



The Flame

SHARING THE LIGHT THAT CONNECTS US . . .

THE SEDONA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April, 2024

Upcoming Sunday Services

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

4/7/24 - "Congratulations for being a Welcoming Fellowship! Now...Keep it Up"

Patty Delp with Musician, Susannah Martin

Patty will discuss the importance of our being a welcoming fellowship, the vital need for safe spaces, inclusion and acceptance of diverse populations and the impact of microaggressions and myths on the LGBTQIA+ community, and especially on our youth.

Patty is a SUUF member, and director of Yavapai County Youth Advocate Programs, Inc (YAP). She's also says she's "a mother, grandmother, out-and-proud lesbian, advocate, educator, coach, counselor, restorative justice facilitator, survivor of emotional abuse and trauma and is passionate about social justice issues for all youth..." Besides all of those qualifications, she's charming, smart, and a real joy to be with!

4/14/24 - "Sermon on the Amount"

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

Let's consider what is truly ours. Our spiritual home is not just another charity to consider – this is where we live out our values individually and as a community. This is the priority among the good causes in our lives. So, what is yours? How about, what you came here with. Your wit, your insight, your character, a gallbladder, couple hips, a head and a heart. Money is not yours, it is something you earned, inherited or was gifted. You did not make it. You do not own it. You can save it, invest it, or give it away.

4/21/24 - "Generosity"

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

We will explore and celebrate the profound impact that acts of generosity can have on individuals, communities, and the interconnected web of all existence. Through reflection, and music, we will delve into how generosity enriches both the giver and the receiver, fostering a spirit of compassion, gratitude, and unity.

4/28/24 - "Interdependence"

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

We celebrate the profound interconnectedness of all life, exploring the theme of interdependence as a spiritual and ethical foundation for building compassionate communities and fostering environmental stewardship. By recognizing our mutual reliance on one another and the Earth, we cultivate a deeper appreciation for the bonds that unite us and all other beings.



Minister's Message



Embracing Transformation: A Journey of Continuous Becoming

In the tapestry of life, each thread of experience, belief, and relationship weaves a pattern of continuous transformation. As Unitarian Universalists, we stand at the confluence of diverse streams of thought and spirituality, each inviting us to consider our place in the endless cycle of growth and change.

This month, I invite you on a journey of transformation that goes beyond the physical and material, into the very essence of our spiritual and communal lives. Transformation, in its most profound sense, is not merely about change for its own sake but about evolution towards greater understanding, empathy, and connection.

The Transformative Power of Reflection

Our path begins with reflection. In the quiet moments of introspection, we discover the seeds of potential that lie within. It is here, in the sanctuary of our thoughts, that transformation takes its first tentative steps. Reflection requires us to confront not only our brightest hopes but also the shadows of our fears and doubts. Yet, in this confrontation lies the possibility of profound growth.

Embracing the Unknown

Transformation often asks us to step into the unknown, to embrace uncertainty with faith and courage. It calls us to let go of the familiar shores of our convictions and to sail into uncharted waters, trusting that our spiritual compass will guide us. This leap of faith is not a rejection of our past but an acknowledgment that growth is an endless horizon, ever-expanding and full of mystery.

The Role of Community in Our Transformative Journey

As we navigate the currents of change, we are reminded that transformation is not a solitary endeavor. Our community stands beside us, a tapestry of individuals each undergoing their own journeys of becoming. It is in our shared experiences and collective vulnerabilities that we find strength and understanding. Together, we create a space where transformation is not only possible but celebrated in all its forms.

Living Our Values in Times of Change

At the heart of our transformation is the call to live our values authentically and courageously. Each step towards change is an opportunity to embody the principles of love, justice, and equity more fully. Our transformation becomes a beacon of hope, not only for ourselves but for the world around us. In living our values, we inspire others to embark on their own journeys of change.



President's Message

One of my favorite roles is being SUUF's cheerleader! Here are some "Rah, Rah, Yea Team" cheers for April!



SUUF Mission/Vision process is nearing completion. Representatives listened to your ideas in our small groups that met after Fellowship, then read all of the written thoughts. The task force group met twice in March at Chuck Spence's home to design a mission and a vision to echo your ideas and fit SUUF at this time. Chuck's leadership, plus Chuck and Neil's great treats, nurtured us all! The proposed mission and vision will soon be in upcoming Orders of Service for us to read and to "feel into" together. We will vote on whether to adopt them at our annual meeting on May 19, *after our SUUF service at nearby Methodist Church on Indian Cliffs Road* (synagogue is to be used by JCSVV that day). Go Team!!

