



Borderlands Unitarian Universalist Congregation January, 2025

Seven New Members Are Welcomed At Borderlands



The new members were introduced on December 1, by a sponsor reading their bio, then the members were welcomed by Rev. Inge followed by the congregation speaking together. From l to r: Laura Callejon, Susan James, Jack Webber, Elaine Webber, Rev. Inge, Stan Amas and Sandy Briggs. Missing from the photo due to illness is Susan Ammons. Her bio follows on page two.

Susan Ammon- New Member Bio

Hello friends. My name is Susan Ammons. My husband, Jim and I have been married for 47 years. I have a daughter from my first marriage and a 17 year-old grandson who lives in Colorado Springs. We moved to Green Valley in March, 2020 and live here full-time.

I grew up in Denver in an Irish Catholic family with 6 siblings. I joined the Army when I turned 18 and trained as a data processor. After leaving the military I was employed in that field for 25 years. My husband is retired from the military and as a systems analyst in the private sector.

In the late-80's we moved to Colorado Springs. I worked for several non-profits, including a hospital foundation, the Humane Society and a Biology Curriculum Textbook company. When my husband retired we sold our home and our belongings to live our dream of traveling in an RV. We spent 13 winters in the small town of Borrego Springs, CA, exploring the Anza-Borrego Desert and playing tennis, before moving to Green Valley.

I began coming to BUU this past spring after having several discussions with a friend and neighbor. He and his wife are very involved with The Samaritans through the church they attend. He knew I wasn't looking for a bible-based church but because of the isolation during 2020 and the political unease of the country, I was feeling unmoored and disconnected.

My friend mentioned there is a UU congregation in Amado and maybe I should check it out. The UU message of inclusion and community I heard that first Sunday, the songs we sang and the first time I recited the covenant, opened my mind and heart to what is possible in a spiritual way. I'm looking forward to putting into practice the Seven Principles of UU, being open to spiritual growth and giving back to our community. Thank you all for sharing your wisdom and life-experiences every Sunday. You have made a difference in my life.

OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT YOU!!.....

The Borderlands Nominating Committee is seeking members to fill 3 positions for the Board of Directors. Each position is for a two year term (July 1 2025 - June 30, 2027).

In accordance with the BUU bylaws, the job descriptions are as follows:

- **Vice President** - Presides at meetings in the absence of the president.
- **Secretary** - Keeps records and conducts official correspondence.
- **Member at Large.** - Gives input on key decisions and contributes expertise to our mission.
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Please submit interest to Riki Renfro by email or text by **February 1, 2025.** rikirenfro@yahoo.com
520-302-2016

The Nominating Committee,
Barbara Lund, Riki Renfro, Diane Tepe

The Women by Kristin Hannah Featured in Book Discussion

Submitted by Ginny Lopez

"Stuns with sacrifice; uplifts with heroism . . . an important, long overdue tribute to the brave women nurses who served in Vietnam."

Bonnie Garmus, author of **Lessons in Chemistry**

The Garden Book Club meets in the Meditation Garden after the Sunday Service on January 12, 2025 from 11:30 to 12:30. You need not to have read the book to discover how we operate and discuss the world we live in. Join us!

Who's Who In The UU

By Riki Refro

Have you ever wondered why the room where we gather for coffee after services is called the Fuller Room? There is a sign on the wall that says Margaret Fuller Room that you might have missed seeing unless you were specifically looking for it. She was born to a Unitarian family in Cambridge, MA, on May 23, 1810, and died too young at age 40 on July 19, 1850.

Margaret's father, Timothy Fuller, was a lawyer and a senator who believed girls should have just as extensive and rigorous classical education as boys. She studied Latin, Greek, grammar, history, math, music, and modern languages; quite the radical concept for girls in those days. She was a particularly precocious child and was translating Virgil by age six. She grew up to be a journalist, editor, writer, poet, literary critic, translator, Transcendentalist leader, teacher, and women's rights advocate.

