



ransforming times



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Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson*

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Freedom

By Rev. Diane Dowgiert, Minister

Freedom is a core value in Unitarian Universalism. The call of freedom rings clearly through our heritage. The freedom we seek is not only for ourselves, but also for all those who live under conditions of oppression. We seek to liberate ourselves from false beliefs that prevent us from seeing the world clearly, from ingrained patterns of behavior that prevent us from living life fully, and from the wounds of the past that keep us tied to the past.

The journey of personal liberation is an important one, part of the spiritual quest. The more we confront those stuck places in ourselves, or those hurt, wounded places, or places of worn-out beliefs that no longer serve us -- the more we develop empathy and compassion for people who live under conditions of oppression. It is then that we find the courage to work for the benefit of others who suffer bondage of mind or body or spirit.


Our religious forebears of the Reformation stood valiantly for religious freedom during a time of extreme religious intolerance. Then there were those who established Unitarianism and Universalism on American soil while standing valiantly for the freedom of people who were enslaved, working for their emancipation. They also championed the cause of equal rights for women. In more recent years, Unitarians and Universalists worked alongside Dr. Martin Luther King in the Civil Rights movement. Freedom's call rings on!

In each of my sermons this month, I'll explore a different aspect of freedom from a religious perspective. I'll begin with freedom of the pulpit, which grants ministers the freedom to speak truth, as he or she sees it, and to speak that truth in love. Then I'll look at spiritual practices that lead to greater freedom. And finally, I'll explore some questions about how class status impacts personal freedom.

I consider it a great privilege to prepare and deliver sermons each week. For me, they are conversation starters, to get us all talking with each other about matters of importance, exercising freedom of the pew, speaking the truth in love.

In the spirit of freedom,
Diane





Transforming Times is organized around theological themes. Each theme plays a part in the development of a well-grounded religious and spiritual life. The church's offerings are by no means limited to the themes. They do provide common ground for community conversation, a way to gain more meaning and depth. We want to hear many perspectives on each theme. You are invited to submit your original poetry, artwork, or short essays of 350 words or less. Be warned: seriously engaging these themes could transform your life!

September: Freedom
October: Covenant
November: Religious Authority
December: Concepts of God
January: Evil
February: Love
March: Brokenness
April: Forgiveness
May: Transformation