

# Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces

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 [uuchurchlc.org/news/newsletter/](http://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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### January Light

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Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces, Vol. 72, Num. 1

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



#### Happy New Year!

Looking back, 2023 has been a challenging and rewarding year for me and your church. I'm glad to be here and part of it all.

To your memories, and mine, Let's commit the joys, connections and accomplishments of the year. As for anything we would just as soon forget – let's learn what we can from them, then let them go – so we can start the new year fresh – with eagerness, energy, and enthusiasm.

This is a great congregation, made up of competent, committed, loving, and caring people. Please remember that!

If I don't say that often enough, I'll say it again, right now:

This is a great congregation, made up of competent, committed, loving, and caring people.

Let's have a great year together!

## **Our President**

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### **Susan Hychka**

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Thanks to all of you for being a part of this beloved community! The energy is wonderful, and your caring and compassion warm our gatherings.

I look forward to 2024 and to activities and adventures that strengthen our bonds of friendship and serve the greater community.

May this new year bring happiness and health to you, and let's pray for peace for people everywhere.

Gratefully, Susan Hychka

## **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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#### **Thankfulness is the quickest path to joy.**

I'm starting January off Thankful for oh, so many joy's! I'll share just a few of them here with all of you.

Religious Education ended 2023 with a donation drive and bake sale. The outpouring of items, monies, homemade hats, and more is an incredible support to Project Link and Religious Education would like to thank you all! Religious Education's bake sale was such a success! So many of our wonderful members and friends took the time to bake, purchase, donate, or all three! Your contributions were appreciated more than you know. I wouldn't say that I'm ever surprised by the generosity of the congregation when it comes to religious education, I'm however reminded of the care and support religious education is given whenever we are in need. I'm also thankful for the OWL team! This group of diverse individuals is dedicated to educating and caring for our young people and their futures.

And lastly (much like always) I'm extraordinarily thankful for my family. Some of you may have heard me speak about my Papa before. This devoted patriarch of my family will turn 91 years old this year and is as Amazing as ever! After being airlifted to Las Cruces in November for a health issue, (that he successfully cleared up) he then spent 6 weeks at a local rehab, before then moving in with my family and me, just in time for the holidays! While we may have been unprepared for the wait of 24-hour care, we are beyond blessed to have the opportunity to provide this man with the love of family at this point in his life. Especially, knowing how he has spent his whole life providing for so many of us! Happy New Year church!

## Music and Choir

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### **Catherine Massey, Director of Music**

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## Music Notes

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In January I always take the time not only to look ahead at the New Year, but also to look back and see what we have just come through. Having been a Classics major for a very brief time, it helps me to think of the two-faced Roman god of beginnings and doorways: Janus, January's namesake. At the beginning of last year I had about 160 Physics students at Las Cruces High School, and I was preparing for my retirement from teaching. I got a lot done in that last semester, but mostly I took the time to savor every moment (the last pep rally, the last light color lab, etc.). On the last day in my classroom, I was finished with all my tasks and preparations for leaving it all to others. I took the last hour to look at that room, the symbol of my whole career, really, bless it for the next person, and say my goodbyes to a 29 year way of being. And then we celebrated!

The months since June have been a time of learning how to be retired, which I'm still working on. I'm freer mentally to work with our choir differently. And we've been back together long enough since COVID lock-down to grow and learn some harder new pieces to add to the repertoire. "Out of the Stars" by Jason Shelton might kill us to learn, but if it doesn't it'll make a great contribution to March's theme of Transformation. It tells the science story of creation, from the Big Bang to life emerging from water on our planet, and I think it's a nice nod to Clyde Tombaugh. (If you read my column last month, this may sound familiar. We are taking more time to learn it!)

We also are planning some pieces by Mark Miller, a fabulous Methodist composer, including "Creation of Peace." This powerful anthem is so needed now, and with familiar words from the Bible asks us to build love together:

"O come build a love, come gather together,  
Anointed by God, then create peace,  
Where justice shall flow down like the water,  
And peace...like an everflowing stream!  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Peace flows down."