Margaret Fuller, along with friends and colleagues like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, were major figures in the Transcendentalist Movement during the late 1820's and through the 1830's. A core belief of the philosophy is, "The inherent goodness of people and nature, and while society and its institutions have corrupted the purity of the individual, people are at their best when truly self-reliant and independent." She and Emerson started a Transcendentalist journal called "The Dial" in 1840.

From 1839 to 1844 she conducted an educational series in Boston for women she called "Conversations". She taught them that women must fulfill themselves as individuals and were not subordinates to men. "Women in the Nineteenth Century" (1845) was considered to be her most important work in her campaign for women's rights. In it she wrote, "We would have every arbitrary barrier thrown down. We would have every path laid open to women as freely as to men". She called for colleges and professions to be open to women, demanded voting rights and the right to own property for women, and dove into the concept of "gender roles" which were used as part of the women's rights movement in the 1970's.

In 1844 she joined the New York Tribune as a literary critic and was sent to Rome as a foreign correspondent where she became involved with the revolution for Italian freedom. While in Italy she met and married Marchese Giovanni Ossoli, a Lieutenant in the Italian Unification Movement, in 1849. She wrote a history of the revolution while they were in Florence, but in mid-1850 they fled Italy with their one-year-old son, Angelo, after the suppression of the republic and the fall of the Unification Movement. They all drowned in a shipwreck when their ship

"Elizabeth" slammed into a sandbar less than 100 yards off Fire Island, New York. Their bodies were never recovered. Such a tragic loss and sad ending for the woman the UU World May 17, 2010, edition described as, "*Our Lady of Wisdom and Wit, Equality and Social Justice.*"

(References: Britannica.com, Poetry Foundation.org, Harvard Square Library.org, UU World

Birthday Celebrations

The people celebrating birthdays this month are as follows:

Jim Brusstar	1/04
Russ Peterson	1/20
Patti Albaugh	1/22
Tanya Leighton	1/24
Ann Penton	1/25
Nancy Peyton	1/25
Stan Amass	1/31

If you would like to send a card or email to one or more people, please look up that person's email/land address on Borderland's web page. Click on members only in the upper right, put in the password and access the address.

If you enjoy cookies with your coffee after the service, MAKE SOME (Costco treats, Trader Joe's, work too) and bring them.

Revelations

By Jan Lathrop

The Fresh Air at BUU

Bruce Sillers feels spiritual when he can walk into a church and feel he can belong, so Borderlands UU feels like a spiritual home. He describes himself as part atheist, agnostic, and humanist. He adds, "If there is a power that created all this, which I have trouble believing, IT put everything in place and turned it over to humans to do as they will. I don't believe that there is a loving god directing us – too many bad things happen. I can't worship or praise a god and then dismiss it for all the bad things that happen."

Bruce grew up observing this attitude in action. His grandparents were immigrants and homesteader - farmers in northern North Dakota, birthing and raising his mother in a sod hut. Bruce was born in a relative's farm house in Montana when his parents were looking for work.

He says, "I have a pretty good memory for childhood, but I don't remember much religion. One of my grandpas carried his family Bible where the names of his 13 kids were written. I think they would say, 'Yes we're Christians,' but I never heard them blame God or praise God. If a hailstorm came and ruined the crop, they'd say, 'Well, that happens.'"

When he was small, some Catholic cousins told Bruce he was a son of the devil because he wasn't baptized, which bothered him. Later, he recalls, "My Mom probably felt protective of me, because she then had me baptized."

His parents divorced when Bruce was in grade school and his mother moved them back to North Dakota. "I can't recall her ever going to church. I remember she said it was because they'd be mean to her because she was divorced." She remarried when Bruce was 12 and they moved again, to a much smaller town where there was just one church, Presbyterian, and everyone went to it.

