

# Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces

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 [uuchurchlc.org/news/newsletter/](https://uuchurchlc.org/news/newsletter/)

Directions from your current location

**2000 South Solano Drive, Las Cruces, NM 88001**

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Office hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 AM until 1:00 PM, except for holidays, (575) 522-7281.

## Newsletter

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### December Light

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Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces, Vol. 71, Num. 12

Services Every Sunday of the Year

We are a transformational Force for Love and Justice in Our Community

We gather to inspire spiritual growth, care for each other and our community, seek truth, and work for justice.

Church Office Open: Monday thru Friday 10:00 – 1:00

Join us for Zoom Worship Sunday at 10 AM, See past worship services on our YouTube channel

**Deadline for Light submissions is the 25th of every month.**

## Our Minister

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### The Reverend Rod Thompson

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#### Rod's Ruminations



December – all of the holiday fervor, the longest night, the turning of the year, and a little more daylight each succeeding day; and lots and loss of celebrations – large and small. Here we go!

Stepping back for a moment – another big THANK YOU for all the help and well wishes I received while I was in the hospital, in rehab, and rested at home. I don't think I am 100% yet, but I'm getting there.

Another look back – for those of you who noticed, but were kind enough not to comment,

that I left Abner Kneeland out of the sermon on November 19th , here is what I should have shared: Abner Kneeland – who lived from 1774-1844, was a Universalist minister and extremely liberal (read atheist, when Universalists weren't, and this was way before the Humanist Movement of the 20th century). Kneeland was quoted to have said, “The Christian God is just as much a fable and fiction as that of the god Prometheus.” This was not a good thing to say in Massachusetts at that time.

He was arrested, tried, and convicted for his blasphemy. That was very embarrassing, not only to the Universalists but also the state of Massachusetts, since it was still trying to live down the Salem witch trials.

Kneeland's life turned out all right when he moved to Iowa where he was reportedly quite popular. So maybe he shouldn't be on this list at all, but we don't often include him as one of our heroes either.

This is my wish for you this holiday season, regardless of which holiday path you follow, Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, or Kwanzaa, may the lights of this season inspire and comfort you and your loved ones as we move quickly from one year into another. Be well and stay safe. Happy Holidays.

## Our President

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### Susan Hychka

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As I think about this year at UUCLC, my heart is filled with gratitude.

I give thanks for the journey we have shared this year and for the many people who dedicate their time and talents to make this community a warm and welcoming space. The Membership Committee welcomes and orients new people. Hospitality responsibilities are now shared by committees, interest groups, and covenant groups. Lots of talented people now offer classes and workshops. Our new Respectful Relations Team offers safe and non-judgmental space for individuals to address issues and repair relationships.

Sunday Services Associates continue to provide excellent programs addressing varied sources of inspiration. This year we were also fortunate to have the guidance of talented ministers Rev. Gary Kowalski, Rev. Munro Sickafoose, and Rev. Rod Thompson.

Our Music Director and the church Choir have been joined regularly by talented musical groups that add richness and variety to our gatherings. Our “Religious Education Kids” join us in the sanctuary for “Time for All Ages” before they head with our Religious Education Director and adult volunteers to their classes.

Our ministries to one another and the broader community gain strength. Immigration and Migrant Worker Services, Climate Action, Change 4 Change, our Little Free Pantry, and the list goes on. There are many ways to pursue our mission: To gather to inspire spiritual growth, care for each other and our community, seek truth, and work for justice in the world.

May you experience the light of laughter, the warmth of love, and the joy of gratitude this season and beyond.

Gratefully, Susan Hychka

## **Annual Budget Meeting – Your Participation Is Needed!**

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Our Annual Membership Business and Budget Meeting will be held in person and via Zoom on **Sunday, December 10**, following Sunday service. The meeting will begin at 11:30am, in the sanctuary and via Zoom. Sign ins will start at 11:15 AM so the quorum can be established, and the meeting can begin on time. Look for the official Notice in mid-November. At this meeting, business will include election of Trustees, presentation of a financial report, and adoption of a budget for the next fiscal year that begins on January 1, 2024.

## **Board of Trustees**

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### **Board Officers**

President: Susan Hychka

Vice President: Bill Fitzgerald

Secretary: Jeanne Gilbert

Treasurer: Jan Thompson

### **At Large**

Rabbitt Loring

Jennifer Trantham

John Seeley

Skip Shelton

Carol Stanfill

Full board minutes are sent to church members in a private emailing.