Hoping for peace to flow down for all, as we step into 2024 together.

## Administration

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### Cheri Coffelt, Church Administrator

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Cheri Coffelt

## December

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The Church Office will be closed from Dec. 22- Jan. 2nd. We look forward to serving you in 2024!

## Committees and Programs

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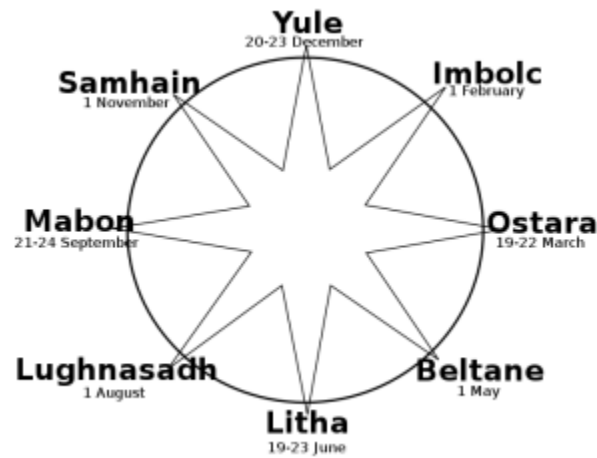
### CUUPS by Cassandra Calway –

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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*

The Desert Spirit CUUPS charter will be **12 years old in 2024**. Join us on January 20, to discuss our future and plan for the following year. We will meet at 6:00 for potluck and begin at 7:00.



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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We often use December as a time for planning what needs to be repaired, painted or replaced. Then we can begin to tackle those items right after Christmas and on into the new year.

### **On Our List**

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- **Painting:** including the new door to the Minister's office, the Foyer doors (inside) and the panel on the North side of the Sanctuary that was replaced last year.
- **Installing:** New concrete bumpers and signage for the re-paved handicapped spaces in the North parking lot.
- Also a bulletin board in Foyer and new wall racks for pamphlets.
- **Building:** Storage boxes for the Choir in back of the front wall in the Sanctuary
- **Removing:** The old shed behind the Minister's office.
- **Estimating:** Repair of the stucco on the west wall of the Gallery and replacement of leaky windows.

## **Finance by Katie Fitzgerald –**

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If you still have an outstanding balance from the auction or your pledge, please pay as soon as feasible.

Elwin Nunn's truffles were almost a sellout. Over \$1200 was made from the sale of these goodies. Thank you, Elwin!! And truffle lovers!!

**Where does the UUCLC stand financially?** Watch your email for a report soon.

## **Generous Giving by Jack Welch**

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We continue to receive memorial gifts in memory of our late member, Darryl Decker. We thank Jane Asche and Bill and Katie Fitzgerald for their thoughtful and generous gifts.

Our December Change 4 Change donations were received from Lucy Silva, Jan Thompson, and Marie and Karuna Warren. Mesilla Valley Hospice was the recipient of these donations.

We thank Cathy Carver, Jean Gilbert, Jan Thompson, and Susan West for their donations to our Little Pantry Fund.

We extend our thanks to Elwin Nunn for providing all of the ingrediencies and making the truffles for our Christmas Truffle Sale. He also served as the friendly sales manager. As Elwin announced in church, “nobody knows the truffles I’ve seen”.

Nancy L Anderson made a donation to the Tents 2 Rents Fund and Doyle and Pamela Daves made a donation to the Religious Education program in support unhoused students in our public school.

## **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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### **Will Certainly be a Happy New Year**

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The Jolabokaflud book sale in December was a marvelous success! All you wonderful readers gave the library a gift of over \$400! Half will be going to the UUCLC General Fund and half will help the library order new books. Thanks to all who bought books for themselves or to give as gifts. Thanks to all who donated books to the sale. It brought my heart joy to see so many folks in the library looking at books.