Thirteen members of a **Summer Services Team** met twice in March, starting on a new endeavor for SUUF. Eight creative and interesting services are in the planning stages for July and August. "Building Community" is the chosen theme, and the following are some of the topics being developed with most dates yet to be determined:

- *Building Community: Voices of our Hispanic Community* (panel of local Hispanics) - July 7
- *Building Community: Kindness in Action* Thomas and Lou Ann – July 14
- *Building Community: Our Unhoused Sedona Friends* - July 21
- *Building Community Through Nature*
- *Building Community: Our Native American Neighbors*
- *Building Community Through Effective Communication*
plus other possibilities currently incubating!

We, like you, will miss Rev. Anthony's talks, and the team is also excited to create new programs, involve our greater community, and to generally exercise our creativity muscles. We're aware that it's new, that people travel, etc. And, if you wish to continue seeing SUUF friends and to try some new programs, SUUF will be here all summer for you. Yea, Summer Team!

Rev. Anthony is introducing SUUF to the **8th Principle** promoted by the UUA:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

Like many other UU churches and fellowships, we will have the opportunity to vote on whether to add the 8th Principle to our seven current principles at our May 19 Annual Meeting.

Go, Coach (Rev.) Anthony!

SUUF Outdoors has begun offering spring activities for our health and friendship (see next page). Yea Mark Watson!

Rise and Shine, our early-birds 9:00 discussion group is a couple of months old and going well. Rah rah Paul Friedman

The Council of Chairs, consisting of the chairs of all committees and teams, met March 31 for the first time. Its mission is to provide regular opportunities for collaboration and information and event sharing among our Team and Committee Leaders so that the SUUF's mission and vision can more effectively be met. It will meet at least twice a year. Woot! Woot! SUUF LEADERS!

And the biggest cheer goes to **our whole congregation** of wonderful people. YEA to all of us SUUFers!



SUUF Connections



SUUF Outdoors! Our first event is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 2 at 10:00 a.m.** It's a medium easy hike of 3 miles.

Invite link: <https://www.meetup.com/sedona-unitarian-universalist-fellowship-outdoor-adventures/events/299873732>

We will walk from the Sugarloaf Trailhead to the Buddha Stupa and back (a loop hike). We are using the [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) platform to organize things. I like this platform because it is free to sign up (resist the temptation to pay for a Pro membership - I do that so I can admin and create new events, no one else at SUUF needs a Pro membership). If you decide you can't attend an event that you sign up for, even as late as a few minutes before the event, then please just unregister yourself for that event. Then when we meet at the trailhead, I can get a real-time update on who is coming.

Have questions? Contact group leader, Mark Watson, at markw@markwatson.com

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>.

April 12: Topic: "If the next five years is a chapter in your life, what is that chapter about?" Who's writing it? Is there a co-author, a ghost writer? Is it a mystery, a drama, a comedy, a success story?

April 26: Topic: "What has become clearer to you as you have aged?"

Social Justice 3rd Friday Film features **YouTube** documentaries on climate change. Watch at home, then **join us for this important discussion** Friday, April 19, at 10:30, at 30 Bronco Dr., or *email president@sedonauu.org to have Zoom set up* - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526141760>. Steve Schliebs and Sarah Anne Fread will be discussion leaders.



The documentaries, totaling 80 minutes, are:

- "Generation Now: The Fight for Climate Justice" (14:06) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGupWkEJinQ>
- "Climate Justice Explained" (10:10) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHRu0VV-Dbw&t=16s>
- "Feminist Global Advocacy for Climate Justice" (7:34) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPp2YqguKY>
(closed captions subtitles needed)
- "How Climate Change is Making Inequality Worse"(4:55) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHF4HHeOtkc>
- "Climate Justice IS Social Justice" (24:00) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Csc-ZoTWqZ0>
- "It's Not Too Late" (19:08) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yngZU-W2zk&t=3s>

Book Group **How to Know a Person-The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen** by David Brooks is the March-April selection.

West Sedona Book Group: at 10:30: Apr 8 pp 134-211) Apr 22 pp 212-271 30 Bronco Dr, 2nd and 4th Mondays, facilitated by Chuck Spence and Paul Friedman.

VOC Book Group meets at 2:00: Apr 3 Ch. 6-10 Apr 17 Ch. 11-14 May 1 Ch. 15-17
Contact Carolyn Kavanagh at ckava48@gmail.com for more information.

Rise and Shine Discussion Group

The group meets at **9:00 in the Conference Room of the lower level of JCSVV**. April topics are:

April 7-What has become clearer to you as you have aged?