## **Religious Education**

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### **Kellie Ingram, Director of Religious Education**

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The month of December brings the warmth of family and the spirit of giving.

Family and giving, two of my favorite things... Just about nothing makes me happier than having my hubby, my mama, and all my kiddos in the same place, smiling and laughing and loving! For my family, December is full of get-togethers and traditions.

Stockings go up on Thanksgiving, we decorate the tree(s) while watching Christmas classics, we bake dozens of cookies and cupcakes (thankfully my daughter loves burnt confections, because there's always a batch!), we sip on endless cups of coco and eggnog, we put together puzzles and Legos by the fire, and we spend Christmas Eve cooking, eating, wrapping and waiting until dark to drive around and look at the beautifully decorated light-covered houses. Christmas morning is a loud, messy, loving, gift in itself! And I'm thankful for every second of it.

Religious Education has started its own tradition of giving. This December we continue to collect items aimed at supporting the Project Link Homeless Education Program. This organization aids homeless Las Cruces Public School students and their families. Requested items include items: Detergent (small bottles), food cards (for our families living in their vehicles) blankets, toddler shoes, new winter coats (teenage & youth sizes), socks, diapers, wipes, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, lotion, toothpaste, feminine products, bath towels, snacks, and small space heaters. Boxes will be set up in the sanctuary lobby and the Religious Education Building for contributions. Happy Holidays church!

## Music and Choir

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### Catherine Massey, Director of Music

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## MUSIC NOTES

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December is filled with candle lighting and music that celebrates the hope that light will return. While the holidays are not easy for everyone, there is much comfort in the beauty to be found in Unitarian Universalist worship, with opportunities to seek and celebrate the focus on light observed in many traditions. Our Soul Matters theme is “Mystery,” uniting those underlying themes.

With Rev. Rod Thompson we will light candles for Advent, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Winter Solstice, and learn how to let go of trying to make our holidays “perfect.” We will celebrate Christmas Eve twice—with a morning service, and an entirely different evening family-friendly candlelight service. Lots of singing and music for all these occasions.

This month our choir will sing a beautiful piece with words by Robert Weston, called “Out of the Stars.” I believe it uses science and nature to describe the beginning of time, the formation of Earth, and the beginning of life. It highlights the ultimate mystery we explore this month, in a way likely to be found in Unitarian Universalist worship and perhaps a few other places. Here is some of the text:

“Out of the stars in their flight, out of the dust of eternity, here have we come,  
Stardust and sunlight, mingling through time and through space.  
Out of the stars rising from rocks and the sea. Kindled by sunlight, on earth arose  
life.|Ponder this thing in your heart; ponder with awe...  
Out of the sea to the land, up from darkness to light, rising to walk and to fly,  
Out of the sea trembled life.  
This is the wonder of time; this is the marvel of space;  
Out of the stars swung the earth; life upon earth rose to love.  
Rising to see and to know; out of your heart, cry wonder;  
Sing that we live.”

I think that Clyde Tombaugh would approve! Have a beautiful December filled with love, light, and mystery.

## **Administration**

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**Cheri Coffelt, Church Administrator**

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Cheri and David with  
Jack and Fritz

## December

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The Church Office is open most weekdays from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The church office will be closed from Dec. 22- Jan. 2nd. Wishing you a very blessed Christmas and Holiday Season!

## Committees and Programs

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## Communications by Lyn Pearson

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### Text Messages From The Church

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We send a variety of text messages to everyone who receives The Light (this newsletter). You can receive texts from us if you have a smart phone capable of sending and receiving texts.

- If you are currently receiving texts and like the service, do nothing.
- If you don't wish to receive these messages, just respond STOP to one of our texts.
- You can start (or restart) texts anytime by sending a text message to UUCHURCHLC.

We are careful not to overload your text system with unnecessary messages. For example, you can visit the church calendar at any time to find dates and times for meetings and other regular church events. These are the messages we text: a weekly worship alert with the date, time, and subject of the upcoming worship, notices of critical meetings for important business or voting, messages about our annual auction that include links to donation forms and ticket and raffle purchase forms, and finally, messages on special holidays.

## Holiday Scams

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The write up below is excerpted from a recent notice sent to Amazon customers. Please

note that the church does not endorse Amazon and this article is not intended to promote purchases from the company. The message been modified to include all businesses that you might deal with, not just Amazon.

