



The Flame

SHARING THE LIGHT THAT CONNECTS US . . .

THE SEDONA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

May 2025

Upcoming Sunday Services

5/4/25 – “The Power of Wisdom”

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

Wisdom is more than knowledge—it is the lived experience, discernment, and deep understanding that guide us through life’s complexities. In this service, we explore the sources of wisdom in our lives, from ancient traditions to personal insight and revelation, and how we can cultivate it within ourselves and our communities.

5/11/25 - “The Call of the Elder”

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

Across cultures, elders are revered as wisdom keepers, mentors, and guides. Yet in today’s fast-moving world, their voices are often overlooked. This service reflects on the sacred role of elders in our lives and communities and the call to honor their wisdom while embracing our own journey toward eldership.

5/18/25 – “Unitarian Universalist Polity”

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Dan Vega

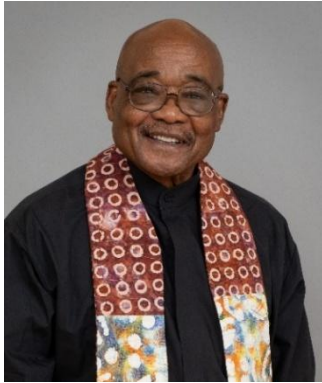
How do we govern ourselves as Unitarian Universalists? Our polity is rooted in congregational democracy, covenant, and shared leadership. This service will explore the principles of UU governance and how they empower us to be a faith of freedom, responsibility, and interdependence.

5/25/25 - “Revisiting UU Principles: Embracing Complexity”

Guest speaker, Dee Wegwert, Musician, Susannah Martin and Service Leader, Sarah Ann Fread

In our Unitarian Universalist tradition, the 7 UU Principles offer guidance as well as challenges. Each principle is a complex statement worthy of consideration. This sermon offers a close look at the principles in the context of our changing world.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



May 2025

Dear Beloved Community,

In this season of blossoming, I find myself reflecting on the many ways community, too, is like a living garden. It takes intention, patience, and a willingness to show up with open hearts and active hands. It asks us to nurture what is tender, to celebrate what is thriving, and to trust that even when we can't see it, something good is growing.

Community is not something we simply have; it is something we continually create—through acts of kindness, through listening deeply, through sharing our stories and weaving our lives together. Every greeting, every helping hand, every act of kindness, plants a seed.

As May brings longer days and warmer light, I invite us to remember that we are gardeners of this sacred space between us. What do we wish to grow together? How might we strengthen the roots of trust, compassion, and justice that support us all?

This month, let's celebrate the gift of each other. Let's renew our commitment to be a place where all can belong, all can be seen, and all can flourish.

Blessings,

Rev. Anthony

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to everyone! It's springtime, and those of us at SUUF find ourselves in a whirlwind of activity. Some exciting things are happening! For example:

We are moving to a new home at Sedona United Methodist Church!

In this new place, we will have much greater flexibility about when and how we spend our time together. We will have use of the church itself, of course, but in addition we will have use of the "New Room" for social gatherings, and also space for meetings. Let's face it – home is where you "keep your stuff" – and one of the many benefits of this move is the opportunity to store SUUF materials in a way that will simplify the work of the greeters – YAY! We even have the option of posting a street sign to let the larger world know where we meet. Many of us have enjoyed our time at the Synagogue, which has been a lovely home for us, but there are certainly benefits to making this change. Stay tuned – there is much to be done in the coming weeks as we plan for the move.



Plans for summer services are in the works!

I am told that this is the second year of summer services for SUUF, and the planning committee is making creative plans. Once the speakers have been selected and scheduled, the plan will be shared in the weekly e-blast. I think you will find some engaging topics on the list. Further information will be provided in the coming weeks.

Publication of the Flame newsletter will be discontinued - watch for news in the weekly e-blast!

Because the information in the Flame and the weekly e-blasts are often duplicative, and also because it's hard to keep up and read everything, the SUUF Board decided that we only really need one method of e-communication. Going forward, plan on looking at the weekly e-blast for information about what's happening in the SUUF community.

The SUUF Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday May 18th!

Yes – a meeting can be something to get excited about. We make collective decisions and select congregational leaders at the annual meeting, so the participation of SUUF members is very important and appreciated. If you have "signed the book" and become a member, please plan to attend. (If you are not available on that date, please consider arranging for proxy voting.)

