Summer is always a time for reflection here at UUCP. As the temperature climbs higher into three figures and some of our members escape to cooler climes, those of us who remain in the valley slow the pace a bit and take time to reflect on the year ahead. And what a year it will be!

We know now that our beloved Reverend Susan has been selected to lead the Unitarian Universalist Association. What a great and well-earned honor for Susan. Those of us who have watched Susan in action know that the national association has chosen a deeply thoughtful, dynamic, and inclusive leader. The UUA is in good hands. Several years ago, the Board of Trustees set out to raise the national profile of UUCP, to make us a “flagship” congregation. Susan’s courageous and collaborative work on behalf of immigrants and undocumented people, a commitment shared by so many of our UUCP members, galvanized UUs across the nation. That work, and her election as UUA president, are convincing evidence of progress toward this strategic goal. We are all proud of Susan’s leadership, and we are proud that our UUCP community chose and nurtured such a passionate champion of human rights.

As we have shared in several congregational gatherings, the Board of Trustees feels very confident in the future of UUCP. Based upon the results of the Stewardship and Capital Campaigns, you all share our confidence and commitment. Susan has been an amazing minister and we will never truly replace her. But she is leaving our congregation in a very strong position. We have talented staff in place, exciting plans for our building and grounds, increasing member participation, and a growing commitment to the financial health of our community.

In anticipation of Susan’s leaving, the Board has been working with the UUA to locate an experienced interim minister, one who is a good fit for the culture of UUCP. Much to our delight, that process led us to Reverend Dr. Margret A. O’Neall. Margret will begin her term as interim minister on August 1 and you will see her in the pulpit late that month. Margret is a specialist in congregational transitions and she has served three UU congregations as they searched for a new permanent minister. We interviewed Margret and spoke with lay leaders and staff with whom she has worked. We concluded the interim selection process with the strong impression that Margret is a seasoned, thoughtful, compassionate, and energetic leader.

Rev. O’Neall will help our congregation absorb the loss of our beloved minister. And she will guide us through a two-year process of reflection and preparation. What does our congregation look like today? How have we changed since our last search brought Rev. Susan to us? What are our hopes and dreams? And what kind of spiritual leader do we seek as our congregation grows into the future? In all, we expect a two-year process ending with a call to our new settled minister.

The information below is largely culled from Margret’s bio page on the website of the Schenectady congregation, which she served until June 30th of this year. We look forward to welcoming her soon.

Margret is a professional interim minister, and she is credentialed both as an Accredited Interim Minister through the Unitarian Universalist Association, and a Professional Transition Specialist through the interdenominational Interim Ministry Network. She also holds a Certificate in Appreciative Inquiry through the Corporation for Positive Change.
Letting Go & Making Room
Benjie Messer

Two years ago, I read the best-selling self-help book *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. The author, Marie Kondo, encourages us to physically pick up every single object we own, one by one, proceeding through categories, and to keep only those things that make us feel good to pick up, that “spark joy.” If we pick up an object and feel anything other than pleasure—guilt, obligation, boredom, resentment, fear of losing it, etc.—she encourages us to get rid of it. She suggests that this process can change our lives, potentially making us smarter, more relaxed, happier, more effective in our work, even healthier.

Maybe that sales pitch stretches the truth a little, but it caught my attention. At the time I read it, I needed to downsize my own possessions drastically in order to move in with my girlfriend (now my wife). I was also feeling emotionally overwhelmed by my own goals and commitments. Whenever I stepped into the room that served as my home office, I was surrounded not just by to-do lists of tasks I had promised to do as part of the many jobs I was working at that time, but also by tools I hadn’t used, instruments I had once wanted to master, books I intended to read, class syllabi I was saving to study “someday,” files of to-do lists and suggestions that I hadn’t followed, records I hadn’t listened to, and more. The room literally overwhelmed me, and I never felt caught up.

So for me, “tidying up” has been an approachable way to think about my life, a shirt or a book at a time. I’ve been following this process of looking at each object one by one, and it’s not only helped me to downsize, but also given me perspective on life by gently teasing out big decisions and feelings from the clutter. Some of the work is simple, just a question of doing it. Other decisions have been surprisingly difficult and hard to focus on. The difficult decisions have usually uncovered big questions about my life that I had put off or left unresolved, and approaching these questions through physical objects has been a way to deal with them in a very concrete way.