It's safe to say that these sensible precautions apply to emails, phone calls, text messages, and even direct contact at your door.

**During this time of year, we often see a surge in impersonation scams. Stay safe by learning to identify and avoid them.**

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In impersonation scams, a scammer reaches out to you pretending to be someone you trust to get sensitive information like social security numbers, bank information, or details about any online account you might have. Scammers change tactics quickly making them hard to detect.

### **Scam Trend: Email attachment scams**

Scammers send emails posing as a business you may be familiar with and sometimes include pdf attachments stating that your **account will be suspended or placed on hold**. These **attachments** prompt you to **click on a fraudulent link to “update your account.”** These links lure you to provide personal information such as **payment information or account login credentials**.

Please do not click on any links or provide your information without **authenticating the email address or verifying the link**. Remember, legitimate businesses normally include the business name in their email address; they rarely send from gmail, zianet, or personal email addresses.

### **Membership scams**

These are unexpected calls/texts/emails that refer to a **costly membership fee** or an **issue with your membership** and ask you to confirm or cancel the charge. These scammers try to convince you to **provide payment or bank account information** in order to **reinstate** a membership.

Legitimate businesses should not ask you to provide payment information for products or services over the phone. To **verify your membership status** with one of your online accounts or make payments, log into the account yourself, never provide your login information over the phone or in email.

**Here are some important tips to identify scams and keep your account and information safe:**

#### **1. Trust direct account logins, either from your computer or a mobile app.**

Always go through the mobile app or website when seeking customer service, tech support, or when looking to make changes to your account.

#### **2. Be wary of false urgency.**

Scammers may try to create a sense of urgency to persuade you to do what they're asking. Be wary any time someone tries to convince you that you must act now.

#### **3. Never pay over the phone.**

Legitimate businesses will never ask you to provide payment information, including gift

cards (or “verification cards,” as some scammers call them) for products or services over the phone.

#### **4. Verify links first.**

Review the link for misspellings or repeated characters. Legitimate businesses often have their own websites that offer access to your account profile or their own support services. In general, you shouldn't follow links offered in email. It's safer to go directly to the business website.

#### **5. Verify email senders.**

Legitimate business emails almost always contain the business name in the email address. In your web browser, hover over the display name under “From” to see full sender address. Look for misspellings or added or substituted characters.

## **CUUPS by Cassandra Calway –**

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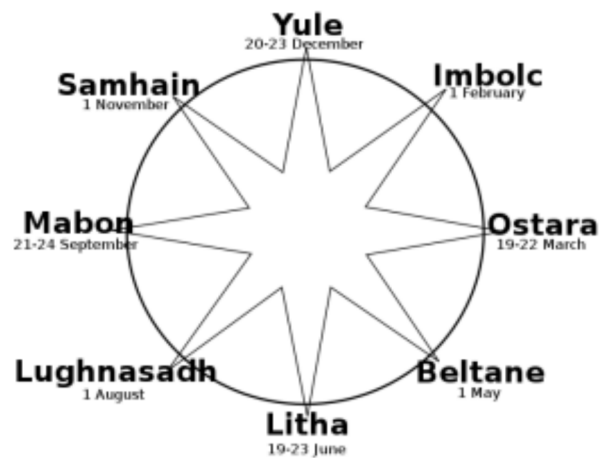
“Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.”

*The Sixth Source of Affirmation of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

Winter solstice is the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Traditionally, it is a time of both foreboding and expectancy, as the longest night leads to the return of the sun. “Solstice” in Latin means “the sun standing still.”

The Winter Solstice has become important to both humanists and pagans, who can find common ground in celebrating this occasion. Themes can include light amid darkness; the death of nature and the cycle of life; the darkness before the dawn; the miracle of every birth.

This holiday season, our Yule service will be on Thursday, December 21 at 6:30 PM in the sanctuary. In December, CUUPS will not have its regular potluck dinner, instead we'll share some holiday treats with you in the lobby. Please join us for this wonderful service and the opportunity for warm fellowship.



The **Wheel of the Year** is an annual cycle of seasonal festivals, observed by a range of modern pagans, marking the year's chief solar events (solstices and equinoxes) and the midpoints between them.

**Yule: Celebrates the winter solstice.**

Imbolc: An ancient festival welcoming the first wave of spring.