I want to acknowledge and thank Tanya Mayer for the leadership she provided to the SUUF community and for her assistance in preparing me for my current role as president of the SUUF Board. Her love of SUUF was evident in everything she did, and I wish her well in her new adventures in San Diego. I also want to express my gratitude to all the members and friends of SUUF for your patience and support as I navigate my role. I am so fortunate to be part of this amazing community!!

Love to all,

Dee

EVENTS



May 4 - Jeannie Beal Marini's "*Celebration of Life*" will take place in the sanctuary following Sunday service.

Jeannie and Tony were beloved SUUF members for several years and are remembered by many in our community.

Please join Rev. Anthony, Susannah Martin, and friends in honoring Jeannie.



May 18 - SUUF Annual Congregational Meeting in the sanctuary following Sunday service.

This annual meeting brings members together to vote on next year's operating budget, elect Board of Trustees and Committee Members, as specified in our bylaws.



June 19 – Celebrating **Juneteenth** at the Sedona Library from 2-4pm. Stay tuned for more details.

June – Pride Month will take place from June 1st to June 30th. This extended period allows for a wide range of events, parades, marches, and discussions to take place – providing opportunities for LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies to come together and make their voices heard. This year's theme is *Activism and Social Change*.

CONNECTIONS

Evolving Elders



A discussion group where friends share feelings and ideas, laugh and cry together, and grow closer. We discuss a broad range of topics suggested by the participants.

Meetings are **10:30a–12p** on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month:

- May 9 @ Marj Haas's house, 20 Sandstone Dr., W. Sedona
- May 23 @ Cheryl Sinn's house, 790 Sunshine Lane, W. Sedona

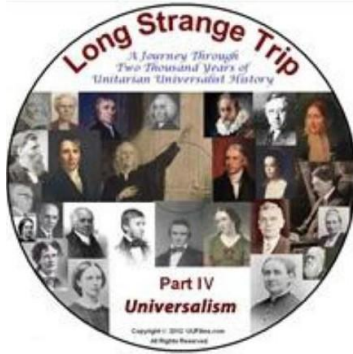
In person or by zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/91655592303?pwd=awLYjqdRURie9KnTexxu1tQa0ScNqu.1>

May 9 Topic: *Passion* - *What are you passionate about? Has that changed in recent years? Are you involved with the things you are passionate about? If not, why not?*

May 23 Topic: *Less doing – more being.*

UU History Class

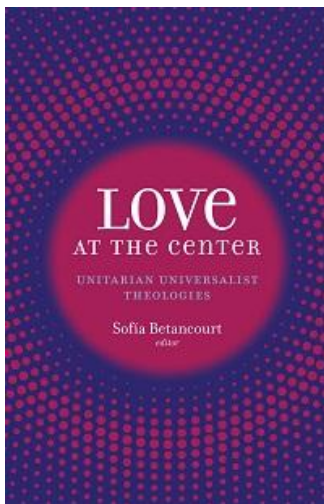


Rev. Anthony Johnson conducts this 6-week class, chronicling the journey of Unitarian Universalism over the centuries. It includes viewing and discussion of the DVD series, *Long Strange Trip*.

This six-part video series by Ron Cordes explores the history of Unitarian and Universalist thought and practice from the early, liberal strands in faith at the beginning of the Christian era to what we know today as Unitarian Universalism. Each part of *Long Strange Trip* is approximately one hour in length.

The **last two** classes take place **Fridays, May 2 and 9**, from **2:00-4:00pm**. Classes are held at Church of the Red Rocks, 54 Bowstring Dr. Sign up on Sundays in the lobby to get reminders, or email minister@sedonauu.org. *You may choose to attend all classes or just some, as your schedule permits.*

Book Group



The May/ June book selection is *Love at the Center*
by UUA president Sofia Betancourt

“In these pages, you’ll find personal testimony to love’s power, reminders of the centrality of love throughout the long histories of Universalism and Unitarianism, and theologies of love drawn from many different expressions of Unitarian Universalism—from the natural world to the justice rally, to a loved one’s deathbed, to the quiet moment before a worship service begins. May *Love at the Center* serve as an invitation to deepen your own understanding and practices of love.” UUA website.

Join the group at 2345 Corral Rd., home of the McCaffrey’s. The 4 sessions will be facilitated by Rev. Anthony. The meeting dates are on **Mondays** from **10:30 -12pm** on **May 5 & 19** and **June 9 & 30**, (note the date changes).

Signup in the lobby on Sundays or email Rev. Anthony at minister@sedonauu.org. Books are available on the UUA website and Amazon. Get yours early to prepare in advance.

