



The Flame

SHARING THE LIGHT THAT CONNECTS US . . .

THE SEDONA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

January, 2024

Upcoming Sunday Services

We meet in the Sanctuary of the synagogue, 100 Meadowlark Drive in Sedona on Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

1/07/24 - "Belonging to a Community"

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

1/14/24 - "Poetry as a Spiritual Practice"**

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Robin Miller

1/21/24 - "Democracy Through My Eyes"

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Robin Miller

1/28/24 - "SUUF and Me"

Speakers Ron and Suzanne Burkey and Barb Malat
with Musician, Susannah Martin

**If you have written a poem or have a favorite poem that you would like to read or have someone else read, please send it to lee.ann.klose@gmail.com by Sunday, January 7.

Birthdays:

Eleanor Cohen. Jan 9

Anthony Johnson Jan 29

Mary Flaisig Jan 29

Bill Golightly Jan 29

Minister's Message

Welcome to the Year 2024! Let us greet this year with open Arms and Hearts!

We celebrated the Winter Season of 2023 by recognizing the Holidays of Christmas, Hanukah, and Kwanzaa. We Unitarian Universalists recognize and honor these Holidays and Holy Days in a Living Tradition. A Living Tradition that calls us to be aware of changes that occur in all belief systems, changes that occur in our understanding of ourselves and of our Universe. Many people ask, "What do Unitarian Universalists believe? Author David O. Rankin offers the following:



“We believe in the freedom of religious expression. All individuals should be encouraged to develop their own personal theologies, and to present openly their religious opinions without fear of censure or reprisal.

We believe in the toleration of religious ideas. All religions, in every age and culture, possess not only intrinsic merit, but also potential value for those who have learned the art of listening.

We believe in the authority of reason and conscience. The ultimate arbiter in religion is not a church, nor a document, nor an official, but the personal choice and decision of the individual.

We believe in the never-ending search for Truth. If the mind and heart are truly free and open, the revelations that appear to the human spirit are infinitely numerous, eternally fruitful, and wondrously exciting.

We believe in the unity of experience. There is no fundamental conflict between faith and knowledge, religion, and the world, the sacred and the secular since they all have their source in the same reality.

We believe in the worth and dignity of each human being. All people on earth have an equal claim to life, liberty, and justice—and no idea, ideal, or philosophy is superior to a single human life.

We believe in the ethical application of religion. Good works are the natural product of a good faith, the evidence of an inner grace that finds completion in social and community involvement.

We believe in the motive force of love. The governing principle in human relationships is the principle of love, which always seeks the welfare of others and never seeks to hurt or destroy.

We believe in the necessity of the democratic process. Records are open to scrutiny, elections are open to members, and ideas are open to criticism—so that people might govern themselves.

We believe in the importance of a religious community. The validation of experience requires the confirmation of peers, who provide a critical platform along with a network of mutual support.” May these beliefs inspire us all to L.O.V.E., an acronym that I am offering to guide us throughout this upcoming “New Year,”

L.O.V.E, “**L**iving **O**ur **V**ision **E**veryday.

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.” Cornel West

President's Message

Doing those deeply unfashionable things—slowing down, letting your spare time expand, getting enough sleep, resting—is a radical act now, but it is essential. --Katherine May

Sometimes I need only to stand wherever I am to be blessed. --Mary Oliver.

YES! I feel in sync with May and Oliver at this time. This month's message is simply to wish you a **HAPPY NEW YEAR** and to say that I feel greatly blessed standing with you, standing with SUUF.

Tanya Mayer



SUUF Connections

Soul Matters Sharing Circles *A NEW SUUF CONNECTION!*



Our facilitators, Rev Anthony, Lydia Johnson, Linda Brefeld, and Suzanne Burkey are excited to welcome you into their homes in February as we introduce to our SUUF Fellowship “Soul Matters Sharing Circles.”

Soul Matters groups mends the threads of spiritual connection. We do this work by listening deeply and intentionally. We listen to each other we listen to our lives and we listen to our deepest self. Together, these three practices add up to a more intentional and authentic life. It's a journey back to connection, and ultimately a journey home.

We will gather for our first sessions...

Village of Oak Creek, Women only - Wednesday 2/14/24 @ 5:00 pm - 7:00pm

West Sedona, Co-ed - Thursday 2/15/24 @ 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Cornville, Co-ed - Wednesday 2/28/24 @ 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

We will provide more information and answer any questions that you may have every Sunday in January after services.

