



Horizons Journal

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix

March 2014



A Sideways Approach to Joy

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray

In a *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon by Bill Watterson, six-year-old Calvin is outside playing with his stuffed tiger Hobbes. Calvin says to Hobbes: "I'm not having enough fun. I am just having a *little* bit of fun. Each moment I should be able to say, 'I'm having the time of my life right now!' But here I am, valuable minutes disappearing forever. We've got to have more fun! C'mon!" Hobbes replies, "I didn't realize fun was so much work." Calvin explains, "Sure! When you are serious about having fun, it's not much fun at all."

I resonate with Hobbes in this cartoon. I have just enough contrarian in me to react negatively to exhortations like "Be Joyful! Be Happy!" Joy is not something I can summon on demand, and honestly, I enjoy being melancholy at times, calm and at ease

at others, and frustrated when appropriate. Besides, I don't want to have to work hard for joy, too. Imagine someone telling you, in a moment of exhaustion or frustration, "Just be joyful!" It would probably have the opposite effect.

However, joy is an intensely powerful feeling. It is a gift – and truly, I do seek to have more joy in my life. It just may be that pursuing it directly is not the best course. Take for example the ways that joy can accompany grief. It's one of the most surprising experiences – to be grieving for a loved one and be overcome with both an intense feeling of sadness and gratitude – grief and joy at once. For the grief is a reminder of how important the relationship, the love, was to you. And while Joy is our theme for March, other themes we explored this year have brought me great joy. In November, when we looked

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Don't Worry? Be Happy?

Reverend Linda Lawrence

Do the following lyrics ring a bell? "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!" Or how about: "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart...to stay!?" These are the songs of my childhood. Many children still sing them today, and why not? Like Bobby McFerrin, we urge: "Don't worry. Be happy!"

While I believe that we all have a reservoir of inner peace and joy waiting to be discovered when needed, most people realize it is unrealistic to expect ourselves or our children to be joyful non-stop. Children need to learn to recognize and name all of their feelings and, frankly, even some adults have trouble doing this. How many of us have heard or said, "Use your words!" when little Jenny or Johnny is about to hit someone or throw something in a fit of anger? How many of us have trouble

putting our own feelings into words?

Teachers and counselors often teach young or troubled students that all people have five basic feelings: Mad, Sad, Glad, and Scared. Wait a minute! Some of you just said, "That's only four!" Can you guess what the fifth one is? It is Calm. That's right. Some psychologists believe that our natural state of being is calmness. Initially at least, the other emotions we feel are a response to external circumstances.

So if our natural state of being is calm, why do we "push" joy and happiness at our kids or expect it of ourselves?

Perhaps another song from my childhood teaches a better perspective on happiness. It is called, "Joy Is Like the Rain" and was written by Sister Miriam Therese Winter in 1965. Here is an excerpt for you to consider:

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Building a New Way – 2014 Stewardship Campaign

With the coming of spring, our Annual Stewardship Campaign begins. At our Stewardship Committee meeting, we had a vibrant discussion of what could serve as a campaign theme. Many ideas were expressed, including a strong optimism about where UUCP is right now and who it can be. The encapsulation of these concepts into a single theme was difficult, until the suggestion of our theme “Building a New Way” resulted in the spontaneous outburst of song:

We are building a new way.
We are building a new way.
Feeling stronger ever day.
We are building a new way.

With this spirit of joy, vitality, and recognition of the value of UUCP’s mission in our lives, we ask all members and friends to proudly renew your commitment to this congregation through a pledge of financial support. During the time of this campaign, many physical changes to the building and grounds will be evident, such as new chairs, new carpeting, and better access to the buildings due to the very successful Mini-Capital Campaign. While the physical structure is being improved, in order for the UUCP to perform its mission, we also need to invest in the health and vitality of our staff and ministries. For this investment, we ask each member to consider significantly increasing their pledge compared to the current year. Since we do not have any big benefactors, it takes every one of us to contribute to ensure that our ministry is vibrant and strong.