Ostara: Celebrates the spring equinox

Beltane: Celebrates May Day

Litha: Celebrates the summer solstice

Lughnasadh (Loo-nas-ah): Celebrates the beginning of the harvest season

Mabon: Celebrates the autumnal equinox

Samhain (saa-wn): Celebrates the end of harvest season

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) is an organization dedicated to networking Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists (UUs), educating people about Paganism, promoting interfaith dialogue, developing Pagan liturgies and theologies, and supporting Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalist religious professionals.

CUUPS was chartered by the Unitarian Universalist Association at the General Assembly in 1987 for purposes of enabling:

- networking among Pagan Identified UUs; providing outreach of Unitarian Universalism to the broader Pagan community continentally.
- providing educational materials on Paganism for Unitarian Universalist congregations and the general public.
- promoting Pagan – Jewish and Christian dialogue; encouraging the development of theological and liturgical materials based on earth and nature centered religious and spiritual perspectives.
- encouraging greater use of music, dance, visual arts, poetry, story, and creative ritual in Unitarian Universalist worship and celebration.

- providing support for Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalist religious professionals and ministerial students; and fostering healing relationships with our mother the Earth and all her children.

## Facilities by Charlie Scholz –

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Read about Facilities in our January newsletter.

## Finance by Katie Fitzgerald –

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As 2023 winds down, we would like to thank all those who have donated of your time, talent and treasure to the church. The budget remains in the black but, as you know, bills are relentless just like taxes! Beginning with January 2024, Ed Long will be the Chair of Finance.

The Finance Committee bids farewell with deepest appreciation to Diane Lee who is completing four years of service on this committee. Diane's business acumen and knowledge of finance have been invaluable to the board in a variety of ways. We will miss her! Thanks seem inadequate, Diane, for all you have done.

## Budget Q and A

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You are cordially invited to attend a Q and A session regarding the proposed church budget for 2024. This budget was prepared by the Finance Committee, reviewed and edited by the Board of Trustees and is awaiting your approval at the Annual Meeting on Dec. 10.

As is our custom, we will provide three different opportunities for members and friends to answer questions and seek clarity about the proposed budget prior to the annual meeting. The Board and the Finance Committee hope that you carve out some time in your schedule to attend one of these meetings so that you know what we will be asking you to approve at our annual meeting. The Board's recommended budget for 2024 was sent to Members and Friends in a special emailing.

## Q and A Session Dates, Times, and Locations

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### **Tuesday, Dec. 5 – via ZOOM at 7 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84662163490?pwd=RDd1Tjhpk0ZzVDRvWkZoSDFUNUY4Zz09>  
Meeting ID: 846 6216 3490, Passcode: 260724

### **Thursday Dec. 7 – via ZOOM at 5:30 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84662163490?pwd=RDd1Tjhpk0ZzVDRvWkZoSDFUNUY4Zz09>  
Meeting ID: 846 6216 3490, Passcode: 260724

### **Saturday Dec. 9 – in Library at 11 AM, also can be viewed through ZOOM**

## Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84662163490?pwd=RDd1TjhpK0ZzVDRvWkZoSDFUNUY4Zz09>  
Meeting ID: 846 6216 3490, Passcode: 260724

## Generous Giving by Jack Welch

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Major kudos to the more than 30 individuals who contributed to our annual Tents-2-Rents Fund in support of the Community of Hope. For those who were not present in church when Social Action chair, David Rice, made the announcement, we more than doubled our goal of \$3,000. Thanks to the generosity of our members we topped at least \$7,100. We are a generous giving congregation.

We have received several memorial gifts in memory of Darryl Decker. Those special gifts came from Jean Gilbert, Ed Gomolka, Dave and Ilene Steele, Marc and Judy Stettner, Donald Thompson, Jan Thompson, Mary Ann Larkin Thompson, Marie and Karuna Warren and Susan West.

Four of our generous members supported our Change-4-Change Fund. They are Jane Asche, Holly Goettelmann, Elwin Nunn and David Rice. This quarter's Change-4-Change recipient organization is Mesilla Valley Hospice.

Our Little Pantry Fund received donations from Cathy Carver and Susan West. Turtle Martinez made a gift to Animal Advocates and Julie Woody to our library and Nancy L. Anderson to Tents-2-Rents. We thank all of our generous donors.