We hope you will enjoy this wonderfully warm and meaningful way to become closer to a group of friends, to yourself and to your SUUF community.

Blessings,

Lydia Munoz Johnson

Lydiadelaluz@aol.com

(805) 895-9319

Social Justice 3rd Friday Film features the Netflix documentary, "End Game," in which visionary medical practitioners work on the cutting edge of life and death. With 100% positive critic reviews on Rotten Tomatoes, one critic wrote, “...stunning cinematography, and delicate and smart handling of nearly impossible subject matter, End Game manages to transcend its genre peers and deliver something truly special and unique.” Watch at home, then join the discussion Friday, January 19, at 10:30 at 30 Bronco Dr. or email president@sedonauu.org and Zoom will be set up for you at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526141760>. (*End Game is 2 separate words...to be sure you get the right film!!*)

Evolving Elders, a discussion group where friends share feelings and ideas, laugh together, and grow closer. Join us! Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month at 10:30, at 30 Bronco Drive. Or join on Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526141760>.

January 12: Topic: Your Gifts and Talents

A gift is a natural ability that comes easily to you, almost effortlessly. On the other hand, a talent is a skill that you've developed over time through practice and effort, although you have been born with certain innate abilities that you honed over time. Both are invaluable!

So, what are your gifts and talents? When were you first aware of certain gifts? Do you still have ways of using them? What skills have you worked to develop? Were they connected to your gifts?

Interested in a comprehensive list of gifts and talents? Google "50+ Examples of Gifts and Talents."

January 26: Topic: From your Ancestry to You All of us come from an ethnic and cultural background, and each person's background is unique. We each were shaped by the people in our lineage, those we knew in our youth and the people who came before them. There's much diversity present among us and similarities as well.

How has your life been influenced by how you were raised? The "people" you come from? The generations before them? The social milieu in which you grew up? The norms and lifestyle you were immersed in before you learned about the larger world? How did your "roots" affect your life? What attitudes, beliefs, and habits do you still carry within you? How have they helped or hindered you? How have you transcended them? What brought about those changes? What have you gained and lost from those changes?

SUUF Book Group Social Justice for the Sensitive Soul: How to Change the World in Quiet



Ways by Dorcas Cheng-Tozun is the January-February Book Selection. Meetings will be held at 30 Bronco Dr, at 10:30. **Or on Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526141760> Sign up on Sundays or contact president@sedonauu.com.

Jan 8 Part I: The Sensitive Soul

Jan 22 Part II Considerations and Questions

Feb 12 Part III: pp. 117-156

Feb 26 Part III pp. 157-203

From the Introduction: Being a sensitive soul in social justice work requires, to a large extent, the courage to be countercultural. It requires a deep self-awareness of what you can and cannot do. It requires focus and limits. It requires a careful consideration of people, situations, and environments. It requires an understanding that you cannot change all things or be all things to all people—but you can certainly make a meaningful difference.

SUUF Connections plus *Food*

Men's Breakfast

The monthly SUUF men's breakfast is held on the **second Wednesday** each month (Jan. 10), at 8:30 AM, at the Sedona Golf Resort in the VOC. Please RSVP to Ben Shor at benshor7@gmail.com or 928-451-4370.



Women's Lunch

The women's January lunch will be on Wednesday the 24th. Further information to follow with email invite. It'll be a good time to get together and share your holiday adventures!

A New Member Orientation and Brunch - From the Welcoming/Membership Team

Have you been enjoying SUUF and wondering about becoming a member? Yes?

Terrific! You are invited to a **New Members' Orientation and Brunch January 13, from 9-12**, at Paul and Tanya's home at 30 Bronco Drive. We'll get acquainted with one another, Rev. Anthony and Tanya will orient you to Unitarian Universalism and to SUUF in particular, after which we'll enjoy brunch. This is always a fun and casual community morning. Please let Rev. Anthony or Tanya know if you're interested in attending. The following Saturday, January 20, we'll meet on Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526141760>) at 1:00 for further information and conversation.

After orientation, if you decide that you'd like to become a SUUF member, you're invited to be a part of a **membership ceremony** during the service on **Sunday, January 21**, and to sign the membership book. If you'd like to remain a SUUF friend rather than a member, we honor and appreciate that choice as well.