For example, in going through my books, I found a second orchestration book (not my usual go-to, well-worn orchestration book). I had purchased this second book brand-new years before and never opened it, let alone read it. When I picked it up, it definitely didn’t “spark joy”—if I had any feeling, it was a nervous, nagging sense of self-judgement that I hadn’t read it. So by the logic of the process, I was supposed to give it away, but I couldn’t seem to do it. When I finally talked about this decision with a friend, I realized that I had purchased this book at a time when I intended to move to Los Angeles and become a film composer, a dream that I had later chosen not to follow. As I talked about whether to keep the book, I felt an unexpected sadness, which was obviously leftover from my decision to not pursue that career. After a few minutes of tears, I realized clearly that I was still pleased with my decision, and that I was ready to let go of both the book and the decision and associated feelings that it triggered.

After hundreds of concrete goodbyes like this, from clothes that no longer fit and instruments I no longer play to mementos that no longer feel like treasures, my life really is less overwhelming. I’ve found that letting go of things can be a simple, step-by-step way to come to terms with the past and to live in the present. I recommend it wholeheartedly to any of you, particularly if you look at your belongings and feel pressure, fear, exhaustion, or self-judgement. □
The Fear Behind Letting Go
Emrys Staton

At the Coming of Age end of the year retreat in June, I led a worship service with the youth, and asked each person to share something that they wanted to let go of or leave behind to mark this moment in their journey: an event, a behavior, or anything that came to mind. We went around the circle twice, and I imagine we could have kept at it for a while, as they named more and more things.

There are many teachings in the realms of religion, spirituality, and psychology that extol the merits of letting go—whether things from our past, or desires for the future. We are told that the practice of letting go creates space in us to be more open and present.

One of my favorite songs by the rock band Tool is called “The Grudge,” about letting go of grudges that we may cling to. I specifically love a line at the end, “Let the waters kiss and transmute these leaden grudges into gold,” followed by an instrumental build-up before the singer, Maynard, lets out a soul-cleansing 25-second scream, then a outro refrain of “let go” repeated over and over.

Letting go becomes complicated when we assess the value and usefulness of what we are holding onto. It often shows up in contradictory ways in religious and life teachings. Some schools of thought, especially those influenced by new age concepts, teach that holding on and focused intention can help us manifest our desires and destinies. But I’ve even seen the advice in these practices say things like “ask and let go.”

For me, it’s a deeper question than simply deciding to let go of past deeds or future dreams. It’s about understanding what is happening inside when we consider letting go. What are the various thoughts, emotions, sensations, or feelings that arise in conjunction with our attachments? This is a huge part of the discussion of privilege, where a whole range of reactions come up for me as I think about what it means to have privilege, and what it means to try and let go of it in different ways.

Discovering where I have internal resistance to the idea of letting something go is where I get the most benefit from engaging this work. Returning to the idea of holding onto a grudge, I know that I learned in my life that grudges are a sort of currency to use against someone later if necessary. But keeping a small stockpile of grudges exerts a noticeable and ongoing emotional toll on me.

But letting go of a grudge is just the surface level. What I’m actually giving up is a mirage of armor for self defense, based on a belief that I’m more vulnerable without the grudge held in my back pocket. Being vulnerable is uncomfortable and scary. Arriving at this insight, the real work begins—transmutation, as Maynard calls it—to address the sources of these fears.

So letting go of the grudge is really hard to do, because if I drill down to it, there’s actually a fear inside me that needs the grudge for protection. If I can resolve the fear, the need for the grudge goes away, and the grudge is let go on its own.

We have many indicators of deeper triggers and feelings that lead us to find our insecurities, vulnerabilities, and our fears. Asking ourselves what we are willing or not willing to let go of helps us discover and unpack the things embedded in our core selves. Counseling and therapy are very useful, especially coupled with intentional practices that shine extra light on our inner workings.

I enjoyed hearing the responses of middle school students talking about the kinds of things they want to leave behind or let go of—regrets, unhelpful habits, outgrown worldviews. It seems that we can all benefit from periodic letting go rituals, no matter our age, which is why I wanted to introduce it to our middle schoolers. We can always check in on each other, too, and ask “what do we need to let go of today?” and see what conversation that leads to. ☐
When the year ended in May at Maryland School (21st Ave & Maryland), word came that students at our partner school had the best academic growth of all the 32 schools in the Washington Elementary School District. What a way to end the year—to be proud of student successes, and celebrate the hard work of the entire staff!

The school administrators think that our partnership efforts (which include UUCP, Church of the Beatitudes, and Beatitudes Campus) have had an impact on this school community and are grateful for what we do. Because student achievement and overall school culture are still not where they need to be, because so many of their families are still struggling to survive and help their children, and because school resources and teacher salaries continue to be so limited in Arizona, we still have work to do. Please read about the opportunities to serve and think about where your interest, gifts, and energy might fit in.