## Hospitality

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Thanks to the various covenant groups and committees that take turns supplying the goodies, setting up and cleaning up for fellowship after our Sunday services. You may have noticed the plexiglass box on the serving table inviting your free will donation. Your donation helps cover the cost of tea, coffee, creamers, cups, etc. that the Hospitality Committee ensures is on hand each Sunday so we can concentrate on the goodies and each other! Thanks for your generous support. *Ed Gomolka and Bill Fitzgerald*

## Hospitality Rotation Schedule

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This schedule is now permanently located on the Members page of our website under Sunday Hospitality Rotation. A new addition to the hospitality rotation is the Caring Committee, which will be handling 5th Sundays throughout the year.

## Library by Rabbit Loring

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## Holiday Sale – books, chocolates, baked goods, and gift boxes

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The library is sponsoring a bargain book sale the **first three Sundays in December**. For only a dollar or two you can obtain a high-quality book to give as a gift to a loved one.

### Jolabokaflud!

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What in the world...? Jolabokaflud (Yo-la-boke-uh-flowed) is an Icelandic tradition roughly translated as Christmas (or Yule) book flood. Books are exchanged as gifts on Christmas eve, then everyone spends the rest of the night reading them and eating chocolates or drinking hot cocoa. The essence of the tradition lies in the joy of reading books together, fostering a love of reading and spending quality time with loved ones.

To help you with your Christmas shopping this year, come to the library where we will have a flood of wonderful books available for only \$1 to \$2. Purchase one or several for each of your loved ones to enjoy this holiday.

Books will be located on special tables in the library each Sunday in December during the social hour after service. Profits from the sale will be split between the library fund and the church's general fund.

### We've Got The Chocolates Too!

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And be sure to purchase some of Elwin's legendary chocolate truffles to go along with them. He will be in the library after the church service on **December 17**. Books and chocolate. What could be better!

- 16 of your favorite flavors (4 more than last year)
- \$4 for a package of 3
- \$20 for a bulk package of 18 (same prices as last year)

**The truffles are already made. If you need or want them sooner than December 17, e.g., to mail to family or friends, contact Elwin.**

### Need Other Goodies? We've Got Them!

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The Religious Education kids will be having a bake sale on **December 17**, in the Library.

What an opportunity to stock up for the holidays. The kids are asking for bakers, so please see Items of Interest and Requests later in this newsletter.

## **Oh, And Gift Boxes Will Also Be Available!**

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Also remember to be on the lookout for Jean Gilbert's beautiful gift boxes to wrap up your books and truffles.

## **Membership by Lyn Pearson –**

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### **Our Newest Members**

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We have two new members this month: Dale Emmert and Cindy Brace. Unfortunately, they are unable to attend church often but participate regularly in Rev. Nancy's covenant group. We are very happy they have joined our community.

### **January 2024 Circle Suppers**

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It's time to sign up to **host** a January 2024 Circle Supper (hint: doesn't have to be a supper; it can be a brunch, lunch, early supper, or a dinner. It's entirely up to the host). If you would like to host a Circle Supper in January, please **sign up** now. Signups will close Saturday, December 16, and guest signups will begin immediately after that. If you have questions about hosting or attending a Circle Supper, please contact an email. Everyone is welcome.

### **A Quiet Initiative**

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Membership has received quite a few complaints about noise in the lobby during services. We are now focusing on this issue so please be understanding if you get a gentle "Shush" if the service has started and you're in the lobby chatting with friends. Sounds carry remarkably well, not only in the lobby but all the way from the Tombaugh Gallery as well. Our greeters will also position the quiet sign in the center of the lobby during services to serve as a reminder. Please remember that announcements begin 5 minutes before the service.

### **Thanks to Our November Greeters**

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In November, our greeters were: Jane Asche, Ed Long, Tom Packard, Lisa Peterson, Linda Ruchala, John Seeley, Carol Stanfill, Sara Thomas, and Julie Woody,

We can always use more greeters and it's one of the best ways to become more familiar with our members who love to see a smiling face on Sundays. If you're interested in becoming a greeter, contact Mark Sukontarak at .

## **Social Justice –**

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### **New Mexico Environmental Rights Amendment**

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Please stop by the Social Justice Committee table before and after Sunday services, for information about the New Mexico Environmental Rights Amendment (aka NM Green Amendment) that our congregation will be voting (yea or nay) to endorse at the December 10 annual business meeting. Dave Steele will be at the table to answer your questions about this important amendment.