February
17 SUUF Auction
and Mardi Gras
Party at the HUB



March
16 Friendly Feasts

April
20 Friendly Feasts
21 "SUUF's Got Talent"

SUUF Recycling to create a more sustainable world

In this column you can 1) **Trade** items, like jigsaw puzzles, books, tools... 2) **Sell** items *with all money going to SUUF*. You name the price. 3) **Give Away** items in really good condition. Be sure to provide a good description of each item.



This office chair is like new, but it's just too big for my comfort! \$50 for SUUF and it's yours. Call Tanya at 928-862-8222 or veryblessed1@gmail.com

Do you have something to SELL FOR SUUF? Take a picture and email it with a description to our editor at livelihood@msn.com.

Events



How can you help make our Mardi Gras Auction successful?

SUUF's annual fundraiser auction is coming soon—February 17th! We'll auction, swing to a N'Orleans-inspired concert with Susannah's dynamic duo, Flor de Bee, eat great food, and visit and laugh with fun folks—all in a Mardi Gras-inspired setting **at the HUB, from 5:00-8:30.**

Create or solicit a donation for the auction!

Five auction categories await your consideration:

1. Would you be willing to hold an event or meal in your home? Here are suggestions for those fun, community-building options...and use *your* imagination:

- A Breakfast Brunch • Game Party
- Themed Dinner • Drum Lesson (or other instrument)
- Hike and Hot Chocolate • Cooking Class
- Painting or Drawing Lesson or 2 • Cookie-making Session



2. How about providing a service using your talent or experience?

- Excel Instructions • Home Fix-it Help
- Computer Help • Gardening help or advice
- Excursions-museum, botanical • A Group Hike garden etc. • Photography Excursion or Lesson
- Voice lesson



3. Might you create a Themed Baskets of Goodies?

- Chocolate Delights • Dog or Cat Lovers
- Spa items • Gardening
- Wines • Baking Recipes and Ingredients
- Teas or Coffees • Other ideas ?



4. Is there something of significant value that you might offer for the live auction?

- A stay in your vacation cabin • Airline or Amazon points
- Timeshare vacation • Two of your season's tickets to a
- Balloon Ride concert or a play • Ski Trip • A weekend on your boat



5. Might you ask a local merchant to contribute a gift certificate? Check the board in the SUUF lobby for those not yet solicited for donation. Jeep tour and helicopter ride businesses have been past donors, as well as restaurants yet to be contacted. Whom might you contact?



NOW for the NEXT STEP!

Email Elizabeth at elizabethherrell@gmail.com describing your auction offering.

Thank you! Good Job!

Food Requests for the Auction:

Considering the Mardi Gras theme, we've started discussing the menu for this exciting event, to include traditional favorites for appetizers, entrees, side dishes and desserts. As always, we strive to include vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free alternatives for each category, and are open to suggestions to provide a variety of options. We are looking for a crew of volunteers to prepare one or more dishes and/or serve as kitchen staff on the day of the event (for set-up, serving, and clean-up efforts). Pat Kopitke has agreed to chair and coordinate the team's effort, which will require the participation of at least a few others, including someone to serve as co-chair. If you are interested and willing to join our crew, please send an email message to Pat at admin@sedonauu.org (or call/text to 928-963-1399) by Sunday, January 7 to let her know how you would like to be involved. Thanks for everything that you can do to help make this another successful event!

SUUF and Me with interviews of Pat Langan and Brad Kincaid



Hi, my name is Pat Langan and I've been asked to introduce myself. My husband, George Peck and I had been coming to Sedona for many years to visit good friends. We got hooked by the beautiful landscape and being able to hike right in it. The visits got longer and longer until we'd thought we should buy a house and not wear out our welcome. So we did in 2020! We are still part timers from November to May and spend the rest of the year in upstate New York.

I grew up in New York City but kept creeping farther up the state, and finally settled near Cooperstown. I worked as an elementary teacher in a small rural K-12 school for 35 years. This was a surprising career having attended much bigger schools, but rewarding. There was a long association with the students, and I could watch them develop into young adults, even beyond my classroom.

I was raised as a Catholic and attended parochial school until college, but since early high school, the dogma and practices appeared irrelevant and hypocritical. Organized religions have been at the root of many conflicts in history, all claiming to be the WAY. What drew me to SUUF was first, Piya Jacob. With other friends, we began a Sunday ritual. I loved the music, the feeling of a welcoming community and the uplifting words of Reverend Anthony. I have come to realize this fellowship is a group of active, reflective, people interested in doing good in the world and being good, kind people OF the world. Just the kind of people you want to be around.