With an overall 10% increase in pledges, we will be able to address several key areas. We plan to provide needed raises to appropriately compensate our talented and professional staff. In addition, we will continue to increase our payments towards Debt Service and for the first time make regular payments for a Maintenance Reserve Fund. Most importantly, we need to invest in our long-term vision.

Beginning next year, we plan to revitalize our justice ministries. In two years, we plan to hire an Intern Minister. In three years, we plan to hold the next Major Capital Campaign, to open our campus more directly to Lincoln Drive (no more hidden door) and create the space needed for our growing ministry. The planning for these initiatives must all begin next year if we are to make them real. To achieve these, we need to invest in support staff now. Specifically, we plan to provide administrative support to Rev. Susan – a strong investment, so that she has more time to focus specifically on missional and strategic priorities. All together, these improvements will provide more opportunities for us all to live out our mission:

*Our Mission: Welcoming all
in building religious community,
called to share journeys, grow in
spirit, advance justice.*

We are thankful for this loving community that makes a real difference in our lives and the lives of our children and families, as well as our neighbors and the Phoenix community. Your contributions will allow UUCP to continue to make a difference as a healthy, vibrant, justice-centered, life-affirming community. The Annual Stewardship Campaign will begin on Sunday, March 9 with a closing celebration luncheon on Sunday, April 20. Together we can – we are – Building a New Way!

A hearty thanks for your generosity from the Stewardship Committee: Smoot Carl-Mitchell, chair; Jim Allen, Diana Ashley, Carey Crabbs, Jan Kaplan, Brian Quinn, Susan Frederick-Gray and Heidi Parmenter. □



Teaching Our Kids the Joy of Sex

Anne Byrne

Director, Children's Ministries

Caught your eye with that headline, didn't I? I admit it is a bit provocative, but it is not entirely inaccurate. Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education program teaches many valuable lessons to our youth about topics that range from family relationships, health and safety, to love-making and reproduction. The most comprehensive OWL class for youth, grades 7-9, is currently underway at UUCP, and we kick off the eight-week companion program for our 5-6th graders this month. OWL is a "sex-positive" program which is a term that describes an attitude towards human sexuality that regards consensual sexual activities as fundamentally healthy and pleasurable. OWL balances this attitude with a clear value statement that it is healthier for young adolescents to postpone sexual intercourse.

OWL was developed jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries (United Church of Christ) as a faith-based, factual, affirming, and responsibility-building sexuality education program.

I recently attended training to qualify as an OWL facilitator, and I came away from the experience personally empowered and excited about this wonderful program. The values and lessons taught in OWL are a terrific embodiment of our UU principles in action. The tenants and assumptions are well articulated and include high expectations for positive self worth, sexual health, responsibility, justice and inclusivity. Assumptions include the expectation that all persons are sexual from the time they are born and that sexuality is a good part of the human experience.

Just Say Know!

One of the fundamental components of OWL is sharing factual information about our bodies, sexual health, reproduction, and contraception in a manner that empowers participants to clarify their own values and concerns while respecting other's needs. One of the exercises we did in training (from the 10-12th grade curriculum) was role-playing a situation when one individual was unwilling to use a condom during a planned sexual intercourse encounter. The activity provided practice in negotiation skills and asserting personal needs. What a powerful activity! If confronted with this situation in life, participation in OWL would have provided the knowledge, practice and confidence a young person (or person of any age!) needs to get his or her needs met.

As a society, we give youth pretty conflicting and confusing messages about sexuality. Instead of acknowledging the reality of youth's experience with changing bodies and interests, we both sexualize and moralize their experiences, which results in sexual encounters where youth are unprepared and may end up with unpleasant, unhealthy or even dangerous outcomes.