April 14-"The Affirmations of Humanism" – exploring a moral code akin to UU

April 21-What is something you've accomplished in your life? Why you, why was it *you* who did that?

April 28-What forgiveness are you withholding?

SUUF Connections plus *Food*

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

Women's Lunch The April lunch will be on April 17th at noon at the Juniper Bar and Grill.



***Sunday, May 19** - SUUF Service and Annual Meeting at the **Methodist Church**, 110 Indian Cliffs Rd.



Sundays in July and August-Weekly Sunday Services at the synagogue. A 13-member team of your friends is planning creative and interesting services with the theme of "Building Community."

***Sunday, June 23** - SUUF Service at **Methodist Church**, 110 Indian Cliffs Rd.

* JCSVV isn't available these 2 Sundays so we're renting the Methodist Church sanctuary.



April Birthdays

Peggy Knecht Apr 3

Mark Watson Apr 15

Joyce Recek Apr 23



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.

Red Purse: "Save the Girls" red leather phone and credit card purse, 9" by 4.5". Has removable shoulder strap. Never used, small scratch on the back. Shown at \$55.00 online. Selling FBO SUUF @ \$5.00.

Ceramic Tiles: Beautiful Arizona-themed tiles with felt corners on the back. Three designs, hand-made. "Made in Italy" on the back. Can be used in an art project or as coasters. Originally \$8.00 each. Selling FBO for SUUF @ \$30 for the set of 8. Anything is negotiable! Call Marj Haas at 928-863-8262.

Is it time for you to pare down? Send item descriptions to president@sedonauu.org



SUUF and Me interviews of Rae and Ron Steinke and Tom Helgesen



Name: Ron and Rae Steinke

Where did you grow up?

Ron grew up in Nebraska on a cattle feed lot operation and farm. He attended a one room school through the 8th grade. While in high school he majored in shop and industrial arts. Woodworking is still his life-long hobby.

Rae was born in Michigan where her father was a chicken grower. Her family moved to LA when she was 11. She graduated from Canoga Park High School... "I was a valley girl!" Went to college at LA Trade Tech where she studied Fashion Design and sewing. She earned an AA Degree.

Her first daughter was born in France where her husband was stationed with the Army. Back in the states, she had three more daughters. Rae says, "I was kept very busy raising four girls."

What was/is your career?

Ron started as a high school English teacher in Wyoming, then retired when he was 60 from Fullerton College in CA, where he was Dean of Counseling and Student Development. Post retirement, he worked as an adjunct counselor and interim Dean of the School of Fine Arts and School of Communications at Irvine Valley College (He was one of four administrators who started that college).

Rae had a business as an Interior Plant Designer which evolved into a career as an Interior Designer. She was always interested in natural health and worked at Henry's, like Whole Foods, until moving to Sedona. Rae then decided to use her expertise in sewing and now does alterations. She enjoys meeting and helping nice people here.

When did you come to the Verde Valley and why?

They moved to the Village of Oak Creek in 2001. They choose Sedona because of the natural beauty, size of community, and affordable property.

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

Ron has been a supporter of the Sedona Historical Society and Museum. He coordinated the Living History speaker series for 3 years, did branding demonstrations for grade school kids, and most recently was a museum docent. During his early years here, he taught several OLLI classes and served for two years on the curriculum committee.

Rae enjoys her University Women's membership. She also takes meals to people in rehab, a self-initiated activity, not associated with an organization.

What is your religious background?

Ron's family were Methodist. he went to college as a pre-theological student with the goal of being a Methodist minister. He then went to seminary at Garrett Biblical Institute on the Northwestern University Campus. He served rural churches for five years as a Supply Pastor. He later became a Unitarian in Denver, CO in about 1974.

Rae was born into a Jewish family which lived on a small farm in Michigan. They were poor farmers, and her dad couldn't afford to buy seats at the synagogue, so she did not learn anything about the Jewish faith. Her first husband was Lutheran, she also became a Lutheran. Her second husband went to a UU Fellowship and that was comfortable for her. When she and Ron got married, they went to the UU Fellowship in Laguna Beach, CA.

What brought you to SUUF?

We found SUUF and joined because we were seeking an opportunity to associate with like-minded, free-thinking people. Ron is an agnostic by orientation and philosophy. Rae sees nature as a source of divine-like association.



Name: Tom Helgesen

Pictured are my wife is Rebecca with son, Nathan, 36, and daughter (adopted from China), 32.

Where did you grow up?

New York: Massapequa on Long Island, Minnesota: Edina, Burnsville and Minneapolis.

What was/is your career?