### **Social Justice Concert Series**

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In early November, a sanctuary-filling, enthusiastic crowd enjoyed a concert by the Karan Kasey Trio from Ireland. This performance completed a series of three concerts at our church. Earlier performances featured Ukrainian Refugee violinist Alla Sukhomlinova and a show by storyteller Micah Pearson with the Old Time Pharmaceuticals music group. These concerts were made possible by a collaboration by our Music and Social Justice Ministries and Cruces Creatives. If you enjoyed these concerts, please let David Rice know and perhaps we can do this again.

### **Change for Change**

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Through the fourth quarter of 2023, the charity receiving our Change for Change offerings is the Mesilla Valley Hospice.

### **Climate Action Group by James Caufield**

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The Climate Action Group is still collecting Green Sanctuary surveys/questionnaires. Health issues have meant the sign-up table is not available every weekend.

Our next meeting is December 6 at 7 PM via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88911933049?pwd=WkVPdTdyTitJbVpqqdHA4U3JybC9VUT09>

Earlier that same day, Maya K. Van Rossum, advocate and author of the book “The Green Amendment” will speak about trying to get a Green Amendment. (Some prefer to call it “The Environmental Rights Amendment” – rights to clean air, water, land, and a stable climate.) That is also a Zoom meeting, Dec. 6 at 4 PM—registration here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlduCvrzlpHtbE-32NAjrjaM5ZaithDaQK#/registration>

### **The Little Free Pantry**

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Clients of our LFP continue to clean it out daily! Jan Thompson’s 7-member crew restocks the pantry daily and demand is brisk. Your donations of useful items (small size, easy to



open, shelf stable foods/beverages, toiletries) and money are greatly appreciated. This is one way we serve those in our community in food stress. You can donate to this worthy cause by clicking [here](#) or on GIVE at the top of the website.

## **Sunday Services by Katie Fitzgerald– SundayServices@uuchurchlc.org**

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### **DEC 3 at 10 AM The Gift of the Dissonant Voice” Guest Speaker: Rev. Paula Maiorano**

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There are more than 10,000 different languages, yet every language has a word for the sun. Every language has a word for human affection. These are expressive of universal, human experience. Yet the words that speak of our inter-relatedness are so infrequently voiced, that the voice becomes a dissonant chord. As we prepare for the holidays of light and love, let us raise our voices and speak of the humanity which unites us.

### **DEC 10 at 10 AM Celebrate the Holidays, but Which One?**

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Led by Rev. Rod Thompson. December is the month of Holidays and we do like to celebrate holidays, but which December holiday should we celebrate? Hanukkah? Solstice? Christmas? Kwanzaa? Or all four? Join us this Sunday and we will try to decide. Lots of thoughts, ideas, and lots of music. See you in church.

### **DEC 17 at 10 AM Christmas, Bah, Humbug**

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Led by Rev. Rod Thompson. We all know that the stores have had their Christmas decorations and merchandise out since Labor Day, that radio and TV have long since starting their “holiday” programming, and that Santa arrived on Thanksgiving; so with 7 shopping days left many of us are already quoting Mr. Scrooge. Still I hope we might all find a satisfying way through the rest of the holidays. See you in church.

### **DEC 21 at 6:30 PM Yule**

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This holiday season, our Yule service will be on Thursday, December 21 at 6:30 PM in the sanctuary. After the service, CUUPS will share some holiday treats with you in the lobby. Please join us for this wonderful service and the opportunity for warm fellowship.

### **DEC 24 at 10 AM Service Why Do I Celebrate Christmas**

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Led By Rev. Rod Thompson. Yes, we will have our regular 10:00 AM Service on Christmas Eve. I am a religious humanist, so I don't believe in a lot the traditional stuff about Christmas; yet I also like Christmas and all the trappings and find any excuse to sing the carols. Also, I realize that Jesus is the reason there is a Christmas, but not the only reason for a winter holiday celebration. So join me as I try to explain why I celebrate Christmas.

## **DEC 24 at 5 PM Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Celebration**

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Led by Rev. Rod Thompson and Staff. To my mind there is no more delightful time to be with family and friends, listening to the old, familiar stories, singing familiar carols, and lighting candles than Christmas Eve; so, at 5:00 PM we will offer a Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with lots of stories and carols, ending with the traditional candle lighting and “Silent Night.” Bring your family, including your extended family if they are with you, a plate of cookies to share and join your church family and celebrate with us.

