a card's significance changes depending on its position and relationship with other cards. Tarot decks may use very different images or themes, but the underlying system is essentially the same. Oracle cards, on the other hand, are highly individualistic, with no shared structure between decks.

I have a longstanding practice of drawing a card a day. With this practice, I can use either tarot or oracle cards. I'll begin by doing some centering breath, then I'll choose a deck, shuffle the cards, and ask what my focus for that day might be. I begin by looking at the card with beginner's mind. I notice what thoughts, feelings, and memories the card evokes for me. Then, I'll consider what some of the traditional meanings of the card might be (in the case of tarot) or what the author has written about the card, in the manual that typically accompanies an oracle deck. After I've explored all the nuances of the card and thought about what lessons it might offer, I try to crystallize those lessons into a single word or phrase and make that my mantra throughout the rest of the day. I keep a record of the cards I've drawn and the meanings I've taken from those cards, because meanings change over time, in interesting ways. By doing this, I'm able to track the patterns of my spiritual life.

Currently, my favorite decks are the [Urban Crow Oracle](#), the [Tarot of Plants](#), and the [Herbcrafter's Tarot](#), but there are many beautiful decks out there. As always, I'd love to hear about your spiritual practices.

This I Believe
Be Scott

Sunday, August 2, 11 a.m.

Bent Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, Taos

In a news series called "This I Believe," first on CBS and later NPR, everyday Americans (not journalists) wrote and shared brief essays describing the principles that guided their lives. Back in the day, people sent in their essays that briefly detailed the core beliefs that guided their daily lives.

And now, for the third year (and in lieu of a service so Rev. Diana can take a vacation), five Unitarian Universalists (all members of UCOT) will share their beliefs with the rest of the congregation. Be prepared to be moved, inspired, and more connected to each other.

All are invited to stay for cake after worship today to celebrate Chuck Fawns' 90th birthday!

Giving Your Heart Away, Finding Meaning
Rev. Doug Inhofe

Sunday, August 16, 11 a.m.

Bent Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, Taos

One's striving may yield rewards, yet finding joy may often be out of reach. Happiness cannot be chased but, rather, must ensue as the side effect of dedication to a cause greater than oneself. Such effort, in turn, requires the courage to commit oneself to worthwhile goals, without regard to outward recognition. This freedom to choose how one lives generates hope for every future moment, thus opening the door to personal fulfillment and meaning.

UUA Corner



SHARING CIRCLES

Bent Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, Taos

Our Troubling Times

Sunday, August 9, 11 a.m.

For many of us, this country is failing miserably on every level. It's challenging not to fall into despair over the immorality of immigrants being murdered, arrested, and crammed into latter-day concentration camps by ICE, an arm of Homeland "Security"; unnecessary and unwarranted attacks on foreign countries, destroying their infrastructure and murdering innocent citizens by indiscriminate bombings; federal interference in state elections; suspension of the rule of law; and the lack of trust we now have in our institutions — among many other degenerations. The list runs long and creates a sense of helplessness.

How do you fight your own despair? How do you find meaning? What tactics or practices, personal or public, have you discovered that have helped you get through these times? Please come and share with others.

Open Topic

Sunday, August 23, 11 a.m.

Come as you are. Say what you like. Share your thoughts or feelings as we pass the mic.

Fifth Sunday Program: Good News Good Planet Mandy Stapleford

Sunday, August 30, 11 a.m.

Launched in 2015, GNGP is a series of 90-second radio stories highlighting local and global acts of kindness, innovation, and compassion. GNGP has partnered with [KNCE 93.5 FM – True Taos Radio](#), and via Pacifica Radio Network, where over 50 stations coast to coast air the program. No religion. No politics. Just good people doing good things.

A [LOR Foundation](#) grant in 2021 supported the launch of [Good News Good Planet Schools](#), an innovative program that helps students develop leadership skills while discovering their own power to create positive change on issues that matter to them. More than 160 Taos students have participated, designing and leading dozens of service-learning projects that have benefited countless people in Taos and beyond.