Name: William Bradley Kincaid aka Brad Kincaid

I suspect that a cowboy singer named William Bradley Kincaid, who had a radio show near where my parents grew up, played some part in my name.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in a farming community near Kirksville, MO. When I was two years old, my parents homesteaded a farm in the Columbia Basin of eastern Washington. After that did not work out, we moved around and eventually settled in Moses Lake, WA where I graduated from HS in 1969. Even though I only lived in Moses Lake for about four years, I consider it my hometown. With my first wife, I went to Bellingham, WA for a bachelor's degree from the Huxley College of Environmental Studies at Western

Washington University. In 1973, we moved to Houston, TX, where I earned MS and PhD degrees in evolutionary ecology.

What was/is your career?

I have always worked in academia and education. In 1982, I was hired as a postdoctoral researcher in applied dendrochronology at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. I was engaged as a research associate for a few years and later found my passion in science education. I spent 24 years studying alternative teaching methods and faculty development at ASU and Mesa Community College.

When did you come to the Verde Valley and why?

In 1986, I met the love of my life Piya Jacob. Our favorite get-away was in Sedona, where we decided to buy a second home in 1992. In 2013, we sold our Tempe home and moved permanently to Sedona.

Are you involved with any volunteer activities you'd like to share?

I joined the Sedona Camera Club upon arrival in Sedona and have been a member of the board for many years. I have occasionally been a server for lunch at the Sedona Community Center. I also have been a canvasser with the Democrats of the Red Rocks.

What are you passionate about?

I love exploring nature and trying to capture the essence of special places in my photography. I am appalled by the fact that we as a single species have destroyed so much of the natural earth and are responsible for the mass extinction known as the Anthropocene epoch. After teaching ecology for decades, I am saddened that we have done so little to save our planet.

What is your religious background?

In Missouri, my family were all southern baptists, so that was my early experience with religion. For some reason, my parents moved away from church after our move to the northwest. Given the SBC history of racism and slavery, I am glad my parents left the church. My encounters with religion have left me disillusioned with all religions.

What brought you to SUUF?

My wife Piya brought me to SUUF. I believe that humans evolved to live in communities and cooperate. We have created a wonderful community of friends since we have been in Sedona. I hope that SUUF will help us expand our community.

How does SUUF fit into your spiritual journey? I do not feel that I am on spiritual journey. As an atheist and a secular humanist, I hope that SUUF will help me expand and diversify my community without too much religion.

Board, Team, and Committee Reports

Board Meeting Recap

Friday, December 15, 2023, 1:00, regular meeting, via ZOOM.

Tanya: presiding officer. Present: Anthony, Tanya, Gary, Lee, Helen, and Liz. Barb was not present. Anthony lit the candle. Tanya called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM after check-in by attendees: A quorum was met. November minutes approved.

Minister's Report – Anthony provided the monthly highlights of activities, including on-going pastoral calls and meetings with various SUUF teams.

President's Report – Tanya provided the monthly highlights of activities, noting the “New to SUUF” gathering for Dec. 17th.

Treasurer's Report – Gary provided an overview of the November Financial Statements for the Board to review and discuss.

Auction Update – Elizabeth noted that planning is on-going and will gear up announcements at service.

Unfinished Business – Discussion topics: Security Plan for JCSVV, Holiday Party Evaluation, Plan for Audio Recordings of Sunday Services, and Creation of SUUF Google Drive Site.

New Business – Board reviewed and discussed the following Policies individually: 1) Celebration of Life. Motion was made to approve policy as written, seconded, all in favor.

2) Board Minutes. Motion was made to approve policy as written, seconded, all in favor.

3) Conflict Resolution Guidelines. More discussion needed.

4) Finance Procedures. Motion was made to approve policy as written, seconded, all in favor.

5) Records Retention Policy. Motion was made to approve policy as written, seconded, all in favor.

6) Gift Policy. Motion was made to approve policy as written, seconded, all in favor.

Additional review and discussion on proposed addition to Statement of Agreement between Board & Anthony. Motion was made to approve statement as read and seconded, all in favor. With Anthony absent for this discussion, Board Members moved, seconded, and approved holiday bonuses for Anthony and Susannah, all in favor.

Closing –Meeting adjourned at 2:51 PM.

Next Board Meeting: Friday, January 19th at 1:00 PM via ZOOM.