## **DEC 31 at 10 AM Lessons I Learned from Watch-Night Service Leaders**

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Leaders are Katie Fitzgerald and Charlie Scholz. This “Watch Night” service encourages reflection on the past year—both its trials and triumphs—while also anticipating what the new year will have in store.

## **Tombaugh Gallery by Lurene John –**

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### **Docents Needed**

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We’ve just concluded our show featuring Navajo rugs and jewelry. And what a thrill it was to sit in the gallery surrounded by all the history, beauty and stories that accompanied the art. You can enjoy this opportunity, too. Just sign up as a docent. Your commitment is only two hours a week when there is an exhibit. Interested, contact Cathy Cox at .

### **Call for Artists**

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The Tombaugh Gallery is inviting artists to submit up to two works of art for an exhibit based on folk singer Phil Ochs’ song, “I’m Gonna Say It Now”. The exhibit will run January 7th through January 20th, 2024.

Artists may use any medium they prefer, as long as the work relates to the Phil Ochs song. There is no submission fee, and first (\$300), second (\$200), and third (\$100) prizes will be awarded at a reception held on Friday, January 19, between 6:00 and 8:00 PM.

In addition, \$100 will be given for *People’s Choice* and a \$100 award for the artist whose work is the best interpretation of the Phil Ochs song.

Artists need to indicate their intent to participate by emailing details of their art piece(s) to no later than December 20. Lyrics of the song can be found in the lower right of the home page of Unitarian Universalist Church website and here.

Artists will be responsible for delivering their artwork to the Tombaugh Gallery on January 5th, between noon and 3:00 PM, and will be responsible for picking up their art after the exhibit ends.

The exhibit is being sponsored by A Still Small Voice (ASSV) nonprofit, the Unitarian Universalist Church and the Tombaugh Gallery.

## Requests and Items of Interest

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### REQUEST: Sign Up for Qi-Gong+Indian-Club Movement for 2024-SESSION 1

Carol Allen, the instructor, invites you to sign up for the next session of Qi-Gong+Indian-Club Movement. A gentle class that increases strength, balance and concentration. 7 students maximum per class.

Tuesdays at 1:45 pm from Jan 9 to Mar 26 (12 classes) – 2 spaces available.

Wednesdays at 12:00 pm from Jan 10 to Mar 27 (12 classes) – 1 space available.

Location in the Religious Education Building great room. The one time registration fee of \$15 all goes to the church. A free class is available in December 2023 for new potential students.

If interested please contact by email Carol Allen at .

### REQUEST: Calling all Bakers!!

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Our religious education kids need your help for their Bake Sale on Dec 17th . Please deliver any kind of your favorite baked goods, labeled “Nut Free” or Gluten Free,” if you choose to bake that way, to the church Library in the morning BEFORE the worship service at 10am.

It is critical to deliver BEFORE the service, because during the service youth will reorganize the baked goods on other plates. This will offer buyers a variety of yummy treats, not just one thing. Plates will sell for \$5 a plate and proceeds go to Project Link, a program for homeless children and their families, as identified through the Las Cruces Public Schools.

Please participate if you can, in either baking or buying, or both. Note that the Library will also have Elwin’s famous truffles for sale on Dec 17th, along with the last day of the Jolobokaflood, the huge Library book sale and Jeanne Gilbert’s gift boxes. Don’t miss it!

### REQUEST: Do You Have a Skill or Interest You Can Share?

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Adult Enrichment wants to know if you have a skill or interest to share. There are all kinds of topics others might be interested in. Here are some examples of previous Adult Enrichment Classes: Catching Up with Technology, Tai Chi, Silk Painting, QIM, Hiking, Knitting, Crocheting, Mahjong, Memoir Writing, Book Study, Mediation, Cooking, Swedish Death Cleaning, Respectful Relations, even Worm Charming! You undoubtedly have many more skills and interests to share. New folks have expressed an interest in learning and also meeting others in this context.

Now is the time for anyone with an idea to set up a class with Adult Enrichment Coordinator Sara Thomas. Just think about when, where, how often and how many. One day workshops work well for some topics. If you need help writing a course description, just ask Sara. She has a course description form to aid in this.

Final deadline for setting up your class is December 15th. The 2024 Spring Catalog will go out to the congregation in late December. Registration will be in early January and classes can begin anytime after Jan 25<sup>th</sup>. Don't miss out!