Bruce recalls that in high school he was "wanting to belong. I think everyone does, and I did too." It was about this time he started noticing that "some people went to church, but outside church they were

not good people." However, there was one "truly good Christian" in his life. "I had one favorite great aunt, a very giving person; she was not preachy, she just did it! She sang in the choir and people loved her."

By the time he started college at the University of North Dakota, Bruce was thinking more about religion, and developing what he calls a bit of "intellectual arrogance." He lived for his first year of college with an uncle who was director of a campus ministry that hosted Sunday night religious discussions for students, including Bruce. "I didn't believe everything I was hearing, but I still wanted to belong. I wanted community."

He later moved into a men's dorm. Often hungry on weekends when students were on their own for meals, Bruce chose to attend one particular church group on Sunday evenings for their better meals, and, he adds, "the girls were cuter."



Bruce Sillers

He met his future wife Jean, who was raised as a Methodist, in college, and they married when Bruce graduated. Jean also was questioning traditional religion. Together, they began looking around at different churches. When they got to Madison, Wisconsin, for Bruce's graduate school, Bruce recalls, "It just became harder to believe. I visited one minister and told him I don't believe a lot of what I'm

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Bruce Sillers – Continued from Page Four

singing and saying in church. You know what he said? Don't worry, a lot of us don't!"

In graduate school and for years later Bruce says, he was "reading, studying, listening to sermons and becoming involved in discussions as part of my searching."

One day a friend said, "You might be a Unitarian." So in 1965 Bruce and Jean found their way to First Unitarian in Madison, "the Frank Lloyd Wright church." Soon, he says, "We looked at each other and said, "Oh, THIS is where we belong! Since then, except for a 2-year gap, we have been Unitarians." BUU is their sixth UU church.

By then a counseling psychologist, Bruce says they felt fortunate to have attended the Madison church when the scholar and intellectual Max Gaebler was its minister, and later to attend Unity Church in St. Paul with the humanist Arthur Foote II as minister. (Foote was instrumental in preparing the first UU hymnal.)

Bruce and Jean's artistic daughter Kelley died at age 26, a terrible blow to the family.

"She saw things differently," he remembers, "and sometimes when Jean and I have a decision to make or a problem to solve, we ask ourselves how Kelley would have looked at it." During the difficult months after their daughter passed, Bruce adds, "I really learned the value of showing up - some friends and relatives showed up and it really was important to us."

Also after Kelley died, nature held even more meaning for Bruce. "I can feel very spiritual in nature." He adds, "I've opened myself up to things that I'm not always sure what's real and what isn't." He learned from reading Carlos Castañeda that "there are things that we can't see well."

"There's a lot that I just don't know. I think I tolerate different beliefs more easily now, except when they try to force it on me. I certainly have more of a sense of humility, an acceptance that I don't or can't know everything. I think a thread running through my whole history is community. I was really tickled when our top value at BUU came out to be community!"

The Sillers came to BUU after leaving a painful and difficult situation in their Seattle-area UU church,

where a "divisive minister" split the congregation into factions and damaged many relationships, Bruce says. There they had become friends with Jeanne Macauley, who would later encourage them to attend BUU during one of their winter visits to Green Valley. "She told us, 'I know what you've been through, come down and give us a try. It was just like fresh air to be here, and we joined in 2022.'"

Committee Fair To Give Folks A Chance to Participate

When we had small group meetings organized by the Vision and Mission team to determine what the most important attributes of BUU were, 'Community' was the top choice by an overwhelming margin. The Committee Fair is being held January 19th to give people an opportunity to make friends and join in community.

After the Sunday Service, tables in the Gallery will be filled with the various committee representatives to inform people just what each committee does and how to join in. A list of the committees will be printed in the Order of Service to study beforehand. (Hopefully, before the service, so one can pay attention to what is happening.)

