



Good Gnus

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro, AR
P.O. Box 1414, Jonesboro, AR 72403

Ariene Domio, President
adomio@suddenlink.net

www.jonesborouu.org
facebook.com/jonesborouu

Betty Stafford, editor
nestafford@sbcglobal.net

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

—Native American Proverb

Service Calendar

The Fellowship meets at Temple Israel, 203 W. Oak Ave., Jonesboro. Services and Children's Program 10 a.m. Coffee 10:45 a.m. Adult Forum 11 a.m.

We gather in worship to find meaning and to live more deeply. Worship creates connections within, among, and beyond us, calling us to our better selves, calling us to live with wisdom and compassion—UUA.

 **April 3 Homage to April Fool's Day.** Karen Yanowitz will present the "Psychology of Humor." Bring your humorous stories and jokes to share.

Please remember the **Children's Shelter** with your donation of personal hygiene products. Especially needed are 100% real fruit juices, jellies, quart & gallon freezer bags.

April 10 Dr. Craig Jones, ASU Professor of Psychology & Counseling, will speak on "Caregiving: Maintaining Dignity and Seeking Justice." Dr. Jones will discuss how our society deals with adults suffering from chronic disabling conditions, focusing on the issues caregivers must address to maintain the dignity of care receivers and obtain social justice for them.

The second Sunday is also **Peanut Butter Sunday**. Please remember your neighbors with donations of peanut butter or other nutritious items for the Food Pantry.

April 17 Andrea Levy and Karen Yanowitz, will share the meaning of Passover and how Temple Israel members and families celebrate its customs.



The third Sunday is our monthly **Pot Luck lunch**. Bring a dish and conversation to share.

April 24 Dr. Jennifer Bouldin, ASU Assoc. Professor of Environmental Biology, will lead us in celebrating Earth Day.

Mark Your Calendar

- ✓ April 29-30 The Spring Conference of the Arkansas UU Cluster, Hot Springs Village.
- ✓ May 10 City Elections
- ✓ May 15 UUFJ Annual Congregational Meeting, to elect officers for the coming year, consider a budget, and review any by-laws changes
- ✓ June 12 UUFJ Annual Picnic, Pavilion 3, Craighead Forest Park

In the Cluster

The Fellowship is invited to attend the Installation Service for the **Rev. Jan K. Nielsen**, Sunday, May 22, 2016, at the UU Church of Little Rock, 1818 Reservoir Rd., 11 a.m. A reception will follow. If you wish to attend, please let Norm Stafford know by May 1st, nestafford@sbcglobal.net. Rev. Nielsen participated in the October Cluster Meeting, where the Fellowship had an opportunity to meet her.



On March 6, 2016, the UUA Presidential Search Committee introduced a new candidate in the race for UUA president—the **Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray**. In January 2016, the Committee had nominated the Rev. Alison Miller and the Rev. Sue Phillips, but Phillips withdrew in February. UUA bylaws do not allow the search committee to nominate candidates after February 1, so Frederick-Gray will need the support of at least **25 congregations** to become an official candidate. Congregations are encouraged to sustain “the democratic process by supporting the petition of this candidate to ensure that we have a contested election for president.” Other candidates may enter the race until February 1, 2017. Delegates to the 2017 General Assembly will elect a new president to a 6-year term.

In naming Frederick-Gray, the search committee said, “We unanimously endorse her candidacy equally to that of the **Rev. Alison Miller**,” adding that the committee considers both women “strong, visionary, and spiritually grounded leaders.” Information on Rev. Miller, distributed in January, is available at – www.alisonforuupresident.org.

Frederick-Gray has served as lead minister of the UU Congregation of Phoenix since 2008. She previously served as minister of First UU Church of Youngstown, OH, where she was a leader in congregation-based community organizing. She served her internship at First UU Church of Nashville, TN. After leading the UU response to Arizona’s anti-immigrant laws in 2010, she became lead organizer for the Arizona Immigration Ministry and a key organizer of the 2012 Justice General Assembly. She graduated from the U. of Wisconsin and Harvard Divinity School. She lives with her husband, the Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray, and their 9-year-old son, Henry.