## Events of Note

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Come join the UU Crafters, December 9, 1:00, in the Religious Education Building great room. We will be making candles with Sara. At the same time a table will be set up to make Holiday ornaments. Bring ideas, supplies, and samples if you wish, but lots of things will be available. After our crafters' meeting, some of us will carpool to the Cruces Creatives Open House. All crafters are welcome. Come join this fun group of creators! Carol Stanfill and Sara Thomas can answer any questions you may have.

## The Tombaugh Gallery

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### **Tombaugh Gallery Features “A Feast for Your Senses: Texture, Color, and Spirit”**

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On December 3rd we are opening with “A Feast for Your Senses, Texture, Color and Spirit” by Kathy Baker and Vickie Morrow. They have both exhibited in the Gallery in the past as part of the Potter's Guild. This time they have expanded their work to include assemblages of found objects, textiles and baskets.

## Regularly Scheduled Activities

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### **Every Tuesday**

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**T'ai Chi**, 10-11 AM in the Religious Education Building great room.

**T'ai Chi**, 5:45-6:45 PM in the Religious Education Building great room.

**Library Hours** – 1-3 PM in the library in the Administration Building

### **Every Wednesday**

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**Caring Conversations** meets on Zoom from 9-10 AM. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87064121421?pwd=QmNhYVlrUTItK1cxRDhSRVdOU01rdz09>, Meeting ID: 870 6412 1421, Passcode: 564007

**Weight Watchers** meets at 9:30-11:30 AM in the Religious Education Building great room.

**The Bridge Group** plays bridge every Wednesday at 2 pm in the church lobby. If you want to play, contact Nancy Anderson by email, phone, or at church to let her know you would like to be on her weekly contact list.

## **Every Thursday**

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**T'ai Chi**, 10-11 AM in the Religious Education Building great room.

**T'ai Chi**, 5:45-6:45 PM in the Religious Education Building great room.

**Library Hours** – 1-3 PM in the library in the Administration Building

## **Every Friday**

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**Yoga**, 12 noon until 1 PM in the Religious Education Great Room.

**T.G.I.F. – Zoom Together.** A great way to end your week with your fellow Unitarian

Universalists. <https://us02web.zoom.us>

[/j/5755227281?pwd=OEp3RTNkcWNid0tTNHFDNHEzUFNIUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5755227281?pwd=OEp3RTNkcWNid0tTNHFDNHEzUFNIUT09)

Meeting ID: 575 522 7281

Passcode: 7777777

## **Every Sunday – Library**

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Library Hours — 11:00 to 11:30 AM.

## **Every Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct – Circle Suppers**

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Join members and friends at small, intimate dinners in the homes of our volunteer hosts. We recruit hosts and guests in December, March, June, and September for dinners held in January, April, July, and October. If you would like to learn more, please email .

## **2nd Friday – Game Night**

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Join us at 6:30 PM in the Religious Education Building Great Room. Bring a snack to share and a favorite game. Hope to see you there!

## **3rd Thursday – Death Cafe**

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Please join us the third Thursday of each month for an opportunity to sit with others and share your experiences with death and grieving. In the church Library 6:30-8:00 PM. Contact Brooks Lewis at or leave a voice message at 512-826-1472.

## **2nd Saturday – Crafty UUs**

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The UU Crafters Group meets the second Saturday of each month at 1:00 in the Religious Education building. Come join us to learn new crafts, share your projects, and have fun. All are invited, guys, gals, teens, members, non-members, new crafters, and experts. We share project ideas and always learn fun new crafts. In November we will be sharing our projects and learning something new: origami ornaments. Some supplies to bring, if you have these: origami paper, beads, thread or string.

November 11th at 1:00 p.m. Carol Stanfill and Sara Thomas. Questions? Email

## **3rd Friday – Eating Out**

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Eating Out Group will be cancelling the dinners until January, due to Covid concerns. If you have questions, please contact Janet Martinique or send email to .

## **3rd Saturday – Desert Spirit CUUPs**

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This is the Las Cruces chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans. We practice and educate others on Earth-centered spirituality. We gather monthly on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 6 PM for a potluck and either ritual or an informative class. All events are open to everyone interested in learning and/or growing in their spiritual path. Events held at the church unless otherwise noted. Visit <http://www.facebook.com/desertspiritcuups> or email .

## **2nd Saturday in Feb, May, Aug, Nov – Fine Dining Experience**

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Dinner at the J Paul Taylor Detention Facility with a group of 14-21 year-old young men. Contact Haney Pearson if you would like to participate.