The Positive Sides of Ambiguity & Paradox
Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray

All I can think of when I consider what it means to be a people of Ambiguity and Paradox is “Welcome to my world right now!” Individually, as a congregation, and in the larger Unitarian Universalist Association—we are in a time of both ambiguity and paradox.

It’s June and before the month is over, we will know the results of the UUA Presidential election. The results are expected to be finalized and announced on Saturday, June 24th at 6:15 PM Central time (4:15 PM in Arizona). At that time, we will know for sure whether I will return as the Lead Minister at UUCP, or whether I will move to Boston to be UUA President and you will be welcoming a fabulous interim minister.

In this time of uncertainty, the idea of paradox can be helpful. A paradox is when a seemingly contradictory idea, when more deeply explored, is found to be true. For example, the closer the election gets, I know that no matter the outcome there will be joy, and no matter the outcome there will be grief. These seem contradictory, and yet they are both true and understandable.

As a community, I suspect many of us hold conflicting emotions—excitement about the potential of something new, anticipation for the larger faith, grief at saying goodbye, uncertainty about what the future might hold. I am a firm believer that our lives are always more uncertain, ambiguous and informed by paradox than we like to think. Therefore, these moments when the uncertainty is so present and clear, we have opportunities to grow and develop in how we welcome and live in the Positive Sides of Ambiguity & Paradox.

Four Sides to Every Coin

Emrys Staton

Paradoxes, riddles, dilemmas, quandaries, conundrums, and my favorite, a Catch-22. In our lives, we often come upon inconsistencies or irreconcilable circumstances that challenge our intelligence and morals. Perhaps we've faced situations where there’s no good solution or choice, so we may need to make a way out of no way, or try to move through a no-win situation with grace.

Since humans like to categorize things, especially in dualistic terms (good and bad, or right and wrong), we often find that many of the circumstances we face are boiled down into two opposing points. Paradox, in particular, is a situation where two (or more) views can both be true, even if those truths seem to contradict one another, or be mutually exclusive.

In the current discussions happening in our congregation and throughout Unitarian Universalism about white supremacy, we find many people speaking about the issue in dualistic terms that tend to get us stuck. For example, someone is either racist or not. Or someone who has participated in anti-racist actions in the past is being told that they are still doing or saying something that is causing harm.

Annie Gonzalez-Miliken, a staff member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, spoke about this in a Facebook post, saying “the false dichotomy I see doing the most harm is the dichotomy of ‘good anti-racist person’ or ‘bad racist person.’ I see it in defensive comments such as ‘I can’t possibly be racist; I did a really important anti-racist thing in the
Preparing a White Supremacy Teach-In

Benjie Messer

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is the national organization which represents, coordinates and shares resources between Unitarian Universalist congregations. Three months ago, a UUA hiring committee interviewed two applicants to be the regional leadership position serving the Southern Region: Rev. Andy Burnette, the lead minister at Valley UU Congregation in Chandler, Arizona, who is white, and Christina Rivera, the director of administration and finance at Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church UU in Charlottesville, Virginia, who is Chicana. Both candidates were members of the UUA board of trustees. The committee offered the position to Burnette, and on social media a passionate discussion exploded between UUs. Many attacked the hiring decision as reflective of an institutional culture which benefits white people and excludes people of color—a culture of white supremacy—while others defended our faith as being anti-racist.

As the controversy grew, several leaders in the UUA resigned, including UUA President Peter Morales, chief operating officer Rev. Harlan Limpert, and director of Congregational Life Rev. Scott Tayler. (For more information on this hiring decision, please read: http://www.uuworld.org/articles/critics-challenge- uua-hiring-practices.)

In the wake of this controversy, the Black Lives of UU organizing collective (BLUU) began promoting a “UU White Supremacy Teach-in”—which was quickly endorsed by many UU organizations and leadership groups. They called on congregations around the country to immediately set aside an upcoming Sunday morning to hold a teach-in on racism and white supremacy. BLUU created a website where congregations could commit to holding a teach-in and find resources; as I write this, 685 congregations have signed up.