(continued from previous column)

Originally from the Northeast, Mandy came to Taos for a short visit in 1998 that happily never ended. She built an art studio and a straw-bale home, where she lives with her husband and dogs. Mandy is an artist, writer, entrepreneur, and self-proclaimed "ridiculous optimist," who knows that changing what we focus on changes the world we experience. She encourages others to discover the extraordinary power of *choosing* to see the good happening all around us and creating more of it.

UCOT Women's Lunch

August 18, 12 noon

Martyrs Restaurant, RSVP [here](#)

Join us at Martyrs, in their separate meeting space at the rear of the property, to enjoy a meal and conversation with UCOT women members and their friends. Enjoy delicious food and the company of amazing women. RSVP by Monday, August 17, to [Mary Shaffer](#).

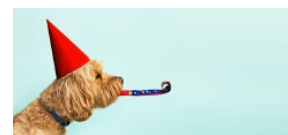
UCOT Men's Group

August 19, 4:00 p.m.

The UCOT Men's Group will meet in person on Wednesday, August 19, at 4 p.m. Contact [Chuck Fawns](#) for this month's location.

Charitable Giving Program Rivers and Birds

Rivers and Birds is a nonprofit organization that takes schoolchildren from 3rd, 4th and 5th grades into nature and connects them with the lands, waters, flora and fauna, empowering them to become stewards of their environment. The organization provides two trips a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. They work directly with schools and provide the educational opportunity for about 400 students per year. These trips are provided at no cost to the schools.



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Mary McPhail Gray
- 8 Wally Cox
- 22 Mya Coursey

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LEADERSHIP

UCOT Presidential Search

Julian Spalding

Many of you have become UCOT members since I became board president a year ago, so here's a little background. Our president at that time was Emily Gillispie. Her husband, Joe, was our audio technician. They decided to move to Colorado midyear in 2025, leaving both jobs open. We hired Brian Lewis to replace Joe. And the board asked me if I would step in for Emily. I accepted.

I agreed to serve for the remainder of 2025. When 2026 rolled around and no one had offered to consider stepping in to assume the role of board president, I agreed to serve for the full year.

It's been a good year. I learned a lot and contributed a lot. Now I am ready to let someone else (younger maybe?) step up. Toward that end, I have asked two other members to form a search committee.

Perhaps you, dear reader, will choose to consider serving as 2027 board president. The 2027 president and board candidates will be announced at the **November 8 Annual Meeting**.

For the most part, the duties are to:

- ✓ Provide oversight for all committees.
- ✓ Officiate Annual Meeting, monthly board meetings, and executive committee meetings, and to produce agendas.
- ✓ Negotiate staff contracts.
- ✓ Maintain official documents on Google Docs.

The president should be proficient in these areas:

- ✓ Basic understanding of Unitarian Universalist principles.
- ✓ Good communication skills.
- ✓ Understands organizational needs and can delegate.
- ✓ Provides strategic thinking and vision.
- ✓ Provides leadership and collaboration.
- ✓ Works well with other board members.

For the right person, the position is rewarding and allows for a deeper commitment to the success of our congregation.

Please consider your qualifications and your readiness for UCOT leadership.



What if UCOT Did Not Exist?



What feeds you the most at UCOT?

Why does Taos need UCOT?

How can we widen our circle without losing our core?

What dreams do you have for UCOT?

The Unitarian Congregation of Taos is hosting "cottage meetings" for voting members, friends, and active visitors on a path to membership. We are doing this to help us define what we do best and how to do more of it.

During our short cottage meetings, held in July and August, we will:

- Discover: Appreciate what we do well.
- Dream: Envision a compelling future.
- Design: Brainstorm and co-construct the future.
- Deliver: Take action.

We will use this feedback to inform our 2027-2028 budget.

[Please click here](#) to select the single date that works best for you for participating in a cottage meeting.

Please plan to attend so your voice can be heard.