The OWL program turns this overwhelming societal approach on its head by putting youth in charge of their own bodies, values and choices. Instead of creating shame, OWL invites young people to accept and experience the totality of their being, including their sexual being. So yes, OWL does teach young people the joy of sex, but more importantly, it teaches the joy of knowing and being true to one's whole self. □

To get the full value of joy you must have someone to divide it with.

— Mark Twain

We need joy as we need air.

We need love as we need water.

We need each other as we need the earth we share.

— Maya Angelou



Can I Get a Hallelujah?!

Benjie Messer

Music Director

The word *Alleluia*, or *Hallelujah*, is an exclamation of joy, and for the last 2,500 years, composers around the globe have set it to music to express feelings of delight and elation. In the Hebrew psalms, Hallelujah means “Praise to God” – literally, “Hail Yahweh.” Early Christians adopted the word into their liturgy and chant, and with the development of the Catholic mass, the Alleluia became an important musical part of Christian services. Joyful Alleluias have been written in practically every musical style since Gregorian chant.

This month at UUCP we’re reflecting on joy, but this March is also the season of Lent in the Christian calendar, and for Roman Catholics, Lent is a time to abstain from joys. Roman Catholic churches exclude Alleluias from the mass during Lent, just as they do during funeral masses. In contrast, while Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity fast and seek to purify themselves during Lent, the season is much more joyful than in the west. In fact, so many sections of Eastern Orthodox services are replaced with Alleluias during Lent that Lenten days are sometimes called “Days with Alleluia.” I wonder if Rev. Susan’s mind was on the Eastern Orthodox calendar when she chose joy

as this month’s worship theme, but regardless, our choir has followed her lead, selecting two Alleluias for March by Unitarian Universalist composers.

On March 9, our Alleluia is by Mary Lou Prince, who is well known to us not only because she writes beautiful music for choir, but because from 2003 to 2013, she was music director at the UU Church in Amado, which is just forty miles south of Tucson. During that time, she wrote over fifty songs for choir and solo voice, and we have several of them in our library. Prince now lives in Salt Lake City and is the choir director at the South Valley UU Congregation.

The choir’s second Alleluia, on March 30, is Thomas Benjamin’s “Calypso Alleluia.” Dr. Benjamin has been leading music programs in UU congregations since 1976, and since 1989 has been the music director at the UU Congregation of Columbia in Maryland. He is a prolific composer, and we have five of his songs in our blue hymnal, *Singing the Journey*. Benjamin’s “Calypso Alleluia” sets the word Alleluia over the chords from Harry Belafonte’s “Jamaica Farewell” and percussion playing the Afro-Cuban son clave rhythm. I have no doubt that you’ll enjoy it, and I hope that the music we make together this month adds to your experiences of joy at UUCP. □

Memorial Garden



Lenore Caroline Bendheim
Jeremy E. Butler
Penelope Wells Butler
Christine Albrecht Campbell
Helen Dycus Lane
Marti Teresa McDermott
Orval Floyd McVey

Nicole Fiala Murphy
Catherine Bird Olsen
Lloyd Dewitt Oxley
Jacquard H. Rothschild
Phyllis Mills Rothschild
Terry Simmons

*friends whose ashes were interred in the Memorial Garden this month
in past years are still remembered*

Continued from "Sideways..." Rev. Susan, page 1

at Wonder, the invitation to pay more attention to the wonder and beauty of nature brought more feelings of both awe and joy into my days.

Last month, one of our Small Group Ministry facilitators shared how as she did the Loving-kindness meditation, she was filled with a powerful feeling of joy. I, too, experienced this during the practice. Although not every morning. Some mornings it captured my spirit deeply; others I struggled to keep my mind from wandering. This is typical, and normal, in any regular meditation practice. It's like the nature of joy itself. We can't hold onto it. It comes and goes. We can only do our part to make room for it.