This teach-in has been a unique project for our worship planning team, which includes Rev. Susan (often joining us by phone during the last few weeks), Katie Resendiz, Emrys Staton, and myself. BLUU had asked congregations to hold teach-ins on either April 30 or May 7, but we decided to hold ours on May 14 to honor the activist roots of Mother’s Day. This also allowed Rev. Susan to be part of our teach-in, and gave us an extra week to prepare.

BLUU had recommended that we discuss the teach-in with the people of color in our community as we planned our teach-in, so we held two meetings. Katie Resendiz led these two discussions, and they were very helpful. Members encouraged us to plan a teach-in that was welcoming and not blaming, that held up a long and broad historical perspective, and that was patient, not trying to solve all our problems in a morning.

Many congregations are simply holding a worship service that focuses on our legacy of racism and calling that a “teach-in.” Our worship planning team felt that this seemed too easy. After all, BLUU had called us to disrupt “business as usual” in order to signal that our faith takes racism seriously—and we already often discuss racism during UUCP services. We were also excited to create a morning that would challenge us individually and would be inclusive to everyone. So on May 14, we started and ended together in the sanctuary, and between, there were many group activities—for both adults and children—each providing a space to think about and grapple with white supremacy in a different way. Individuals were free to participate in whichever group would be the right challenge for them on that day.

Our morning of teaching, learning, and exploring together included a quiet chapel space; an art space; a space for activists to discuss next action steps in anti-racist work; discussion groups on the role of race in our family histories and in our current relationships; a discussion of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail;” guided

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Joining General Assembly from Home & UUCP

Technology has re-shaped Unitarian Universalist Association of congregations General Assembly (GA) landscape in recent years—providing new opportunities to connect GA on-site participants with those who cannot attend in person. GA is transforming from an event at which one needs be present to experience into a hybrid meeting—incorporating off-site delegate participation, live-streaming of events, and social media to create an interactive experience for on-site and remote attendees.

The following events will be streamed live on the web for everyone. Registration is not required to view them. Local Arizona times have all been listed.

Wednesday, June 21: 5:30-7:00 PM, Welcoming Celebration & General Session I

Thursday, June 22: 6:00-6:30 AM, Morning Worship
6:45-10:15 AM, General Session II
6:00-7:30 PM, Service of the Living Tradition

Friday, June 23: 6:00-6:30 AM, Morning Worship
6:45-10:15 AM, General Session III
6:00-7:30 PM, Presidential Candidates Forum

Saturday, June 24: 6:00-6:30 AM, Morning Worship
6:45-10:15 AM, General Session IV
3:00-4:15 PM, Synergy Bridging Worship
6:30-7:30 PM, Ware Lecture

Sunday, June 25: 7:00-8:30 AM, Sunday Morning Worship
10:30 AM-1:30 PM, General Session V & Closing

Volunteers to help offer screenings at UUCP for these events are needed. Help setting up and breaking down, greeting, and running the projector and computer are needed. If you are interested in helping please contact Heidi by calling 602-840-8400 ext. 202 or emailing heidiparmenter@phoenixuu.org.

Off-site Registrants Get More GA Online: Off-site registration ($165 at www.uua.org/ga) includes: Listen to the mini-assemblies on proposed bylaw amendments and Congregational Study Action Issues. Delegates will be able to propose amendments. Participate in online chat room to build community and share ideas with other off-site registrants. Watch video of additional workshops within one day of each event. Watch all events that happen in the General Session Hall: worships, business meetings, and the Ware Lecture.
Walking Among Giants
Glen Lockwood

This is my final written update as President of UUCP’s Board of Trustees (that sigh you just heard was from Elyse, the Horizons editor). (Editor’s note: Not so, Glen!) What a phenomenal opportunity this has been. For the last four years (and really over the 20+ years that Terry and I have been members here), I have been privileged to serve with and after some great leaders. I couldn’t begin to list them all, but I will say that we all walk among giants (and their spirits) here at UUCP. From our founders to our newest members and friends, we are a congregation with deep and distinguished roots—and a promising and inspirational vision for our future.