May Birthdays



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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Brad Kincaid – 2 nd | Tom Roen – 3 rd | Glenn Farley – 5 th |
| Lin Ennis – 6 th | Debby Losse – 6 th | Ron Fischer – 14 th |
| Michael Steele – 16 th | Marj Haas – 26 th | Ben Shor – 29 th |

If you have a May birthday and it isn't listed, please email the date to CherylSuuf@gmail.com

Soul Matters Sharing Circles

Soul Matters



CIRCLES

Greetings and Gratitude to ALL who participated in our SUUF Soul Matters Sharing Circles this year! We all took a deep dive into knowing ourselves and each other better while holding sacred space with and for one another.

In July and August, we take a pause and will resume our Sharing Circles in September. This is when we open our Circles to other folks who might want to participate. **At the beginning of September**, we will offer, “A Taste of Soul” - an experiential introduction and overview of Soul Matters Sharing Circles.

If you want more information or if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to any of our Soul Matters Facilitators - Heartfelt Hugs! Lydia Munoz Johnson at lydiadelaluz@aol.com * Linda Brefeld at lbrefeld@aol.com * Suzanne Burkey at sfburkey47@gmail.com

Social Justice Interfaith Film



The SJ team has substituted SUUFs usual film discussion date with a film made available **to the public** for free by Sedona Indivisible’s LGBTQ + Action group. The showing, and discussion after, will take place on **Friday, May 30**, from **3:30-5:30pm** at Sedona United Methodist Church, 110 Indian Cliffs Road.

“**The Bystander Moment**” is a 49-minute documentary, produced by The Media Education Foundation and features interviews with Jackson Katz, an expert on gender violence prevention and leadership training. While “**The Bystander Moment**” primarily focuses on how to address cultures that are conducive to violence against women, the film also speaks to how homophobia silences men who take a stand against the mistreatment of women. The film also has important implications for the fight to create a community that protects trans people, as trans people are at extremely high risk of physical and sexual assault. Ultimately, the message of “**The Bystander Moment**” is a hopeful one. We all have the capacity to change our culture. Click for details: <https://www.mobilize.us/indivisiblesedona/event/780665/>

How You Can Help SUUF



Volunteer's
Needed!

Check out a few opportunities for you to bring joy to yourself and others!

- **Audio/Sound** - Might you be a volunteer to help Gary with sound equipment some Sunday mornings? If you have skills and/or interest in this area, Gary welcomes you! Talk to Gary or Rev. Anthony about the team.
- **Greeters** – Each Sunday you can welcome and attend to all...especially our newcomers. It’s easy, uplifting, and fun to see the smiling faces as they enter SUUF. Just sign up in the lobby on Sundays or talk to Donna or Barb – they are there to help!
- **Readers** – Rev. Anthony welcomes anyone who would like to read a meaningful quote during Sunday service. Please contact him directly on Sundays or at minister@sedonauu.org
- **Summer Service Series** – If you have ideas and/or wish to be a part of SUUF’s lay-led July and August services, contact Joe at joe.wegwert@gmail.com. It’s an exciting, creative project.
- **Teams/Committees** - We have many opportunities for *you* to be involved in *your* community. What spot might use *your* talents? *Marketing/Social Justice/Membership/Outreach/Worthy Now/and more.*



SUUF and Me - An Interview with Cheryl Sinn

Where did you grow up?

Philadelphia, PA. until I was 22 - then I moved to Sedona. I attended the High School for Creative and Performing Arts (from the movie *Fame*) in center city “Philly”. My commute included a daily trek past the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Betsy Ross’s house and other notably historical sites. It was a great place to be from!

When did you come to the Verde Valley and why?

In 1984 I hitchhiked around the country for 3 months looking for my new “home”. I was hiking the Grand Canyon and got caught in a flash flood/avalanche – I was rescued by two men from Sedona. They convinced me to come to Sedona with them and I have been here ever since. I knew instantaneously I was “home”.

What is/was your career?

Since I have lived in Sedona for 40+ years, I have had numerous jobs (early on) in order to survive in the then small town. Most recently, my husband and I owned and operated a Vocational School for 13 years, training military veterans to be catastrophic insurance adjusters. I was also the Business Manager of the Sedona Arts Center and the co-producer of the Native American Scholarship Festival held at the Verde Valley School each October in the 1990’s. I am currently the part-time Administrative Assistant for SUUF.

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

I have helped with many community and art events as time had previously allowed. Now, I sign up for SUUF related activities. With more time on my hands.....who knows?

Do you have hobbies with which you're involved?

Hiking, beach time as often as possible, travel, and fun home improvements. My first loves are horses and art.

