

The Unitarian
Congregation
of Taos
September 2026
Bulletin Board



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

Sun., Sep. 6	Service: Rev. <i>Acequias and the Spirit (Water Ceremony)</i> , Rev. Diana Davies
Sun., Sep. 13	Sharing Circle: <i>Judgment</i>
Tue., Sep. 15	UCOT Women's Lunch, 12 p.m., Martyrs
Sun., Sep. 20	Service: <i>I'm Sorry, Please Forgive Me: Atonement</i> , Rev. Diana Davies
Wed., Sep. 16	UCOT Men's Group, 4 p.m.
Thu., Sep. 24	UCOT Book Group, 10:30 a.m., SOMOS
Sun., Sep. 27	Sharing Circle: <i>Open Topic</i>

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

I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you. I love you.

These four sentences are known as the Ho'oponopono mantra or prayer, which comes from an ancient indigenous Hawaiian practice. In this ancient practice when one person wronged another or discord emerged within an extended family, an elder would gather up all the parties to participate in a process of prayer, honest conversation, silent reflection, confession, repentance, and forgiveness. Similar processes can be found in indigenous and other cultural traditions all around the world, known collectively as "[restorative justice](#)."

Today, this practice has been crystallized into four sentences that can be chanted as a means of personal spiritual cleansing, interpersonal healing, and self-love. This is one of my personal spiritual practices. I chant these words while meditating, or sometimes I will listen to someone else sing or chant these words while I'm doing my morning sun salutations. Some of my favorite recordings are by Carrie Grossman ("[Thank You](#)") and Wakes ("[Ho'oponopono](#)").

Almost always when I do this practice, I begin by addressing Nature. I acknowledge my role in harming the Earth through the daily choices I make, the damage I do just by living in the Western world, and all the times I take Nature for granted. ("I'm sorry.") I ask Nature's forgiveness, from a place of true repentance and a desire to do better. ("Please forgive me.") I express my gratitude for all that Nature provides. ("Thank you.") And I express my deep love of the Nature that holds me, that gave me life, and that moves through me in my breath and my blood. ("I love you.") Others may address someone or something else through that "you". It might be addressed to someone who has been wronged, to a family member who is estranged, to God, to an unknown victim of war or other violence, or even to the self.

The beauty of this practice, though, is that when you chant the sentences long enough, it becomes relatively unimportant who you chose to address at the start, as the "you" becomes everything and everyone. All is connected.



Acequias and the Spirit
(Water Ceremony)
Rev. Diana Davies

Sunday, September 6, 11 a.m.
Bent Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, Taos

Christian mystic St. Teresa of Avila compared the soul to a garden that must be watered. She wrote about four stages of prayer or spiritual practice that function as spiritual water: the well, the water wheel, the river, and the rain. How might the acequia function as a symbol of Unitarian Universalist spiritual practice? Today we also celebrate our annual water ceremony. Please bring water that represents the sacred to you.

I'm Sorry, Please Forgive Me: Atonement
Rev. Diana Davies

Sunday, September 20, 11 a.m.
Bent Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, Taos

Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement begins this evening at sundown. Jews mark this holiest of days with fasting, abstaining, and praying for forgiveness. Ultimately, what is sought is atonement or at-one-ment with God. Yet, that word 'atonement' is prickly for many of us. For many of us, it conjures up negative feelings like guilt and regret. But are we missing an important method of healing by avoiding the act of atonement?

SHARING CIRCLES

Bent Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, Taos

Judgment

Sunday, September 13, 11 a.m.

We often hear the admonition: Don't be judgmental. We are judgmental constantly in our lives. There's both good and bad judgment with different consequences. Share a personal story with either good or bad judgment as its consequence. Was there ever a case when you thought you handled something with good judgment which turned out with a bad consequence? Upon what do we depend for guidance in order to secure good judgment? Share your thoughts on judgment with the Sharing Circle.

Open Topic

Sunday, September 27, 11 a.m.