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

Most of what we know about the world is mediated through words. We don’t experience most things directly; we hear or read about them. We don’t so much experience the world as gather in symbols of the world—words, ideas, concepts. Words make it possible to share another person’s reality, even a person who lives thousands of miles, or thousands of

years, from us. But when we mistake words for reality, it’s like mistaking a menu for a meal.

Some words may seem objective or neutral, but have embedded value judgments. If someone says what he means, and you like that, you’ll probably call him “honest.” If you don’t like what he says, you’ll probably call him “blunt.” So “honest” and “blunt” may describe the same behavior. If you have a leader who’s involved in day-to-day decision-making, and you like that, you will call her “a hands-on executive.” If you don’t like it, she’s “micro-managing.” Conversely, a leader who is not involved in the details may “know how to delegate,” but if you don’t like that person, he may be “detached.” If someone speaks strongly, and we like it, we’ll say she’s “forceful”; if we don’t like it, we’ll call her “strident.” Your dentist probably won’t say, “This is going to hurt a lot.” He’ll say “You may experience some discomfort.” Have you heard the words “In the unlikely event of a water landing,....”? You probably won’t hear “in case we crash in the ocean,....”



Words are symbols of experience, not the experiences themselves. A word may lead us to think we’re sharing a common experience, when all we’re really sharing is a common symbol. For example, the word “spiritual”—many people like that word. Someone will say, “I’m not all that religious, but I am spiritual,” and the other person will say “I am too!” And they think they hold something deeply in common. But we have no agreed-upon definition for “spiritual.” For one person it might mean “I find God in sunsets.” For another it might mean “I like to listen to New Age music.” Both interesting, but not necessarily the same.

We, living in modern times, may think we don’t give words the magical power that our ancient ancestors did. We may even affirm that “actions speak louder than words” and “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” But words may color how I see things, or how others see them. And that may hurt people, only in a more insidious way than sticks and stones, which you could at least see and know for the weapons they are, unlike words, which can mask a reality, or create a new one altogether.

---from Rev. Dr. Tony Larsen, Olympia Brown UU Church, Racine, WI

The Fellowship's March contribution to Helping Neighbors Food Pantry was **54** pounds of peanut butter. Your concern made the month easier for many needy families.

You can also participate FEED THE NEED—at Harp's, Hays, Cash Savers, and Kroger. Take off a ticket or two at checkout. 100% of Feed the Need contributions goes to the Pantry.

from the UU Service Committee

Mèsi. شكرا. Salamat. Asante. Obrigado. Teşekkür ederim. Gracias. Thank you.



While the words, characters, and pronunciation might vary from country to country, the sentiment remains the same—Thank you for this generous Guest at Your Table gift from the UU Fellowship of Jonesboro in the amount of \$570. With your own and other UU congregations across the country, you make our work possible. Together with more than 50 grassroots partners in 20 countries, including the U.S., UUSC and its members are fostering social justice and building a world free from oppression. We are grateful that you share UUSC's dedication to protecting the world's most vulnerable and delivering peace, justice, and dignity to tens of thousands of people around the world.

Sincerely,
Rev. Dr. William F. Schutz
President and CEO, UUSC



The Worth of Every Person

On March 24, 2016, the UUA and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) designed to provide guidance to UU congregations who wish to charter scouting units. The UUA is the latest religious group to renew its relationship with the BSA, following the Union for Reform Judaism and the United Church of Christ. This move towards re-establishing organizational ties is due to the BSA's recent policy changes making scouting more inclusive of gay scouts and gay scout leaders.

The Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President, said "We have always acknowledged the many shared values between the Boy Scouts and our UU tradition. I am happy to see our two organizations form new bonds of mutual understanding which will allow UU boys and young men who want to participate in scouting to be able to do so within their own UU community."

The UUA opposed the BSA's ban on openly gay members, which led to the dissolution of the relationship between the two organizations in the late 1990s. Despite the conflict, many UUs continued to work in support of LGBTQ justice issues and to persuade the BSA to adopt inclusive scouting policies. While some conservative denominations are severing ties with the BSA following the policy changes, the UUA is proud to be among religious groups who are embracing the BSA's decision to be more inclusive.