**Tutoring reading or math:**
Just an hour once or twice a week with a student or small group can make a big difference over the course of a year. That relationship and extra attention means a lot. Students are also asked to practice their reading at home with a parent on a daily basis. Many students do not have that support, so a new program is beginning to have those students read with a volunteer every day. We need a whole bunch of volunteers to make that happen throughout the week, as well as some clerical help to change out books and keep progress charts up to date. One of those people could be you!

**School Supplies:**
We will again have a Back-to-School supply collection for three Sundays: July 30, August 6, and August 13. Especially needed this year are: disinfectant wipes, boxes of tissue, large bottles of hand sanitizer, spiral notebooks (70-100 pages), glue sticks, composition notebooks, markers and colored pencils.

**Gardening:**
Maryland has a lovely raised-bed garden of vegetables and flowers, as well as a small orchard. Maintaining that garden and conducting classes two mornings, twice a month gives first and fourth grade students a hands-on chance to learn about life cycles and the importance of our environment, make scientific observations, and discover new tastes and smells. Kids and gardening—a great combination—come and join us!

**Occasional Events:**
The staff plans late afternoon events during the year to engage whole families on a particular topic to encourage both education and family time. Student recognition ice cream parties are held quarterly. Supporting teachers and staff is an important focus, to build community as they work with a challenging population—notes of encouragement, helping PTA with several staff dinners at conference time, and a teacher appreciation luncheon. All of these events need volunteers, so if you can help occasionally, let us know, and we’ll be in touch about dates and tasks.

**Donations:**
Also needed are incentives for reading and math achievement: colorful erasers and pencils, small toys and trinkets. For more significant achievement: $10 gift cards for Harkins Theaters, Target, Walmart, etc. and fast food restaurants.

Contributions may be made by cash or check for the Maryland Task Force to meet these needs. Checks should be made to UUCP with “Maryland School” in the note, or cash and gift cards in an envelope also marked for the school. These may be put in the offering on Sundays or checks may be
mailed to UUCP.

Tax credit donations are a very important source of funds for field trips and after school programs. Forms may be found at the Washington Elementary District website and include Maryland School’s address: www.wesdschools.org/domain/42.

Imagine what it might look like: Maryland School as a high-achieving school, in a more racially, ethnically, socio-economically diverse neighborhood, with sufficient funds to hire high quality teachers and administrators who are motivated and can afford to remain at the school for a good number of years and to provide resources they need, and to fund better maintenance for a 60-year-old facility. Our way of managing and funding education in Arizona needs a lot of work to make it an equitable, just system. We need to continue conversations at UUCP about how we can be better advocates in this area. Would you like to be part of this effort? Please be in touch and help us plan for this.

Many thanks to the Maryland School Task Force Members, and all those who contributed in so many ways to help build this partnership and give to the Maryland School community. The resourcefulness of people in this congregation is great. Our individual gifts and talents when brought together in the spirit of respect, kindness, and justice become immense in their impact. It has been a splendid first-year effort, and we look forward to the continued unfolding. We need you, and ask that you think about where you might you fit into this partnership.

For more information, contact Cathy Kim at ckim248@yahoo.com.

Pathway to Membership

Saturday, August 12, 9:00 AM

Pathway to Membership is a class that invites you to meet with other folks considering membership and hear more from ministers, leaders, and recently joined members about what it means to be a member of our congregation. You will have the opportunity to learn about the history of Unitarian Universalism and UUCP, get to know each other in groups, and ask questions.

The class ends with an invitation to join by signing the membership book and pledging your support. There is no pressure to join. We recognize membership is a commitment and we hope people will take their time before joining.

To register:
• stop by the welcome table in the lobby to fill out the registration;
• register on the UUCP website, phoenixuu.org;
• or contact Janine Gelsinger at janinegelsinger@phoenixUU.org.
Born in White Plains, New York, Margret became a Midwesterner after high school, earning a BA in Latin American Studies and MA in Sociology at Michigan State University, an MS in Community Development at the University of Missouri, and a PhD in Sociology at the University of Michigan. Margret is quite familiar with Arizona, as her mother owned a home in Rio Rico for several years and Margret visited on multiple occasions. She seems unfazed by the heat and enjoys the desert southwest.

Margret’s entry into ministry in 2009 was the capstone to a 35-year career, bringing together many streams of her experience in complex organizations and as an independent consultant. She has done outreach and development work in communities, helped found a rape and abuse crisis program, created and directed a grant-funded not-for-profit agency, served as an administrator in a metropolitan health department and as administrative faculty in a School of Public Health. As a staff member and consultant, she has hired and supervised staff, built collaborative teams, led and facilitated participatory processes of planning and change; she has counseled and facilitated individual intentional change through movement and bodywork. She describes herself as “a manager, an educator, community activist and team-builder—and perhaps most of all, a facilitator of intentional transformation.”