What is your religious background?

I was raised Jewish within a very large Jewish family. I attended services and Sunday school until I declined to partake in my Bat-mitzvah ceremony. Then I began my life long spiritual journey which brought me to Sedona and continues today.

What brought you to SUUF?

Semi-retirement in August 2024 left a big space for me to fill. I was looking for a community and attended my first SUUF service in September 2024. The rest is still to be written.

CONNECTIONS & FOOD



Friendly Feasts are such fun—food, friendship, and frivolity—all in one evening! They build community by getting to know other SUUFers over food and conversation.

Anyone can attend a Friendly Feast throughout the year – you do not have to be a host in return!

Hosting means providing a main course and asking the attendees to bring side dishes. The number of people is determined by you, usually between 4-6 other folks. Feasts can be breakfast, lunch, or dinner – whatever works best for you.

This month's Feasts takes place on **Saturday, May 17** and having **3 host houses** per month is ideal. There is still **one more** opening for a host house in **May** and we are now opening up **June** to accommodate more Friendly Feasts.

It is easy to sign up as a host or an attendee in the lobby on Sundays. Attendee signup sheets usually appear at the beginning of each month for that month's Feasts.

Please contact **Suzanne Burkey** at Sfburkey47@gmail.com or (309) 635-6681 to **ask questions about Friendly Feasts or to sign up as a host.**



Men's Breakfasts

are the **2nd Wednesdays** of the month at **8:30am** at the Juniper Bar & Grill in the Sedona Golf Resort in the VOC, this month on **May 14th**. Please RSVP to Ben at benshor7@gmail.com or 928-451-4370.



Women's Lunches

are the **3rd week** of each month at **12pm**. Barb Malat selects a restaurant and day, either in the VOC or West Sedona, and announces it through an Evite to which you can RSVP.

Gather with the other women this month on **Wednesday, May 21st** at Juniper Bar & Grill in the Sedona Golf Resort, in the VOC. It's fun to see friends and enjoy good conversation over lunch. In case you don't get that Evite, please reach out to Barb to sign up for your future invitation at bbmalat@gmail.com.

SUUF RECYCLES

All proceeds go to SUUF!

Is it time for you to de-clutter?

In this column you can **sell, trade, or give away** items in good condition.

Take a picture and email it with a detailed description and price to CherylSUUF@gmail.com



"Tritronic Field 90 G2 Exp" electronic dog collars. \$100 for the package, which includes a waterproof transmitter with a holster and strap, 2 waterproof receivers and collars, a charging cradle, an owner's guide, and an instruction video. Purchased new for \$370. Contact Cora Shor at (928) 379-0505, for more information.



Asian Tea Set used only as a decoration. Asking price \$30.

Contact Carolyn Kavanagh at ckava48@gmail.com or (928) 699-2493



50" Emerson TV in excellent working condition. Asking price is \$50. It is not a smart TV but can have its IQ raised with cable boxes, Blu-ray players, or game consoles. Will connect to separate streaming devices like a Roku, Fire Stick, or Apple TV via an HDMI cable. It was wall mounted – legs may be purchased for about \$10. Contact Tom Helgesen at trhelgesen@gmail.com or (651) 329-9155

BOARD, TEAM, AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Social Justice Team

Is it time to stop “Othering” and to start “Bridging”? John A. Powell of Berkeley’s Othering and Belonging Institute thinks so. Listen to what he has to say in his YouTube video called “Bridging to Belonging” or read his book, *Belonging Without Othering - How we Save Ourselves and the World*.

Also of interest – read Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book, *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* in which she urges us to follow the example of the Serviceberry. The Serviceberry is “an embodiment of interconnectedness and gratitude - distributing its wealth of sweet juicy berries to meet the needs of its natural community and thereby ensuring its own survival.” Robin is a mother, scientist, professor, and an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes for the Board Meeting on April 8, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the SUUF Board was called to order in person by President Dee Wegwert at 2:10 PM. Members present included Barb Malat, Gary Stewart, Piya Jacob, Ben Shor, Donna Fox, Mary McCaffrey, and Reverend Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson. A quorum of half the board is required by our bylaws and was present.

It was decided unanimously that the May Board meeting will be held on May 16th at 2 PM at Mary McCaffrey's home. The June Board meeting will be held on June 6th at 2 PM at Piya Jacob's home.

Written monthly reports were submitted by the Minister, President and the Treasurer followed by oral summaries, questions and discussion. All reports were approved. The minutes to the March, 2025 meeting of the board had previously been approved.