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

UU 101

Saturday, September 12, noon-3 p.m., Bent Lodge

Are you new to Unitarian Universalism and/or the Unitarian Congregation of Taos? Do you have questions about who we are as a congregation and as a faith? Rev. Diana Davies will offer a three-hour Saturday workshop (September 12, noon to 3 p.m.) at the Bent Lodge that will cover the basic history, theology, and principles of Unitarian Universalism, as well as an overview of the history of UCOT and ways you can get involved. A light lunch will be included. We welcome those who have joined within the past year (or since the last UU 101 offering) or who are seriously considering becoming a member of UCOT. Longer-term members who would like a refresher are also welcome.

An RSVP is required. Register [online](#) or by contacting [Julian Spalding](#), by September 11. Please let us know about any food allergies.

UCOT Women's Lunch

Tuesday, September 15, 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 friends. Enjoy delicious food and the company of amazing women. RSVP by Monday, September 14, to [Mary Shaffer](#).

UCOT Men's Group

Wednesday, September 16, 4:00 p.m.

The UCOT Men's Group will meet in person on Wednesday, September 16, at 4 p.m. Contact [Chuck Fawns](#) for this month's location.

Charitable Giving Program

Bridges Project for Education

The Bridges Project helps students with applications and financial aid and guides them in making informed choices about the best college for their needs (income, learning style) as well as academic, career, and life goals. In July, they had a free college prep program for students who are the first in their family to apply to college.

UUA Corner



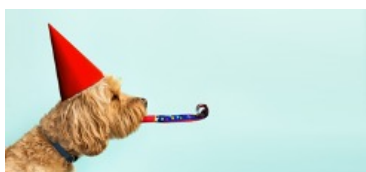
LEADERSHIP

Ingathering
James Radnor

Here we are at the turn of another season; September is just around the corner, when we celebrate Ingathering and Water Communion as part of our liturgical calendar. It is a time to gather from our summer wanderings, to tell stories of our adventures and misadventures, and to share what we experienced and learned. As the temperatures cool, it is a time to welcome each other into fellowship, and to look forward to new beginnings.

Growing up in a northern climate in the Northern hemisphere, September for me is a time of migration, a time of movement, a time of return, and a time of harvest. To this day, when I see large V-shaped formations of geese flying overhead and hear their honking cries, I think of the return to school, and of new beginnings.

As the growing season comes to an end, and farmers bring in their crops, this is a time to acknowledge and to celebrate their hard work of spring planting and summer tending. Like farmers, our congregation will soon harvest the rewards of our hard work. We have been busy: we planted the seeds of change through our Cottage Meetings, our Vision statement sharing circle, and the exploration of a UCOT logo and brand. We have asked many questions: who are we, and what do we believe? How do we want to engage with each other and with our community? Now, as we gather on the threshold of autumn, we will reap the fruits of our collective effort. Fall will not be a quiet time for us; we will see what grew from the ideas we planted over the spring and summer. Some things may even surprise us. Then looking beyond September toward November, and our general meeting and board election, we can see that change is upon us; but, between now and then, we have work to do. We have a harvest to bring in, and the opportunity to embrace new beginnings.



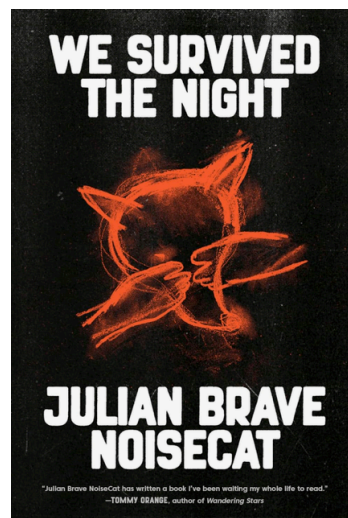
SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 Donna Collins
9 Martha Morgan
17 Linda Aubrecht
26 Ted Reid

UCOT Book Group

September 24, 10:30 a.m., SOMOS
(Fourth Thursday Monthly)

In September, we will be reading and discussing **We Survived the Night** (2025), by Julian Brave Noisecat.



Through a dazzling blend of history and mythology, memoir and reportage, NoiseCat grapples with the erasure of North America's First Peoples and the trauma that cascades across generations while illuminating the vital Indigenous cultural, environmental, and political movements shaping the future. He chronicles the historic ascent of the first Native American cabinet secretary of the United States and the first indigenous sovereign of Canada, probes the colonial origins and limits of racial ideology and Indian identity through the story of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and hauls the golden eggs of an imperiled fish out of the sea alongside the Tlingit of Sitka, Alaska.