Perhaps joy is one of those things you can't approach directly. I don't know that we can make ourselves joyful. And like the lesson from Calvin and Hobbes, if we expect to be joyful – as joyful as possible in every moment – it might not be any fun at all. At the same time, the practices of a religious life – even a liberal, hard to define, humanistic religious life, with its focus on wonder, humility, connection and loving kindness – invite more experiences of joy. So, don't take this month to reflect on Joy as an exhortation, a command: Be Joyful! Rather, welcome it as an invitation to be aware of the things in your life, in your everyday, that bring you a feeling of joy, and then try to make more room for those things in your life. □

Remember this, that very little is needed to make a happy life.

— Marcus Aurelius

In my own worst seasons I've come back from the colorless world of despair by forcing myself to look hard, for a long time, at a single glorious thing: a flame of red geranium outside my bedroom window. And then another: my daughter in a yellow dress. And another: the perfect outline of a full, dark sphere behind the crescent moon. Until I learned to be in love with my life again. Like a stroke victim retraining new parts of the brain to grasp lost skills, I have taught myself joy, over and over again.

— Barbara Kingsolver

So many conditions of happiness are available; more than enough for you to be happy right now. You don't have to run into the future in order to get more.

— Thich Nhat Hanh



Pacific Southwest District Assembly 2014

Join hundreds of UUUs at the First UU Church in San Diego for our Pacific Southwest

District Assembly on April 25-26. The keynote address will be delivered by the Rev. Meg Riley, minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship. This year Heidi Parmenter, UUCP Business Administrator, will be facilitating a workshop on *Creating Valuable Office Volunteer Staff*:

"When well organized, volunteer office staff can translate into thousands of dollars' worth of labor

and an opportunity for growing community. Join Heidi in learning how to create a meaningful office volunteer program that strengthens commitment and encourages engagement within your congregation. We will learn how to recruit for the skills you need, build a loyal and devoted team, and honor these essential volunteers."

There will also be 17 workshops on a variety of topics as well as plenty of worship and celebration. Save the dates and check the PSWD website for more information. www.pswduua.org. □

March Worship Theme: **Joy!**

Services bring our community together every Sunday at 9:30 AM and 11:15 AM

March 2: *The Importance of Laughter and Joy*

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

March 4th is Fat Tuesday – an intentional day for excess and playfulness before the Christian observance of Lent, a holy season marked by giving things up. Similar holidays of joy and merriment abound in other traditions. Joy is so important to our humanity that religious traditions have found ways to schedule it. So whether it arrives by calendar or by surprise, let's make time to remember the role of joy in our lives.

March 9: *Multigenerational Flower Communion Service*

Service Leaders: Revs. Susan Frederick-Gray and Linda Lawrence

Flower Communion is a unique Unitarian Universalist celebration. Through story, drama, and singing we will celebrate joyfully our values of respect, equal human dignity and the beauty of Spring. Each person is asked to bring one flower to the service to share. Together we will make a beautiful arrangement celebrating the beauty of creation's diversity.

March 16: *Children as Teachers of Joy*

Service Leader: Rev. Kathleen Baughman

Annie Dillard asks, "What can we make of the inexpressible joy of children?" Children are some of the most natural practitioners of joy that I know. If, as one author says, "Joy is like water flowing" that never stops, children will often be the first ones "to cup their hands, put it in their mouths and taste it." We will explore what children have to teach us about joy in the wild playground of our lives.

Kathy is UUCP's Affiliated Community Minister and a Chaplain at Mayo Clinic.

March 23: *Finding Joy in the Journey*

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

The road to joy runs right through pain. The wisest teachers remind us that joy is not to be found in denial or silencing our struggles. Indeed, the true intensity of joy is something that comes mysteriously alongside the honest reckoning with life's pain.

March 30: *How Joy Grows*

Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

Discovering sources of joy is the first step growing more joy in our own lives. One secret is that giving and sharing helps joy grow.

The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.