Graduated from Drake University with a master's degree in public administration; Executive Director of the Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority; Community Development Planner in charge of the Minnesota Enterprise Zone program and a

grant program for Community Development Corporations; Also worked in the Governor's Community Energy Council program; Management Consultant for the State of Minnesota.

When did you come to the Verde Valley and why?

2012; my wife Becky and I stopped over in Phoenix coming back from a vacation in Hawaii in 2009. We stayed 3 days in Cornville with Becky's aunt and uncle, Ruth and John Wadell. We had a wonderful time and became endeared to the area. We had often talked about retiring to the Southwest in an artistic community. We moved here in 2012.

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

I have done consulting work for the Urban Arts Academy in south Minneapolis. I am on the board of the Sedona Gem & Mineral Club and run their raffles. I have done extensive volunteer work with AA through 42 years of sobriety.

What is your religious background?

Lutheran. My Father was a Lutheran pastor for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. I graduated from a two-year program from the Lutheran Bible Institute 1964-1966, and received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. I left the Lutheran faith in 1967.

What brought you to SUUF?

I felt a need for connection to an organization of people who hold values similar to mine and who believe in personal and spiritual growth and community service. I had lacked such a connection for most of my adult life. I feel very at-home with SUUF.



EVENTS



2nd Annual SUUF Talent Show

Sunday, April 21, 2024 (11:30-12:30)

This year's talent show is shaping up, is guaranteed to entertain our discerning audience, and (to borrow a phrase from our esteemed minister) "and the rest of y'all too."

Here are some of the acts:

- an evolved and refined line dance
- a classical flute and clarinet duet
- various singers
- a rhythm band of unique percussion instruments
- Paul's latest version of a Guy Noir-based skit
- a magic trick
- a barbershop quartet
- stand-up comedy
- original poetry

This was a total hit last year! Join us again, appreciate your talented friends, and enjoy lots of laughter.

INVITATION TO ALL MOVIE FANS! A SUUF movie event will be held **Sunday, May 5, at 12:30, shortly after Fellowship.** Those who signed up and voted chose the film, **“Oppenheimer, which won four academy awards:** best picture, director, actor and supporting actor. During World War II, Lt. Gen. Leslie Groves Jr. appointed physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer to work on the top-secret Manhattan Project. He and a team of scientists spent years developing and designing the atomic bomb. Their work came to fruition on July 16, 1945, as they witnessed the world's first nuclear explosion, forever changing the course of history.

The theater was rented as a part of February’s Mardi Gras fundraiser—thank you, Michelle and Gerry Snyder. Included in the ticket price, thanks to Penny and Eddie De Jarnette, is a free drink (including wine) OR a snack. Admission for this fun afternoon with SUUF friends is \$25 a ticket at Mary Fischer Theater. You needn’t have signed and paid ahead of time to attend. You can just pay at the door. There’s plenty of room for all of us! Bring a friend!

NEWCOMERS’ GET ACQUAINTED MEETING, April 28, at 9:30 in the synagogue Social Hall. If you’re relatively new to SUUF, come get acquainted with some members and with Rev. Anthony. It’s a time to have a cup of coffee, get questions answered, and chat with people. We’d love to have you join us and get better acquainted before we attend Sunday services.

The JCSVV Women’s Havurah hosts their annual **WOMEN’S SEDER**

*A group of SUUF women enjoyed this celebration last year.
Please note the email address to RSVP if you intend to go and the fee to pay at the door.*

Please join us as we celebrate Passover through the lens of women’s understanding of the Exodus account impact on our lives today- in song, dance, story, and food!



Sunday, April 28, 2024, from 5:00 pm till about 8:00 pm in the JCSVV Social Hall
Please RSVP to Havurah@jcsvv.org by Friday, April 26th
Guests are welcome at \$25 per person (Pay at the Door).



Board, Team, and Committee Reports

Board Meeting Recap

The SUUF Board Meeting met March 15, 2024, and began at 1:05 PM with Tanya Mayer, Gary Stewart, Rev. Anthony Johnson and Elizabeth Herrell present. Chris and George Bein also attended.

The minutes were approved for the February SUUF Board meeting.

A March meeting was held with George and Chris Bein, Chuck Spence, Paul Friedman, Tanya and Rev. Anthony discussing ideas for the upcoming year's pledge campaign. Suggestions for the pledge letter were discussed as well as the possibility of small group meetings.