Lengthy discussion took place on our proposed budget for 2025/2026 as presented by our Treasurer. Some changes and clarifications were made. Gary moved to accept the 2025/2026 proposed SUUF budget as discussed. Ben seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. In May this budget will be presented to the congregation for a vote.

President Dee brought up the need for a Fundraising Team. Piya and Mary volunteered with Mary agreeing to be the chairperson. More information to follow once the team meets separately.

The New Member/Welcoming Team is led by Donna and Barb. Donna will be scheduling a meeting including Rev. Anthony and Ben to discuss dates and plans for our future new member brunch and ceremony.

It was noted that the Vice President position on the board is still open and we are seeking candidates.

President Dee informed us that there are numerous, exciting summer service plans in the works. Details to follow.

Discussion followed on the details of our move to the Sedona United Methodist Church (SUMC) along with a detailed review of the lease agreement. The agreement will be signed soon and will begin July 1, 2025. Gary and Ben will be trained on the AV equipment and we are looking for others to be trained, as well.

To avoid redundancy and accommodate our administrative assistant Cheryl's growing work load, the entire board agreed that the monthly newsletter will be eliminated in favor of the weekly announcements in the Eblast. The information previously in the newsletter will now be found in the weekly Eblast.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Donna Fox

Outreach Committee

Thank you for your continued support to everyone who participated in the April “Share the Plate” offerings. We raised \$547 for Steps to Recovery.

We also appreciate all of you that put something into the April donation boxes for the *Summer Survival Kits* to give to homeless folks through the Cottonwood Old Town Mission.

May’s “Share the Plate” offering will go to Sedona Recycles

You may not realize that Sedona Recycles was named the “*Best Sustainability Minded Non-Profit*” in the State of Arizona in 2024. They have been keeping the red rocks green since 1989 and in 2024, they diverted 813 tons of recyclables from the landfill. They offer educational programs and advocate for the “reduce, reuse, recycle” mindset. They are currently in critical need of raising money to purchase a new baler, which compacts recyclables into transportable bales (the backbone of their operation).

Your generosity on May 25 for “Share the Plate” will be greatly appreciated.

Upcoming Outreach Activities

We have SUUF volunteers continuing to participate in the 2025 “**Kids Backpack Program**”. Volunteers have already signed up for three Thursdays in May: 5/1, 5/8 and 5/15. Volunteers will pack bags at the Sedona Food Bank and take them over to the West Sedona School to support children with insecure food needs over the weekends.

FOCUS ON MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES



Please join us for our monthly PFLAG Sedona/Verde Valley Support Meeting on **Tuesday, May 13th, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.** live at the Sedona Public Library (3250 White Bear Road, Sedona) in the Quiet Study Room, and on Zoom. We will be presenting scholarships to our 4 Sedona Red Rock High recipients. Both the presentation at 6:30 and the support meeting at 7:30 will use the following zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/92237972093?pwd=TzJuVzFsck1xQk5vcjcyWDYzMWRzZz09>
Meeting ID: 922 3797 2093 Passcode: AZPFLAG



“In a fair and just society, no one is left behind” says, Violeta Tomic’, General Rapporteur on the Rights of LGBTI People.

Anti-gender movements deny the humanity of those who challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, particularly LGBTI persons. Apart from undermining equality, they also endanger democracies. Today, let us stand up for justice and protection for all. The date of **May 17** was specifically chosen to commemorate the World Health Organization's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.

Sedona Area Homeless Alliance



Our Mission *Empowering Change Through Action* is to create projects, programs, and services that protect, advocate for, and empower those in our local homeless community. SAHA addresses the immediate needs of the homeless and mobilizes the community to create long-term and permanent solutions.

Our Vision is to create a new model of reconnecting those experiencing homelessness in Sedona and the Verde Valley back to their communities.

Our Values at the Sedona Area Homeless Alliance are that we believe everyone has the right to feel safe, included, respected and loved. Every person deserves to be treated with dignity, empathy and compassion. Every individual deserves to be met exactly where they are, without judgment and celebrated for their uniqueness and strengths. We strive to offer each person what they need to be successful by providing quality programs that address multi-level challenges and are responsive to the evolving needs of those we serve.

Reach out to the Sedona Area Homeless Alliance today to learn more about how you can join us in empowering lives and building futures in Sedona. Together, we can create a community where everyone feels safe, respected, and loved.

SAHA clients generally text (928) 978-9387 to request services
Email: sedonahomeless@gmail.com
PO Box 1411 Sedona AZ 86339 • www.SedonaHomeless.org