I will lift up one specific leader that bears naming. One of the great privileges of Board service is getting to work with the Lead Minister on a regular basis. Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray is special indeed. Susan is a good mentor to seasoned Board members and staff as well as the newest visitor just being exposed to Unitarian Universalism. She is Vision-driven and she helps us all be successful. And maybe most important to me has been the fact that she does all of this from a foundation of Love. Love seems to be at the root of Susan’s approach to everything. I remember seeking out recordings of her sermons when we learned she was a candidate to be our settled minister. There were a couple of recorded sermons available, but the one that stuck with me (I still listen to it when I run across it—or need it) was entitled “Love” (or that’s the title in my mind anyway). I feel like Susan is “home” when love is at the core of a sermon—and in fact I can feel love in almost everything she does.

I have been fortunate to serve with Susan, as a member and on UUCP’s Board. I have been equally fortunate to serve with you, UUCP. Susan was drawn to this congregation for many reasons, but chief among them was the fact that this congregation had a clear vision of where we wanted to go and a plan to get there. She has certainly helped us achieve our goals and challenged us to continue to dream together—new dreams—a new Vision for our future. Our Vision. We walk among giants:

Those who founded this congregation and then sustained it through McCarthyism;
Those who donated land, built our first physical home and those that modeled civic activism for us and for our community;
Those who imagined the role that nature could play in growing our spirits—and invested in creating spaces for that to happen;
Those who have faced challenges and learned from them—for the good of UUCP;
Those who adapted a new leadership model to empower staff and congregation to carry out our ministries;
Those who led us to define and renew our shared statements of Mission and Vision;
Those that created plans to guide us into fulfilling our Vision while living our Mission;
And those that have helped us all execute those plans—achieving what would not have been achieved without having set clear, intentional and lofty goals.

We need only look at our recently completed (and wildly successful) combined campaign for Stewardship and Capital. You would have been forgiven if you assumed the members and friends of UUCP would approach this campaign cautiously—a bit hesitant in pledging support for this fundraising campaign—given that our charismatic Lead Minister is running for President of the UUA. We won’t know until the end of June whether Susan will be back as our Lead Minister (hooray!) or moving to Boston to lead the entire Association of North American UU congregations (tears and huge cheers). But we—you—are not hesitant. You are courageous and generous. You looked at what we have accom-
Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, June 4th, 11:30 AM, UUCP Sanctuary

All UUCP members are invited (and encouraged!) to attend the Annual Meeting. We will elect Board, Nominating Committee and Foundation members, approve the annual budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, and hear an update on the Capital Campaign and construction projects. The Board will also share information about a potential interim minister and update on Rev. Susan’s Presidential campaign. We will also recognize outgoing elected leaders.

plished, what we can accomplish—and maybe most importantly, you looked at your neighbors—those on your street, in your apartment complex, and those seated next to you on Sunday morning, and you said: “YES, I’m in! This is our time!”

My truth is that I feed on the work that it takes to try to keep up with UUCP, those that UUCP serves and those that serve UUCP. In my first Board service here (in the late ‘90s), the feel was different—the work was much different, but the energy I got out of serving feels similar to what I have experienced these last few years. This kind of service suits me (even though I am not always well-suited for the work). I am appreciative of those I have served with over the years and I hope that you will each evaluate the kind of service that gives you energy—and then, as you did in this most recent fundraising campaign, say “Yes!” to serving among giants. Say you’re in. Help UUCP make an impact in whatever way(s) work for you—and for us.

Throughout the years, it has been the people of this congregation that have kept Terry and I coming back. UUCP has been here for us, for our children, for our friends and for our community. UUCP has an impact. And it feels like UUCP is just getting started!

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served with all of you and I am eager to participate in whatever comes next. □
Theologically speaking, as Unitarian Universalists, we celebrate ambiguity and multiple truths. Our liberal religious perspective cautions us against insisting on our own way. And yet, we are also human, and particularly in times of anxiety or conflict, we can find ourselves rigid, dug in, less able to listen. This is especially tough, because it is often in times of tension, change or even conflict that, if we can really listen and be open to learning and changing, even better possibilities arise. And I know how tough this is, because the lessons in conflict being destructive are far more common than ones where we experienced a growth or a strengthening of relationship. Still, when we can do our best to remain open, to listen, to make room for holding perspectives different than one’s own—that is the path of expanding understanding, the path of wisdom.