Several people came to me with ideas for book displays, for sharing book titles and reviews on topics of interest, and for starting book study groups of different sorts. In fact, Deborah and Danny Hawkins are starting a book club as an Adult Enrichment class. Look for the description coming out in the catalog soon. Keep those ideas coming! Let me know what support you need to carry out the project of your imaginings. Suggest titles for inclusion in the library. Make sure we have a section on your favorite topic.

We still have a plentiful supply of books for sale. The two book carts are full again, one in the lobby and one in the library. Overflow is being stored in the shed awaiting a sale in May,



which will coincide with the church garage sale. You will have another opportunity to bring your neighbors and friends, and all go home with beautiful books. Watch this space! See you in the library!

## **Membership by Lyn Pearson –**

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Please look for and chat with our five newest members, who signed the book in December. We are so happy that they are part of our community.

1. Christopher L. Brown
2. Sophia Brown
3. Carol Casavant
4. Eric Haney
5. Anne Kanim (Moirra Kanim's daughter)

## **Thanks to Our December Greeters**

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In December, our greeters were: Jane Asche, Cindy Backman, Jaimie Gibbard, Steve Hychka, Katie Fitzgerald, Diane Lee, Ed Long, Lisa Peterson, Linda Ruchala, Carol Stanfill, Lisa Stevens, Gayle Trantham, Jack Welch, and Susan West.

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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### **Border Servant Corps**

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The Border Servant Corp is in need of a few supplies for our immigration guests, any donations will be greatly appreciated. Needed are: blankets, feminine hygiene products – no tampons, infant formula for babies under one year old, and jackets for children 5 years old and under. There will be a collection box in the Religious Education Great Room. Any questions? Irene Schultz will be happy to try and answer.

### **Change for Change**

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#### **Please submit nominations for our next Change for Change competition**

The Social Justice Committee invites Members and Friends of UUCLC to make nominations of local organizations which will receive donations made to our Change for Change offerings for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. Four local (Las Cruces or Dona Ana County), charitable organizations will be selected.

**The deadline for submission is Friday, March 1, 2024.** Selections will be made on Sunday, March 17, 2024.

If you want to nominate one (or more) of your favorite local local charities, please contact me, David Rice [] to obtain complete details expected of a nomination. You may also direct questions about our process to me. We look forward to receiving your nominations.

## **Change for Change — Jan 1 to Mar 31, 2024**

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Casa de Peregrinos (House of Pilgrims) was selected to be the recipient of our Change for Change contributions from January 1 to March 31. C de P is our local emergency food program working to meet the needs of low income families that are experiencing food insecurity. Their mission is to end hunger while providing mobile pantries and resources that build strong, diverse, and inclusive relationships and partnerships in the community. When the government ended its pandemic stimulus program that had pulled many New Mexico children out of poverty, we have seen a steep increase in the number of families having to receive food assistance. Your contributions can help keep kids nourished and ready to learn at school. Please be generous.

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

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CAG is winding down the year.

We are glad that the congregation has voted to support the Green Amendment as an organization! Thanks to Dave Steele and Jane Asche, who led the way.

Karuna is working on starting an algae biomass to biofuels biorefinery and CO<sup>2</sup> remissions project, to be based in Upham. CAG may organize a field trip there, and maybe try to visit Spaceport too.

Social Justice has provided funds for a few climate-related books for the church Library, and we plan to display them in the lobby in the coming month.

Please note we have changed our meeting date to once per month, the 1st Wednesday, at 7 PM.

## **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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As we ring out the old year, it is timely to give a shout out to all of those who have made it possible to provide the range of Sunday Services we enjoyed at the UUCLC this year. First and foremost, our ordained ministers: Rev. Rod Thompson, Rev. Gary Kowalski, Rev. Munro Sickafoose, Rev. Nancy Anderson and Rev. Paula Mairiano (guest). Your collective insights and wisdom have nurtured our spirituality and enriched our lives.