Lorelei Schober, chair of the Co-Ordinating Council, reports, "This will be our second Committee Fair. It's a time for everyone to learn more about all the Committees involved in the life of the congregation. There are ongoing activities such as 'Sunday Coffee' as part of the Hospitality Committee. The Monthly Share offering is part of Social Justice. Some activities are One and Done, such as the Spring Fashion Show and the Women's Retreat. Find out where you can. . 'Support our congregation with your presence, gifts and service.'"

One should also remember that the "Holy No" will be respected, but if you like people and like to make new friends, this is the best opportunity.

Green Valley Samaritans Are January's 50/50 Choice

Submitted by Barbara Lemmon

The Samaritans are one of the Humanitarian Aid groups in southern Arizona who offer lifesaving aid to migrants in our desert and mountains. Organizing in 2005 after Tucson Samaritans, they began by placing water, food, and blankets on known migrant trails with the simple moral mission of preventing death. We know that Migrants are dying in our desert at least every two days as the count of recovered remains since 2005 is over 4300. However, most remains will never be found. The common cause of death is dehydration and exposure, whether heat or cold.

Over the years Samaritans have expanded into other supportive work – at the KINO Comedor and other shelters in Nogales Mexico, at Casa Alitas shelter in Tucson, and court witnessing in Tucson.

For the past year as migrants from all over the globe began to seek asylum in large numbers at our border, teams of Samaritans established a welcome camp at the end of the wall in the remote mountains of Santa Cruz County. There they are given water, food, and medical evaluations while they wait out in the elements for the Border Patrol to pick them up.

Your donations help purchase supplies for the camp, gas and upkeep for vehicles, life straws and blankets for desert hikers, and first aid. If you are interested in looking into joining Samaritans, check our website at <http://www.gvs-samaritans.org/> We meet every other Monday at 8 AM at Good Shepherd UCC.

This month there are two extraordinary events. On Jan 15 Samaritan Alyson Ball will be hosted by BCA at the Green Valley Methodist Church. Her talk at 2 PM is titled Immigration Basics and What Could Be Ahead in 2025. The program will also be on zoom and recorded. This is a free event. Please register at <https://bordercommunityalliance.org/> to get the zoom link. The following day starts the 20th annual Common Ground on the Border, held on Jan 16-18 at Good Shepherd UCC church. It is an event of music,

art, tours and local multicultural vendors. Our superior speakers this year are Dolores Huerta, who was co-founder of United Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez. Also, Dora Rodriguez of Salvavision and Samaritans, Mike Wilson of Tohono O'odham nation, and Margo Cowan, public Defender and immigration activist. Please go to The Good Shepherd website to register.

<https://www.thegoodshepherducc.org/common-ground-on-the-border> Saturday morning speaker forum is only \$10 at the door, no pre-registration required.

We hope to see you there, especially on Saturday morning.

Calendar Of 50/50 For 2025 Share the Offering

January 2025	Green Valley Samaritans
February 2025	Amado Youth Center
March 2025	Border Community Alliance
April 2025	Sopori School
May 2025	Hands of a Friend/ Genesis House
June 2025	Valley Assistance Services
July 2025	Early Learning Program Arivaca
August 2025	Helping Hearts Arivaca
September 2025	Habitat for Humanity
October 2025	UU JAZ Justice Arizona
November 2025	Casa Alitas Shelter
December 2025	St. Andrew's Children's Clinic

Every Sunday is an opportunity to participate in the life of Borderlands. Greeters to welcome folks at the door with an Order of Service, Folks to Pass the Basket at Offertory, Counters to tally the collection, and the ever-needed Kitchen Wizards are in demand. Sign up and meet friends and those you'd like to know better.

Metaphors, Semaphores, And Two - By - Fours: Folding Tables

By Randy L. Mitchell

"In a world filled with people, only some want to fly; isn't that crazy?" (Seal)

The human race. An evolutionary enigma. Capable of so much good. Capable of so much evil. Highly developed in the manipulation of its environment. Able to build and utilize tools. Able to think, create, destroy, and create again. Inventive. We think, therefore we invent.