As a larger faith community, we have been invited to deepen our understanding of how white supremacy culture influences our own Unitarian Universalist institutions. The definition being used in the UU White Supremacy Teach-Ins, organized by three fabulous religious educators of color, Aisha Hauser, Kenny Wiley and Christina Rivera, is “the set of institutional assumptions and practices, often operating unconsciously, that tend to benefit white people and exclude people of color.”

It is my hope that as a larger faith community, walking into very difficult conversations in order to guide profound and deep change—that we can foster a greater openness, a willingness to hear the truths we each hold, to hold room for multiple perspectives and yet through listening and a willingness to be changed by our listening, create new ways of sharing, living and practicing our faith. We indeed have work to do; and doing the internal work will prepare us for working more collaboratively and with intersectional approaches to broader justice work. It will also take courage and a willingness to embrace discomfort and sit in the space of change, of challenge, of deep soul work.

In “Brave Space,” African-American “creative extremist for love/justice doula,” Micky ScottBey Jones (who rocks by the way!) writes:

Together we will create brave space
Because there is no such thing as a “safe space”
We exist in the real world
We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.

There is paradox in these words, particularly in the line that we all carry scars and all have caused wounds. And yet, we still can create brave space to hold hard conversations, to make space for seismic shifts in our own hearts and understanding, make room to grow ever deeper into the fullness of our humanity, our common creation. We live amidst paradox and change, ambiguity and uncertainty, yet this is not an excuse not to act, nor to wait, nor to avoid challenge. It is just an invitation to keep our hearts and spirits open for the work, for greater learning, for growing wisdom and community.

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Memorial Garden
friends whose ashes were interred in our Memorial Garden this month in past years are still remembered
Audrey Hope Engelen
Shannon Lea Garvin
Daniel Raymond McNeal
Jennifer Goyette Raines
Dr. John Charles Mitchell
Unicare News

Please lift up in your thoughts those in our community who share their transitions, sorrows, celebrations and wishes—that they may find strength in your love and friendship. For more information, or to get involved, contact Vicki Myers, Unicare Coordinator, at unicare@phoenixuu.org.

Remembrances:

- Cyndi Whitmore, who was a part of UUCP for many years, died in April. She was a dedicated justice activist, helping thousands as she supported people through the asylum process. There is a fund for her 4 children: https://www.youcaring.com/tylerwhitemore-813763.
- Longtime UUCP member Faye Berger died in early April. An active member for 30 years, she was unable to participate after the onset of Alzheimer’s. She will be missed by partner Sherwin and three children.
- Keep Susan and Rich Goldsmith in your caring thoughts as they honor the lives of these loved ones:
  - Susan’s mother, Ann Nelson, died at the age of 96. She lived a long, healthy life and made a difference for people in her life and community.
  - Mary Goldsmith, sister-in-law of Susan and Rich Goldsmith, died after a long illness. She was married to Rich’s brother John, and mother to sons David and Michael.
  - Rich’s mother, Ethel Frank Goldsmith, died in May just two weeks before her 98th birthday.
- Gene Harvey mourns the passing of his father, Harper Harvey. He was a Korean war veteran and loved his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
- Sam Kirkland will miss his best friend, Kerry Turman, who passed away in April.
- Barb DeWitt says goodbye to her ex-husband, the father and grandfather of their children.
- Val Wylie honors the life of stepmother Phyllis Cox Birney, who died in May.

Healing Wishes & Transitions:

- Our healing thoughts are with Barb Cawthorne as her brother Harold Green recovers from multiple surgeries and pneumonia.
- We send our love and support to Karen Kurtz, who continues to find humor and wonder in daily life, while courageously battling ovarian cancer and raising a six-year-old.
- It is good to share that Ed Cernek had a successful procedure in May to correct atrial fibrillation. We hope his heart now only flutters for Bonnie.
- Happy Trails and Good Luck to: Marlene Tromp and James Spearman as they leave UUCP to start new positions at UC Santa Cruz. Also to Barb and John Olson as they move to North Carolina.