Where would we be without the numerous lay leaders who stepped up and out this past year to lead a service that helped us all gain insights about some aspect of our community, our environment, our church or the challenge of living our faith. We say thanks to Charlie Scholz, Kevin Fitzgerald, James Caufield, the Respectful Relations Team, the Multicultural Awareness Group, Dave Steele, Jane Asche, Shirley Davis, Jan Thompson, Haney Pearson, Brooks Lewis, John Seeley, Micah Pearson, Karuna Warren, Mark Hohnstreiter, Judy Licht, Karl Kohl, Roy van der Aa, Kellie Ingram, Sandy Nielsen, and Catherine Massey.

Let's hear it for the singers and musicians who added a joyful dimension to our services each Sunday. We thank the Sacred Harp singers, Old Time Pharmaceuticals, Room to Roam, David and Nancy Carlson, Carol Blum, Cathy Cox and the inimitable UUCLC Choir.

What wonderful, diverse and engaging collection of services you have given us all year long!

**January 7**      **More Love, sermon written by Rev. Darcey Laine**, led by Mike Yaczko  
What does love mean in the context of our liberal Unitarian Universalist faith, now and historically?

**January 14**      **Where is Dr. King's Dream for Us?**, led by Rev. Rod Thompson  
As our nation celebrates the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it gives us a chance to look at his legacy and his challenge for religious liberals in this illiberal age.

**January 21**      **Liberating Love**, led by Kevin Fitzgerald  
As Unitarian Universalists, we draw from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love.

**January 28**      **Jazz as an Ecclesiastical Model**, led by Room to Roam and Rev Rod  
In the Psalms we are urged to "make a joyful noise" with singing and dance and with various musical instruments or varying types and sounds. People, too, like musical instruments, come in various sizes and types and pitches and volumes and voices. When we come together in community we join in a unique kind of Jazz.

**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 .

## Art Deliveries for January Exhibition

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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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### Reserve Now for MLK Breakfast

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The annual MLK Breakfast sponsored by the NAACP will be offered on **Monday, January 15, at 8:00 AM** in the **Las Cruces Convention Center**. The keynote speaker will be NM Attorney General, Raul Torrez. Cost is \$50. Reserve your place at a UUCLC table by contacting Jan Thompson. Checks should be made payable to DAC-NAACP. There will also be the annual MLK March and Rally on Sunday, January 14, at 2:00 PM. Meet at the Plaza de Las Cruces, 200 N. Main Street. Wear a UUCLC shirt and we'll try to meet up to walk together.

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

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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 .

## Spring Adult Enrichment is Here!

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There are several classes to choose from that are offered by our congregation members. It's a great way to meet new people, renew old friendships, or just learn new skills. You can register the first 3 Sundays of January before or after service at a table in the lobby. There will also be a registration table in library during office hours. You can even just respond to the coming email blast of class offerings with your registration. Most classes have a registration fee of \$15 to help cover church utilities although some classes are free. If your class is full or doesn't make you will be notified, and registration fee returned, or it can be donated to the church. For any questions, ask Sara Thomas. Community members are welcome too!

## Events of Note

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The UU Crafters' Group is meeting the second Saturday of each month in the Religious Education Building Great Room at 1:00 PM. We enjoyed making candles and holiday ornaments in December. There was some interest in making jewelry and other beaded items, so let's do this in January. Bring any ideas, extra beads, wrapping wire, cord, old jewelry scraps, etc. and let's create. Or just come work on any crafty thing you choose. Guests welcome, all ages, all genders, all beliefs.

See you January 13th, Saturday, at 1:00 PM. Contact Sara Thomas or Carol Stanfill for more information.

## The Tombaugh Gallery

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### Tombaugh Gallery Features

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### 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>  
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 – UU Crafters**

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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.