— e.e. cummings

UUCP Picnic

Saturday,
March 15
11:00-1:00

McCormick-
Stillman
Railroad Park,
7301 E. Indian
Bend Road,
Aste Ramada



Fun and fellowship for all ages brought to you by the Membership Committee!

Join us at Aste Ramada: north end of the park nearest the parking lot, close to the playground. Bring family and friends, a dish to share (no grilling – drinks and place settings provided), outdoor games and musical instruments. Opportunities for JOY abound!

Unicare News

Serious illness/hospitalization:

- Pete Creelman was diagnosed with chronic open angle glaucoma in December.
- Jack Morgan underwent surgery for blood clots and tumors in January.
- Loretta Isaac suffered a serious heart attack but is recovering well at home and is grateful there is no permanent damage.

Celebrations:

- Emma Farrell started a new job in February doing Alzheimer's research.
- Jon Poblador will be leaving this summer for a teaching opportunity in southern China.
- Raveev Ardra's parents visited AZ in January. First time in more than seven years!
- Smoot Carl-Mitchell celebrated one year of being cancer free in February.

For more information on significant events in the life of UUCP members / friends, sign up to be on our Unicare email list at unicare@phoenixuu.org.



Ceyshe' Napa, Unicare Coordinator

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I saw raindrops on my window.

Joy is like the rain.

*Laughter runs across my pain,
slips away and comes again.*

Joy is like the rain.

I saw clouds upon a mountain.

Joy is like a cloud -

*Sometimes silver, sometimes gray,
always sun not far away.*

Joy is like a cloud.

I saw hope in wind and thunder.

Joy is tried by storm.

Christ asleep within my boat,
whipped by wind yet still afloat.*

Joy is tried by storm.

I saw raindrops on the river.

Joy is like the rain.

*Some UUs might prefer to substitute the word *Hope*

*Bit by bit the river grows
'til all at once it overflows.
Joy is like the rain.*

These lyrics ring truer to my own experience of joy. They express the idea that joy is elusive and brief, like rain and clouds and storm. The lyrics remind me of the words of Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*: "The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain."

I do not wish you sorrow, but I know that life will inevitably bring sorrow – joy's partner – to your heart's door. I hope you will find ways to express your sorrow and make room for the joy that there is to find in your life. The gifts of religious community include listening to and caring for one another, especially during times of sorrow. We do indeed help one another make room for joy – even and especially in the face of our sorrows. □



Creating Opportunities to Connect

Linda Bellantoni

President, Board of Trustees

On behalf of the UUCP Board of Trustees, I'd like to thank you all for engaging in dialog with us and each other over the past three months through our series of Board Chat sessions.

The Board Chats have been a great success, and have provided a unique opportunity to get to know each other better, address questions big and small, hear your hopes and aspirations for our community, and just talk and share with each other. The seemingly simple act of *listening* is more powerful than almost anything else we do to build bonds that strengthen our commitment to each other and to our Mission.

As I've shared with you in past months, one of the Board's primary goals this year is to improve communication with the congregation. The Board Chats, staffing an "Activity Table" in the Johnson Room during coffee hour last fall, and holding the mid-year Congregational Meeting between services

are just a few examples of our efforts to create opportunities to connect with *you*. No *one* thing that we do will be convenient for everyone, of course, and so we will continue to try different things to create time and space for engagement. We are always open to questions and suggestions, and genuinely welcome your thoughts and feedback.

Throughout March, the Board will be available between services on Sunday during Social Time to meet and greet. Board members have new **red** lanyards to help you identify us and we'll be at a table outside, now that the weather is so nice.

Also, if you missed your chance at the Auction, there are still tickets available for our *Wine with the Board* event on Saturday, March 29th from 7:00-9:00. Tickets are \$20 and benefit UUCP. It will be a fun evening of warm camaraderie, stimulating conversation, delightful wines, and scrumptious hors d'oeuvres. We'd LOVE to see you there! □

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