Drawing from five years of on-the-ground reporting, **We Survived the Night** paints a profound and unforgettable portrait of contemporary Indigenous life alongside an intimate, deeply powerful reckoning between a father and a son.

Tommy Orange, author of *Wandering Stars*, finds, "With this, Julian Brave NoiseCat has written a book I've been waiting my whole life to read."

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](#).

High Road Mission Tour

Saturday, October 10 — Save the Date

Travelers along the High Road to Taos are always struck by the large adobe church in Las Trampas, sitting in quiet dignity out of all proportion to the modest village that surrounds it. What is its story, people ask, and what does it look like inside? Alas, the church is almost always locked, and so travelers pass on by.

The church is San José de Gracia, started in 1760 and completed in 1776, and yes, the folks of Las Trampas just celebrated its 250 anniversary. UCOT members and guests are invited to participate in a rare tour of San José de Gracia and two other remarkable High Road historic mission churches in Truchas and Córdoba on **Saturday, October 10**.

All three churches have recently undergone extensive conservation and restoration. San José de Gracia, the jewel in the crown, in particular has never looked more beautiful.

If interested, add to your calendar. More details in October newsletter. Julian Spalding is a contact for this.

Taos Art Museum

By Julian Spalding

I have been a docent for Taos Art Museum at Fechin House for a few years. Most recently, June 28, I offered a tour of the House, the new Gallery and the Studio for UCOT; it was attended by several members.

Janice and Roy Coffee donated their collection of 150 paintings from the early to mid-20th century, including many of the Taos Society of Artists originals, which have been on display in rotating exhibits.

After conducting numerous tours for locals and visitors over the past few years, I discovered that the lumber with which Nicolai Fechin carved his exquisite, artistically done furniture, was sugar pine lumber from southern Oregon. Synchronistically, I grew up in Ashland, Oregon, the son of family lumbermen whose business was the “Sugar Pine Lumber Company.”

Where did Fechin buy his lumber for this furniture? From a southern Oregon lumber company! He may well have purchased the lumber from my grandfather, Elmer Spalding. If so, that may account for my feeling of “ancestral” connection to the furniture in the Fechin House.

From the 5th Sunday Service Committee

Marianne Furedi

Our 5th Sunday Service in May, “Feeding Our Community,” provided attendees with a wealth of information regarding Taos’ network of food providers. Here’s a look at what Rusty Gaston, who manages the St. James Pantry, told us:

The mission of the St. James Food Pantry is to provide supplemental food to the people of Taos County who need it. All who come to the Pantry are welcome, regardless of income, race, or any other defining characteristic. This program has been in existence for more than 30 years. It started by handing out food from the janitor’s closet. Today it has almost 1,300 people registered to receive food. When SNAP benefits were cut last fall, the numbers were climbing and are now the largest ever.

The St. James Pantry distributes food through four programs:

The largest program is the weekly distribution of food on Thursdays. In April, 796 households (2,216 household members) received food.

The second largest program is the School Program. Volunteers prepare over 150 bags every Thursday. (The budget for this program, as of May 31, was \$6,000/year, but now more than \$10,000 has actually been spent.) Enos Garcia and Taos High School have asked St. James Food Pantry to continue through the summer.

Another program is the snacks provided to the Taos Youth and Family Center for after-school students—a minimum of 100 snacks per week.

“Necessity Bags,” which include not only ready-to-eat foods, but items every person needs are given to people without homes. These include lip balm, toilet paper, water, and socks and hand-warmers in winter.

The cost of food constantly rises. The St. James Food Pantry is affected by the rising prices but fortunately is able to get food from the Food Depot at highly discounted prices, and even some free items have been available.

Donations are primarily the source of funding: the yearly Empty Bowls Fundraiser has in the last two years brought in over \$30,000, and there are a few grants that provide help. All this, however, is not nearly enough.

Over 50 volunteers work in the Thursday Distribution; 12 volunteers cover the School Program; and 8 to 12 volunteers bag rice, beans and oats for distribution on Thursday.