Margret went directly into interim service after her ordination as a UU minister, serving as interim minister for two years at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, Florida, where the work focused on collaborative leadership, staffing and policy development. She then completed a three-year intentionally extended interim ministry at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, New York. The interim time in Buffalo focused on articulating mission, implementing policy-based governance, revitalizing covenantal relationship and increasing the practice of engaged stewardship in the congregation. Margret’s approach to the work of the interim time begins with getting to know the congregation, and asking church leaders to set goals for the ways in which they want to develop capacity in the congregation as they prepare for their next settled ministry. She then supports the congregation to help them achieve those goals in their time together.

We have much to celebrate with and because of Rev. Susan and we will do that. Rev. Susan will be here one final time on July 2nd. We hope you’ll be available to help us celebrate nine years of spectacular shared ministry.

With many thanks and much gratitude, we are ready to live into our Vision. Rev. Susan, thank you for sharing part of your journey with us. We love you and we can’t wait to support you as you lead all of us UUs to a brighter, bolder, more loving and vital future.

Memorial Garden

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

Carl Roland Ely
Mel E. Fair
Roberta Chamberlain
Howard Ewing Irvine
Lawanda Roach Mc Vey
Thomas Evan Parker
Rose Ruttkay
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:
- Valeriann Donley shares the passing of husband and best friend Rik Donley in June.

Milestone Celebrations:
- Joy! Mary Cota, our pianist, and husband Frank celebrate the birth of baby Aaron Javier Coda.
- Bill and Linda Kesler celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary in May.
- Beth Graham and Hamid Bellart are happy to announce their marriage on April 29th. They were married in Sedona.
- Amy and Steven Miskell celebrated their 5th wedding anniversary in May.
- John Moats shares his joy in being 22 years clean and sober.
- Congratulations to Richard “Duke” Plattner. In May he received two significant awards: Lawyer of the Year from the American Board of Trial Attorneys and A Lifetime Commitment to Civic Justice award from the Arizona Association for Justice. Well done, Duke!

Healing Thoughts and Transitions
- At this writing, Jane Grenard is in the hospital and we send healing wishes and hope she has a full recovery.
- Heidi Parmenter shares that she and Todd are no longer a couple, and he will be moving out in July. Life is unpredictable and full of risks. She is thankful for the good times together and for what she learned about herself and blended families.
- For all our members and friends who may be healing, coping with loss, or, supporting others through care-giving, we take a moment to lift you up in our thoughts.

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.

— LETTING GO —

Some people believe holding on and hanging in there are signs of great strength. However, there are times when it takes much more strength to know when to let go and then do it.

Ann Landers

There ain’t no way you can hold onto something that wants to go, you understand? You can only love what you got while you got it.

Kate DiCamillo

There are times in life when people must know when not to let go. Balloons are designed to teach small children this.

Terry Pratchett
Transitions: Lessons from Our Kids
Katie Resendiz

People can sometimes be a bit dramatic about changes. We resist, we fear, and if we are in the 2-5 year old category we may throw ourselves to the ground and pound our hands and feet. I’ve seen this response from shifts big and small: from getting in the car in the morning to a helium balloon flying away (inevitably to choke some unsuspecting fauna when it finally returns to earth... if my copy of 100 Things Kids Can Do to Save the Planet was right), from the death of a beloved pet or moving to a new home.

Once we find comfort it can be hard to let go.

This summer marks a number of transitions. The de rigueur of school ending, camps and summer schedules starting, preparing for new schools, and here at UUCP we’ve been thinking about the UUA election.

There are a million articles on how to help kids through transitions. I started to wonder if any of those “pro tips” could help keep us adults from throwing ourselves down to thrash on the floor.

1. Say Goodbye: Make it official, make it real, make yourself say it out loud. One of my all time favorite movies is All That Jazz. I don’t necessarily recommend you watch it, but I will say it’s an amazing reflection how to say goodbye.

2. Listen: Check in with yourself. Are you afraid? Excited? Angry? All of the above? Acknowledge what you’re feeling and how that is affecting you. Validate it, accept it as reality, and plan accordingly.

3. Ritualize: This one works so well with elementary and middle school students, I can’t leave it off this list. Even if I’m not totally sure how we learn to do this for ourselves as adults. Can we create cues and special touchstones that provide consistency when things are shifting? For me, that probably looks like jotting a journal page or flipping through my beloved planner. Or maybe... calling a friend who I don’t talk to very often; maybe I’ll designate her my “transition lifeline.”