**Share Your UCOT Experience
With the Taos Community and Beyond**

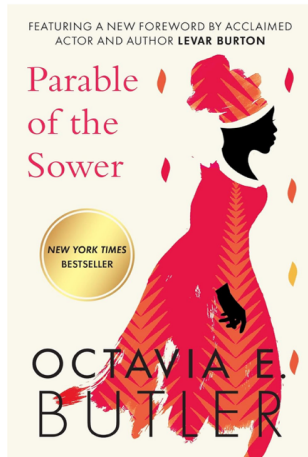


[Write a Google Review for UCOT.](#)

Please take a minute to add a review for UCOT and share with those who may be seeking the same thing you were when you came here. Tell them what you get out of your congregation and about the people you meet here. There are likely others who are looking for something like you found, so speak up.

UCOT Book Group
August 27, 10:30 a.m., SOMOS
(Fourth Thursday Monthly)

In August, we will be reading and discussing
Parable of the Sower (1993), by Octavia Butler.



When global climate change and economic crises lead to social chaos in the early 2020s, California becomes full of dangers, from pervasive water shortage to masses of vagabonds who will do anything to live to see another day. Fifteen-year-old Lauren Olamina lives inside a gated community with her preacher father, family, and neighbors, sheltered from the surrounding anarchy. In a society where any vulnerability is a risk, she suffers from hyperempathy, a debilitating sensitivity to others' emotions.

Precocious and clear-eyed, Lauren must make her voice heard in order to protect her loved ones from the imminent disasters her small community stubbornly ignores. But what begins as a fight for survival soon leads to something much more: the birth of a new faith...and a startling vision of human destiny.

A New York Times bestseller, The New York Times Book Review described the book as “a gripping tale of survival and a poignant account of growing up sane in a disintegrating world.”

Please join us for the conversation.

The UCOT Book Group is open to all readers and their friends. Please bring \$1.00 to contribute to SOMOS for allowing us to use the meeting space. To view the entire **2026 Book List**, follow [this link](#).



From the 5th Sunday Service Committee
Sarah Reid

Our fifth-Sunday Service in May, “Feeding Our Community,” provided attendees with a wealth of information regarding Taos’s network of food providers. Each of the five panel participants presented a fascinating look at their food operations; we plan to continue to cover one a month for the next few months in the UCOT newsletter. Here’s a look at what Punya Upadyayha had to say about the work of the Neem Karoli Baba Ashram.

“At the Ashram, our guru, our special teacher, told us he had all these young hippies showing up in the ’60s and ’70s, right? And they’re all like, ‘I wanna get enlightened, now! I wanna be free, now!’ So they asked, ‘What do I do to be free, what do I do to get enlightened now?’ And he looked at them and said, ‘Go feed people, serve people.’ So that has been a critical part of our efforts since the 1980s.

“And here is what we do to fulfill that mission:

“We Prepare Meals. Everyone is welcome to come eat traditional vegetarian meals. At our peak, we were serving three meals a day, seven days a week, to 2,500 people. Now, due to staffing challenges, it’s about five or six meals a week – Saturday, Sunday, and Tuesday.

“We’ve shifted to using more fresh, local, organic foods. We were encouraged by our Board to move away from a poverty mindset. We have our own farm and grow several tons of food – greens, and vegetables – most of which we use in our kitchen. The rest, we bag up for people to take with them as they come and go.

“We collect and redistribute food donations. People come from all over the country, as well as from Canada and Europe, to visit the ashram. We have a wish list on our website. Two weeks ago, we put almonds on that list, and now we have an abundance, thanks to visitors to the ashram who saw our request. Visitors bring amazing amounts of food to donate, and we share this food with the community through programs like El Pueblito’s Shared Table and the St. James Food Pantry. We also provide food to immigrant groups who come and take food directly from us. And we provide food to other religious centers – the Buddhist Sikh center in Española, for example. We have a barn that’s been converted to our food-storage center. And we make pallets of food every couple of weeks to send to the Food Depot for redistribution.”