What comes to mind when you think of the great inventions of the human race? The wheel? The printing press? Penicillin? Electricity? The internal combustion engine? The telephone? The radio? Nuclear vision? Microchips? Lasers? Too easy. Sure, all of those developments were important. Life as we know it was and continues to be shaped by inventions like these. But think smaller for a moment. Think of inventions that are so much a part of your life that you take them totally for granted. Now think what your life would be like without them.

Paper clips. Not very significant, right? How about fingernail clippers? Scissors? Swiss army knives? Pencil sharpeners? Velcro? Forks? Combs? Keys? If we didn't have them we'd have to invent them.

Folding tables. Not very important – unless you have to feed several people in a room where many other functions need to take place. Believe it or not, there can be wonder in the mundane, magic in the ordinary, and wisdom in the commonplace.

Who are the inventors of the simple solutions? We generally don't know. The first person to take a wire and bend it into a paper clip probably didn't get rich. There is no nail clipper king to my knowledge. Henrico de Scissors is not commemorated on a stamp. Yet these are examples of human ingenuity. Much of the human experience related to discovery goes unrecognized. In a world filled with things, we take things for granted. In a world filled with ideas, we take ideas for granted. In a world filled with people, we take people for granted. Like folding

tables, we put them away when we're finished with them.

We have a unique opportunity to not take things, ideas, and people for granted. We have the opportunity to examine more closely, to listen more loudly, and to sense more fully the world we inhabit and the world we create. If we don't – and if we don't teach each other to experience their lives more completely – we've wasted the precious gifts of time and energy available to us.

Early in my career a custodian taught me that much less pressure would be placed on my hands if I carried a folding table by its folded legs rather than by the metal edge of the table top. A simple lesson perhaps but one that saved me a substantial degree of discomfort. He was just one of the many teachers I had in my life and work; he knew how to use tools and how to teach others to use them.

Many years ago, I bought an 8-foot commercial quality folding table for use at home. Among its many uses, it provided a surface for garage sale items, a neighborhood picnic, a temporary desk, a fabric cutting surface for our daughter's evil stepmother costume, and a place to stack books while painting a room. It made me wonder how we possibly managed the household without that folding table.

Folding tables may just be things – instrumental and practical. But with a little creativity and ingenuity they take on more magical, spiritual qualities. Thomas Moore, in his best selling book, *"Care of the Soul,"* suggested that things have soul; that the value of things is based on our attachments to them and the meanings and memories that those things have in our lives. Moore concluded by speculating on whether things can suffer, not unlike people, when they have no value or meaning beyond their function. How often do the things, ideas, and people that cross our paths suffer because we only see them as instrumental, practical, and functional?

This essay began with the words from a 1980s singer/songwriter named Seal: *"In a world filled with people, only some want to fly; isn't that crazy?"* I think it's crazy to not find wonder in the mundane, magic in the ordinary, and wisdom in the commonplace. In a world filled with things, let's not take things for granted. In a world filled with ideas, let's not take ideas for granted. In a world filled with people, let's not take people for granted. Let's encourage them to fly.

We Did It !!



Hats, gloves, mittens, even a scarf or two covered the Giving Tree, and moved on to fill the box below, and then many more donations on the table in the Gallery.

These warm gifts will go to the border and Casa Alitas to be given to migrant children to ward off the cold. We know the children will feel the warmth of love and concern from BUU well wishers. Not incidentally, our hearts, too, feel the joy of helping others, even in a small way.