Milestone Celebrations:

- Christina and Sue Kinsman Barnes celebrate their progress in adopting 11-year-old Aracely.
- Vince Waldron shares the joy of son Lucas graduating from UC Berkeley with a Masters in digital journalism.

If you’re not on the Unicare e-Group list but interested in participating in a mealtrain to provide meals to members/friends when needed, contact unicare@phoenixuu.org.

Memorial Service for Lois Fisher

A memorial service for long time member, Lois Fisher, will be held at UUCP on Saturday, June 10 at 2:00 PM. Following the service the family will host a reception in celebration of Lois’s life.
Reassurance in the Face of Ambiguity

Katie Resendiz

Observing our toddler room on any Sunday, you will see a repeated cycle of anxiety and reassurance, repeat itself over and over again. It’s a tableau common to the toddler set.

“Daddy don’t leave! I want to go with you.”

Tears, tears, tears.

“It’s ok, daddy will come back and get you.”

Comforting and reassurance.

“I want daddy.” Sniffle, sniffle.

“Remember, last week you came and played and had fun with your friends and when he was all done, daddy came back.” Cooing and more reassurance.

Soon, the child is reminded of a favorite toy or a dear friend and wanders off to play. How much of this plays out and how often depends on the child, the family, and the space.

Thinking about ambiguity and paradox, this scene kept coming to mind: the unsure child, the rejection of a safe and familiar space, watching a little one make a decision so rooted in immediate emotions. It becomes a powerful image of what we know, what we don’t know, what we want, and what we think could happen. These are the moments when both fear and faith get manufactured. We decide, often unknowingly, what we will believe and from there we take our next steps, bravely out onto the playground or running back to our parents arms.

The Ladder of Inference Model (Chris Argyris) has been used by organizational psychologists to describe how individuals move from an experience or fact to an action. An individual moves through the ladder as follows:

1. Presented with a fact or experience.
2. I focus on specific pieces of that experience, those pieces become my data.
3. I apply meaning to that data based on personal and cultural values.
4. I make assumptions about forces outside of myself based on the meanings I’ve created.
5. I create conclusions that fit within the logic of my assumptions.
6. I develop beliefs validated by my conclusions.
7. I take actions based on my now strongly held beliefs.

This can be seen as a thinking process through which one proves something true to oneself. The model is often used in creating organizational loyalty, branding campaigns, and public health efforts.

I think it can also be a useful reminder to each of us individually as we enter this summer. The first day over 100 degrees can create a palpable Phoenician panic and the coming months hold quite a bit of ambiguity. Kids are leaving the routine of school days, our congregation will be watching the UUA election closely, many families are facing economic uncertainty, national and local politics are shifting and slipping every day. But, if we think through our process, we can, like in the toddler room, gently remind each other that there were times before when you came and played and had fun with your friends. It takes faith and strength to make sure we cultivate our best beliefs to inspire our best actions.

I wanted a perfect ending. Now I’ve learned, the hard way, that some poems don’t rhyme, and some stories don’t have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what’s going to happen next.

Delicious Ambiguity.

Gilda Radner
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past! clearly those who criticize me are wrong.” So then we seem to have a paradox in the making.

I’ve often found myself struggling with similar thoughts, about my own actions and in my judgement of others.

One tool that has helped me break out of dualistic thinking is an ancient Indian philosophical construct known as a tetralemma. My Zen sangha teacher in Tucson used to love to illustrate the tetralemma by lighting one candle from another. Holding up the newly lit candle, he would ask us, is this flame the same or different from the flame of the first candle? Well, in dualistic thinking, there would be two possible answers: the same or not the same. The tetralemma offers two more choices based on combinations of the first two: both the same and not the same, and neither the same nor not the same. I always felt somewhat captivated when he would get into a tetralemma discussion. And sometimes, just for fun, he would add in a fifth option: all of the above.

The concept of paradox asks us to hold space for the possibility that two conflicting truths can co-exist. The tetralemma illustrates this directly, by offering the paradox as one of four explanations available.