Submitted by Lee Klose, Secretary

Covid Team

Recommendations remain the same - optional mask-wearing and avoiding groups when having symptoms.

Hospitality Team - NEW

A new and exciting team has been birthed by an enthusiastic midwife, Piya Jacob! Pat Kopitke has lovingly spearheaded our Sunday Socials on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, for many moons, and we're most grateful to her. With her help, Piya and her new group of volunteers will offer the opportunity to enjoy fellowship over a cup of coffee regularly beginning in January. Thanks to all who will make coffee, set up and clean up...*and a special thanks to all of you who ask our newcomers to join you for a cup of coffee. We want everyone to feel welcome, to be seen and to become known at SUUF. We ARE a welcoming congregation!*

Community Outreach Committee

We will be doing another Thursday morning volunteer event at Manzanita Outreach in Cottonwood in February and will announce the date as soon as I have confirmation from Manzanita Outreach. Sign-up will be in the lobby before and after service from mid-January.

We are also exploring the possibility of 4 volunteers (must be able to stand for 2 hours and lift crates of food) helping at one of the Saturday food Sharing events in February or March. More on this will be announced in services in January.

The Outreach team wishes you a very happy and safe 2024,

---The Outreach Committee: Cora Shor, Penny DeJarnette, Jan Oswald

Environmental Justice embraces our 7th Principle: *“Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”* Interested in those affected by environmental inequities? A Verde Valley Environmental Justice group led by Lisa Voss meets on Zoom monthly, the 2nd Monday from 10 to 11 am. They're currently discussing with our local Yavapai-Apache tribal members needs and hopes for the future. [zoom link here](#)



Interested in what is happening in Arizona on the climate front? Hazel Chandler's group, Arizona Climate Action Coalition, meets every Friday on Zoom at 3 PM (starting again in January). In registering for the group, you will get an attachment with agenda items informing you of what's happening in our state to combat climate change. Hazel is also an organizer for Mom's Clean Air Force, Elders Climate Action, and an indefatigable advocate for clean air. To sign up for your own Zoom link. [Register Here](#)

Recently in the news a proposal called solar geoengineering talked of injecting aerosols like sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere to act much like an umbrella to reflect sunlight back into space. CNN: And don't forget about our own UU.org group at uumfe.org.

May 2024 be a Year full of Love, Peace, Joy and Hope for the future of our planet and all its inhabitants!

-- Earth Advocates: Sarah Anne Fread, Eleanor Cohen, Tom & Deidre Roen, Chris Seeholzer

Finance Team

The Finance Team met on December 2, 2023. Present were Ben Shor, Gini Kyle, Gary Stewart, and Tanya Mayer. The items below were discussed.

- Creating and fine-tuning written Finance Procedures and Gift Acceptance and Records Retention policies
- Reviewing the Income and Expense Budget vs. Actual report for July - Oct 2023. We are close to the budget in most accounts, some areas being a bit over and some under budget. Many thanks for your pledges and keep up the good work as they allow us to meet higher expenses and to equitably compensate Anthony and Susannah.
- Year-end bonuses for Anthony and Susannah, which recommendations will be conveyed to the Board of Trustees at their upcoming meeting.
- Processing credit cards for the holiday party and beyond.
Please direct questions on our finances to Gary Stewart.
Submitted by Gini Kyle, Finance Team Member

Welcoming Congregation News



Please join us at our upcoming PFLAG Sedona/Verde Valley Support Meeting on **Tuesday, January 9, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.** live at the Sedona Public Library (3250 White Bear Road, Sedona) at the Sedona Public Library (3250 White Bear Road, Sedona) and on Zoom. The Zoom link is noted below.

Our speaker will be Nate Meyers, Executive Director, Sedona Historical Society and Sedona Heritage Museum.

After the presentation, we will have our usual support group at 7:30 PM. As always, you may attend the first hour, second hour, or both.

Hope to see you at the meeting!

Carolyn Martin, Secretary
PFLAG Sedona/Verde Valley

Both the presentation at 6:30 and the support meeting at 7:30 will use the following zoom links:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92237972093?pwd=TzJuVzFsck1xQk5vcjcyWDYzMWRzZz09>

Meeting ID: 922 3797 2093

Passcode: AZPFLAG

One tap mobile +13462487799,,92237972093#,,,,,0#,,3720249# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,92237972093#,,,,,0#,,3720249# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

number: <https://zoom.us/j/92237972093>

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 922 3797 2093

Passcode: 3720249

Find your local