History is Interesting When It Is About Us

By Carol Hoy

The now famous rally/protest/celebration corner in Green Valley was instituted by June Wortman in 2004 when George Bush invaded Iraq. June, our BUU Conscience (preceding Barbara Lemmon) organized women, dressed in black, with signs protesting the war. They stood on La Canada on Monday mornings, every Monday, enduring jeers and acrimony, solaced by horns tooting agreement and thumbs up. June always smiled back and waved. She believed that treating anger with smiles created strength in the smilers, and probably not too generous, but it felt good, when the jeering, thumbs down folks were absolutely flummoxed by love.

To create perspective: June Wortman, then 13 years old was imprisoned with her family by the Japanese during WWII. Her mother was a famous activist for liberal causes. June became fiercely driven to support peace in all forms.

Then a few years later, women and a few men, gathered on the sidewalk on La Canada and Esperanza on Valentine's Day, dressed in red to call attention to Domestic Violence Abuse. Folks from Good Shepherd Church joined in, later the Democratic Party encouraged this idea.

By this time the MAGA activists started getting ugly and called the police every single time people gathered. The police advised us to stay on the sidewalk for safety. We agreed that we understood and that was our practice.

Momentum grew. The Red For Ed Movement to support teachers and staff with a decent salary came to the forefront. We assembled there, later joined a huge gathering on Duval Mine Road. The voter Initiative passed. The Arizona Legislature promptly cut the amount budgeted so that the teachers basically lost the salary improvement. WE RISE.

And as they say, the 'rest is history.' There is a memorial plaque honoring June just west on the Esperanza side green space. Next time you are moved to rally for a cause, take a few moments to view it; actually any time would work.

Have you heard about UUnderWorld?

Submitted by Jeanne Macauley

Since the last General Assembly, a new, free, independent, reader submitting, online magazine has begun, and we're going on our 8th monthly issue! We are working to become a platform for unfiltered and interesting contributions from liberal spiritual people of all shapes and sizes, to discuss and contemplate issues about Unitarianism, Universalism, church management & philosophy and lots of other topics. We have editorials, letters, cartoons, ads and news. We are working toward a vibrant "help wanted" section for job seekers and openings.

All current and past issues are available at our spankin' new website UUnderWorld.com. You can also be added to the email list there. Check them out! We depend on readers sharing the issues to get help the word out, so please share with your congregation, minister, friends, family and strangers.

If you want to comment or send something in to be included in the next issue, please send to UUnderWorld74@gmail.com. Flexible deadline is the 5th of each month.

Thanks!

John Griffin Miller, editor
UUnderWorld



And Another Thing.

UPCOMING SERVICES

January 5th: Epiphany Stories

January 12th: The Blessings of Martin Luther King

January 19th: Lay-Led Service – Committee Fair

January 26th: Resilience Speak

What Do UU's Subscribe To?

Submitted by Jeanne Macauley

Borderlands UU congregation welcomed new members in December. Along with a hearty welcome, members received a new book that many BUU folks are finding interesting, *A Liberal Religious Path: A Short, Personal Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*, by Rev. Jame Kubal-Kumoto, a UU minister for nearly 25 years. @2023

Rev. James attempts to *"clearly explain what many Unitarian Universalists do believe, not just what we don't, I share my personal beliefs as a Unitarian Universalist and make references to my understanding of commonly shared Unitarian Universalist beliefs..."*

"...Finally, let me say more about being religious. In this book, I try to describe Unitarian Universalism in a way that shows that Unitarian Universalism is not only a philosophy of social ethics, as it sometimes appears to outsiders, but a religious tradition that deals with the ultimate questions of human existence."

Kubal-Komoto, James. *A Liberal Religious Path: A Short, Personal Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*. Kindle Edition. Paperback available for \$7.50 on Amazon

The Annual Auction Is Coming

The official kick off will be Sunday January 5th. We look forward to another great event. The auction is how Borderland UUs put the FUN in fundraising. Look for Diana King and Deb Mitchell in the Gallery after the service. We'd love to talk to you about activities and auction items you'd like to offer. Some past items that have been offered include meals, happy hours, bird watching, picnics, local tours. etc.