Proposed budget plans for the upcoming year includes pay for a part-time administrative assistant, using UUA salary guidelines to determine the minister's salary, a raise for Susannah, and rent for summer services. Rev. Anthony indicated he would like his salary to be more in alignment with other ministries such as Flagstaff. The pledge campaign will work to educate people and to cover the additional costs which our active Fellowship calls for.

Reports were presented: minister's report by Anthony, president's report by Tanya, and treasurer's report by Gary.

Plans for summer services are in process with the theme, "Building Community." Summer services planning meetings are ongoing. Thirteen volunteers attending the first meeting.

Mardi Gras evaluations were presented by Tanya. The event netted approximately \$8,000 and was attended by 110 people. A brief discussion was held on upcoming '24-25 events.

The Council of Chairs, consisting of all team and committee chairs, will meet on March 24 (*amended to March 31*) after the Fellowship. This council replaces the Committee on Ministries.

A Mission/Vision creation meeting was held at Chuck Spence's home with mission and vision statements to be finalized this month at a second meeting, and to be voted on by the congregation in the May annual meeting.

February financial statements were reviewed. SUUF has \$77K in investments in funds.

A waiver of responsibility form was discussed and will be used for SUUF Outdoor Activities. A Motion was passed to adopt the proposed form.

A motion was made that SUUF "Share the Plate" monthly with local 501c3 charities. Congregants will be invited to propose groups to donate to and the board will decide the recipients. Weekly plate donations are about \$200.

A Disruptive Behavior Policy was updated and approved. Thirteen policies from about 10 years ago have now been updated and 5 new policies were created this term. *All are on the sedonauu.org website.*

An announcement policy was discussed. Anthony suggested he would share appropriate announcement protocol with the intent of keeping announcements short and relevant.

Anthony closed the meeting suggesting we focus on what is possible. Meeting was adjourned at 2:10 PM.

A second March board meeting was held March 22, on Zoom at 2:00 and attended by all board members, in order to approve a budget upon which our April/May pledge drive will be built. Gary explained the proposed budget and a discussion followed. A motion was passed to adopt the budget which is subject to change depending on the success of our pledge drive.

We decided we will meet in the Methodist Church, 110 Indian Cliffs Rd, on the two Sundays, May 19 and June 23, that the synagogue is not available.

Finance Team

Pledge commitments for the current year, which ends June 30th, total \$105,000. To date we've received pledge payments of \$80,000, leaving \$25,000 to go. So, we've received 76%, with 75% of the year gone - how's that for being on target? Assuming the entire \$105,000 is received, pledge receipts will have increased \$27,000 from the prior year's \$78,000! Why such an increase? There are 62 pledging households this year compared to 46 for the year prior. Yea SUUF! If you need help determining your outstanding pledge amount, please contact me.

--Gary Stewart, Treasurer

Environmental Justice (a part of Social Justice Team) embraces our 7th Principle: "*Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*"

Join SUUF's April's Social Justice 3rd Friday Film discussion to share your thoughts on Environmental Justice.

April 22 is Earth Day. Google "Free 2024 Verde Valley Earth Day Events" for events in our area.



A local 4th grader won an award for her article on water in celebration of World Water Day: <https://www.redrocknews.com/2024/03/18/dhara-alstons-water-essay-wins-award/>

Help the **Friends of the Verde River** keep it flowing and fresh and clean: <https://verderiver.org/>

Every Month:

For UU Ministry for Earth, go to: uumfe.org

To join Hazel Chandler's AZ Climate Action Coalition Zoom Fridays at 3 PM, <https://bit.ly/3xDQs5n>

We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.

Community Outreach Committee

We finished collecting items for summer survival kits for the Old Town Mission in Cottonwood. If you still have things to donate, you can place them in the JCSVV collection box at the bottom of the steps to the synagogue until the end of April. You can also donate cash to Penny on April 7th. Thank you to those who have already made donations.

Might you volunteer for the Backpack program on May 9, 16, and 23? The sign-up sheet is in the lobby and instructions will be emailed prior to your day. You will go to the Sedona Food Bank at 8.30, pack the bags with food provided, then deliver them to the front office of West Sedona Elementary School. It takes a little over an hour to complete.

---The Outreach Committee: Cora Shor and Penny De Jarnette



Welcoming Congregation News



Please join us for our monthly PFLAG Sedona/Verde Valley Support Meeting on **Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.** live at the Sedona Public Library (3250 White Bear Road, Sedona) and on Zoom. Please email us at pflagsedona@gmail.com for the Zoom link. Our speaker this month will be Tracey McConnell, Community Development Director for Verde Valley Sanctuary. Tracey will share details of the Sanctuary's 30-year mission to provide safety, services, and comfort to survivors of domestic and sexual violence.