The MoU states, in part, that "...the UUA and the BSA will work cooperatively with each other within the policies and regulations of each organization to establish and nurture Scouting units as an expression of the pastoral care and outreach of the youth ministry of the UUA and its member congregations so that boys, young men, and adults may nurture their religious life in a supportive and welcoming UU community."

Why Sing in Church??



Hymn singing is a purposeful way of—

- Forcing you to stand close to your neighbor, who is holding the hymnbook for you.
- Differentiating one church from another. Every UU congregation handles music and congregational singing differently. I nearly swallowed my gum when I found out some UU churches don't use congregational singing AT ALL as part of worship, only bringing in guest singers and musicians on the occasions they feel appropriate. I would hike up my skirts and trot out of any church so inclined. That aside, each church comes to have a particular set of fall-back hymns, with complicated backstories of how they came to be part of the lifestream of the church. These 'in frequent rotation' hymns are part of the psychic furnishings of the church.

—from "A Drunkard's Walk through Singing the Living Tradition," via Chuck Turner

Pilgrimage for Peace

The third annual **Pulaski County Pilgrimage for Peace** will be held on Sunday, April 3, 2016, at 2 pm. This reflective walk will start from Heifer International Village, in Little Rock, pass the Clinton Presidential Library and the River Market, and cross the Junction Bridge to the "Beacon of Peace & Hope" at the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum, 110 Riverfront Dr., N. Little Rock. With prayers for peace and reconciliation, the Pulaski Co. interfaith community seeks to "mourn the violence committed in our community and the world and to walk together as active peace-makers." A service of remembrance will be held at the Beacon site at 3 pm.

—Rich Roy, AR UU Cluster

Our Interdependent Web



Long before there were meteorologists with computer models to track changes in climate, there were winemakers. They kept records of harvest dates. A new paper published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* shows how these records give insight into what's happening now as the globe heats up. Wine grapes are pretty sensitive to temperature and drought, and during hot years, winemakers tend to harvest their grapes earlier. Elizabeth Wolkovich, who runs an ecology lab at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, thought early records of harvests could be useful and found that **grapes are a great window** into changes in climate. She and her colleagues were interested in using long-term harvest dates of wine grapes to see how climate had changed and even to try to reconstruct climate.

The further Wolkovich and Benjamin Cook of NASA went back in time, the less information about climate they found. We often don't have the really long-term records to answer the question of whether things happening in the 1700s and 1800s are the same as what's been happening in the 1900s and onward. But with grapes and France, Wolkovich's colleagues found records going back to the 1300s. Monasteries weren't just for prayer and contemplation. Monks tended large vineyards and kept meticulous records, which another colleague, Inaki Garcia de Cortazar Atauri, tracked down. Inaki went to the old libraries in Avignon and pulled down the books that had been kept by different sorts of

church properties. These handwritten records were carefully compiled from all across France.

When they put all this data together, Wolkovich and her cohorts saw a pattern in Western Europe that remained stable for centuries. It took a heat wave and a drought in the same year to drive temperatures high enough to lead to an early harvest. But beginning in the 1980s, this pattern started to break down. Rising temperatures alone started to move the harvest forward, and this trend has accelerated. So places in the south of France that usually harvested in late September or early October are shifting earlier across France about two weeks. This represents a really big change in the timing of the wine grape harvest.

If you're a wine lover, this is not necessarily a bad thing, at least in the short term. Hotter summers usually yield higher-quality wines in France, so we can actually have higher-quality wines on average with climate change. But we can't keep warming up the system and expect that to continue. And it's not just in Western Europe that weather conditions are forcing winemakers to think about how to adapt to the changes. Lee Hannah, an ecologist with Conservation International, says vintners around the globe are buying up land in places that used to be considered too cool for winegrowing. Wine grapes are starting to be grown in places like Tasmania, even in Montana, and the crop model suggests that those areas will become really good for growing wine. But don't expect a lot of Montana Merlot. Vintners there are experimenting with hybrid grapes more suited to their climate.

—from Allison Aubrey, NPR, 3/23/16



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