Looking back at the question about the false dichotomy that Annie describes, the tetralemma invites us into a deeper and broader discussion about our self-understanding in any circumstance. If I ask myself, for example, am I racist?, I could stop at yes or no, and try to defend either position. But when I add in more options, that I am both racist and not racist at the same time, or neither racist nor not racist at the same time, I can explore the ways that I’m simultaneously perpetuating racism and confronting it and struggling to understand it. I learn a lot more about myself, and I have a better understanding of the work I have to do. This brings to life the teachings of Buddhists like Thich Nhat Hahn, who asks us to look into our own hearts for the roots of war, hate, and anger.

As I create more openness to exploring the issue within myself, I find that the tetralemma helps me be more receptive to feedback from others. If someone gives me feedback saying “this thing you said or did was harmful,” I can acknowledge that yes, I can make mistakes, even cause harm, while still being a worthy person at the same time. Being able to non-defensively listen to criticism and feedback may be one of the highest goals we can strive for.

Rumi wrote, “Beyond the ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing there is a field. I’ll meet you there.” Whether the tetralemma is helpful, or you have another way to hold space for multiple truths, I think it is important to find a way to look past dualistic thinking, especially as the UU movement commits even more fully to remain engaged in the work of challenging all forms of oppression. □
What Is Chalice Lighters?

Chalice Lighters is a program created to help fund the growth of the member congregations of the Pacific Southwest. The Chalice Lighters Program is designed to provide grants to congregations for:

* Facility improvements, such as buying land, rebuilding, furnishing or enlarging facilities.
* One-time professional leadership expenses, such as the costs of hiring a Minister, Religious Educator or Music Director.

These are improvements that would significantly strengthen the scope of a congregation’s ministry.

How can I help?
The funds for these grants come from UUs like you — subscribers who pledge to pay $20 or more towards Chalice Lighter calls.

Sign up to be a Chalice Lighter today! You can sign up online. Just visit pswduua.org > About Us > Programs and Resources > Chalice Lighters. Click on the link Become a PSWD Chalice Lighter and submit the sign-up form. You’ll be added to the list of people who receive each Chalice Lighter call!

Your $20 could help a congregation hire its first minister, or build its own worship space, or renovate old, cramped, tired facilities — it might even help your own congregation!

Who is eligible for grants?
Congregations that meet these requirements:

*A member congregation of the Pacific Southwest District of the UUA
* An honor congregation that contributed to the UUA and PSWD for the previous fiscal year.
* A congregation in which 20% of the members are active Chalice Lighters. An active Chalice Lighter is someone who has contributed to at least one call in the past two years.

How does my congregation apply to receive a grant?
Blank applications can be found on the Chalice Lighters page on the PSWD website. Once you’ve finished filling it out, save or scan it into PDF format and submit it to pswd@uua.org. Your application and any supplementary materials will be sent to the board for review. One call per year can go toward justice activities. If you have a justice project in mind, we’d love to hear about it. There is no grant application period; applications are received on a rolling basis.

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Fulton at pswd@uua.org.
June Worship Theme:
Ambiguity & Paradox

*Services bring our community together at 10:30 AM*

June 4: The Possibility in Ambiguity
Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray
Uncertainty, ambiguity, multiple truths—these could all be recipes for inaction and stagnation. However, this is the last thing we need right now. How can we as a people and as individuals find clarity and momentum for action, even in the midst of uncertainty?

June 11: One Last Thing
Service Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray
In the spirit of ambiguity, Rev. Susan will share some final wisdom, which of course, may not final, nor all that wise.

June 18: Mark the Time
Service Leader: Glen Lockwood, UUCP President; Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray & others
This is the last service at UUCP before the UUA Presidential election at General Assembly in New Orleans. Together, with leadership from the Board and staff, we’ll take time to mark the big week Rev. Susan and all of us are entering. We’ll send Rev. Susan off with blessings and honor this moment in the life of the congregation.

June 25: From General Assembly
Service Leader: Benjie Messer
This weekend, UUs will gather in New Orleans for a historic General Assembly, the annual meeting of the faith. We will put our attention on them from Phoenix by watching video of the sermon given there just hours before, sharing the results of the previous night’s UUA presidential election, and enjoying the music of New Orleans.
THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE
RADICALLY INCLUSIVE
JUSTICE CENTERED

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF PHOENIX