4. Agency and decisions: Recognize your power! Figure out what things you can control and want to control. Dealing with a big transition? Focus in on your clothing choices each day. Express what you can through your wardrobe. Be aware of the places you don’t have agency, and try not to worry or blame for those spots.

And if all else fails, sing at the top of your lungs “Let it go, Let it GOOOOOOOOOOOO!”

— POSSIBILITY —

A thought, even a possibility, can shatter and transform us.
Friedrich Nietzsche

Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities.
Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning.
Gloria Steinem

If we all did the things we are really capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.
Thomas Edison

The possible’s slow fuse is lit by the Imagination.
Emily Dickinson
Summer Potluck Picnic Parties

Staying in town for the summer? Can’t wait until Community Nights resume in the fall? Want to beat the heat with your favorite UUCP friends? Save the Date for our Summer Potluck Picnic Parties!

**July 6th:** “Family Potluck with Katie and the Children’s Ministry”
Come one and all for an all-ages potluck. Let out your inner child and explore arts and crafts, games, and lots of fun! Please bring a dinner dish to share.

**August 3rd:** “Variety Hour with Benjie and the Music Ministry”
Bring your instruments, artwork, and voices for a casual talent show... no talent required! Potluck dinner before the show, bring your favorite food!

All Summer Potluck Picnic Parties are held on Thursday evenings at 6:00 PM in the Johnson Room and patio. No childcare is provided for these family-friendly events, so kids and adults can socialize together. In keeping with our green picnic theme, please consider bringing your own utensils and plates, and be prepared to wash your own dishes. See you there!

Save the Date: Fall Community Nights

Community Night resumes for the fall on Thursday, September 21st at 6:00 PM in the Johnson Room, and will continue each Thursday through November 16th.
July/August Worship Theme:
Letting Go & Possibility

Services bring our community together at 10:30 AM

July 2: Goodbye... or Welcome Back!
Service Leaders: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, UUCP Board and Staff
Depending on the results of the UUA presidential election, this service will be either a chance for us to say goodbye to Rev. Susan, or to welcome her back. Either way, we'll reflect on the nine years we've enjoyed together, and we'll throw a big party after the service!

July 9: Roots Hold Me Close
Service Leader: Sky Williams
Sky (née Celeste Allen) grew up here at UUCP. Next fall they will begin studying at Starr King School for the Ministry, a UU school for ministers. Before leaving, they want to honor this congregation and everyone who taught them about being a Unitarian Universalist.

July 16: Letting Go of Neo-Liberalism: Religious Lessons from Global Politics
Service Leader: Emrys Staton
The theology and principles of Unitarian Universalism have often mirrored overall progressive political values in America. What do big shifts in liberal politics mean for our faith?

July 23: Lessons from Sculptors and the Skin Horse
Service Leader: Kathy Baughman
Richard Rohr, contemplative Franciscan friar, says that “all great spirituality is about letting go.” We will explore the concept of “letting go,” which is a strong component of Eastern and 12-Step spiritualities. We start “letting go” at birth when we leave the womb, and it continues right up until we die when we surrender to leaving existence as we know it. Given that “letting go” is a life task that we will be asked to do again and again, this sermon will explore it as a spiritual practice, one that helps us clear away non-essential clutter so that authentic, life-affirming possibility can be realized in life.

July 30: Resolving Resentment Towards a God Not of My Understanding
Service Leader: Celso Mireles
How do we let go of resentments about our own religious histories and find our own spirituality? Celso speaks about his own spiritual journey, which leads from his Catholic roots to rebellion and judgement, and finally to a place of acceptance.
August 8: *Rhyme and Reason: UU Poetry for Our Time*
Service Leader: Emrys Staton
A lyrical service featuring poets from UUCP and beyond.

August 13: *I Can't Keep Quiet*
Service Leaders: Bonnie Cunningham, Glenda Henman and Heidi Singer
The musical trio “ReSisters” brings you stories and songs about the lives of women: the struggles and the power.

August 20: *Sanatana Dharma and the Four Yogas of Our Living Tradition*
Service Leader: Arpit Davé
Our Living Tradition is sustained by “Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.” Join Arpit Davé in a brief exploration of the Sanatana Dharma tradition, known more commonly as “Hinduism.” We will seek modern truths in the ancient practice of The Four Yogas and, just maybe, discover the Yogi living within us all.

August 27: TBA

*You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.*

*Thomas Merton*
THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE
RADICALLY INCLUSIVE
JUSTICE CENTERED

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF PHOENIX