



Good Gnus

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro, AR
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August 2016

“The MORE that you READ, the more THINGS you will KNOW.
The MORE you LEARN, the more PLACES you’ll GO!”

—Dr. Seuss

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.

August 7 Our Annual Summer Readers’

Review is an opportunity during discussion for sharing a something you have read recently—fiction, non-fiction, poetry—anything you have enjoyed in the past several weeks.



Please remember the **Children’s Shelter** with your donation of personal hygiene products and 100% fruit juices.

August 14 Jonesboro Chief of Police Rick Elliot and Sgt. Cassandra Brandon, the Department’s Community Outreach & Recruiting Officer, will be our guests. Please plan on attending to give Chief Elliot and Sgt. Brandon a warm welcome.

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.

August 21 Dr. William Bill Clements, retired ASU Professor of Folklore, will discuss Native American harvest ceremonies.



Third Sunday Pot Luck will be shared. Bring a an easy-to-do treat as many of us resume our school schedules.

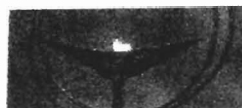
August 28 Fellowship President Arlene Dormio will speak on Love and Community.

September 4 No Meeting—Labor Day Holiday.

September 11 Our Annual In-Gathering & Water Communion Ceremony.

In the Region

The **General Assembly Chalice** travels across the host region prior to GA. Before the 2017 meeting in New Orleans, the Traveling Chalice will be shared in the Southern Region at retreats, ceremonies and other special events, a beautiful way to unite our congregations in preparation for our annual gathering. The Point, the all-ages retreat at Fort Gibson Lake in Oklahoma, enjoyed hosting the GA chalice. **Chuck Turner** was honored to light it on July 28th!



Standing on the Side of Love

Below are excerpts from an editorial (July 20, 2016) in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* titled "Why Let Death Win?," in response Gov. Asa Hutchinson's intention to set execution dates for death row prisoners before January 2017—

"Arkansas' governor is now rushing to execute inmates on Death Row before the shelf-life of a drug runs out...used to put a prisoner to death. Why the rush to fatal judgment? It's a complicated process, putting the condemned to death by the state, and should be. Which may explain why Arkansas hasn't executed a prison since 2005....

"[Governor] Win Rockefeller never did a better, more life-affirming deed than when he commuted the sentences of every prisoner on Death Row to life. He did so openly, publicly, proudly. Not in secret.

"[Judge] Wendell Griffen ruled sections of a state law unconstitutional... those sections of the law that keep secret the supplier of a drug used in executions (vecuronium bromide). But it shouldn't take the common law, just common sense, to tell the rest of us that any public policy that must be carried out in secret may have something shameful about it. There are times when the state must act in secret, such as wartime, but this is decidedly not one of them. Unfortunately, the state Supreme Court reversed Judge Griffen's decision.

"[N]ot a one of these [death row] prisoners may turn out to be the next Birdman of Alcatraz, but that doesn't mean each of their lives is worthless. What man dare take it, and in a rush at that?"

The 1974 UUA General Assembly approved the following resolution—that the UUA will continue "to oppose the death penalty in the United States and Canada, and urges all UUs and their local churches and fellowships to oppose any attempts to restore or continue it in any form."

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

My dog Lydia is not a particularly good dog. I always say that her favorite poem is Mary Oliver's "Wild Geese"— really, the first line, which says, "You do

not have to be good." Lydia has never thought that being good, or pleasing me, was a worthy life goal. Whenever I leave the house, I imagine what may be destroyed when I return. .So far, she has eaten—a houseguest's retainer; a box of butter, box and all; my grandfather's dictionary; too many loaves of bread to count; many bowls of cat food; a whole apple cake; a Costco sized box of cold cereal. And that's just what I can think of quickly.

I have never really had a bad dog before. My old lab Penta could be left in the car with a bag of groceries and trusted not to even sniff at them. Penta lived to please the people in the house. She did what we asked, generally. If one of us spoke sharply to another person in the house, much less to her, she drooped as if she were an unwatered plant. The few times she was left too long and had to pee or poop in the house, she looked miserable and guilty the moment we opened the front door, as if we would blame her for our own negligence. When we had to finally let her go a few years ago, after a long and happy life, she wagged her tail and looked at us trustingly even as the vet injected her with her last shot of any kind.

Lydia was a pound puppy, and we'll never know what happened to her in the 7 months before she arrived here. She is terrified of loud noises or large objects; she cowers when people yell; she will look right at us as she defies a command; she loves nothing more than chasing the cat and stealing its food.

Here's what I have learned from life with Lydia—I adore her. I love her at least as much as I loved Penta, though many days I don't like her. She has been sick lately, and I have been heartbroken at the thought of life without her. It turns out that meaningful companionship isn't always about "being good." Lydia makes me laugh almost every day, even as her behavior sometimes makes me howl. I'd be lost without her—her bad breath, horrible gas, and bad habits are an essential part of my day.

What about you? What parts of your life don't you like, but you love? Have you ever loved someone or something that was nothing but trouble? Life is mysterious, and who and how we love is part of the mystery!

---Rev. Meg Riley, Church of the Larger Fellowship

UUFJ Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Temple Israel 6/23/16

5:30 pm



Present—Arlene Dormio, Marlee McCampbell, Sarah Rout, and Sue Garrison.

After check-in and chalice lighting, the Board discussed the meaning and importance of communicating compassionately with each other and within the Fellowship and created their meeting covenant—"We will communicate compassionately with each other."

The Board created its vision for the Fellowship. **It is not a congregational vision for the Fellowship, but a vision to guide the Board 2016-2017 in the work before them.** This vision is—"to foster and encourage community and connectedness among members, to be more active in the outside community, and to strengthen our outreach and welcoming of others."

The Board created its mission for the Fellowship. **It is not a congregational mission, and was created to guide the Board of Directors in the work before them.** This Mission is—"To help all four committees reach functioning status, to foster and encourage community and build connectedness as a means to strengthen the Fellowship as a force to work in our outside community, and to reach out to the ASU community."

The Board of Directors created concrete goals for the 2016-2017 year—

1. To have and encourage attendance at activities outside service to help build community and to support our members within the Fellowship (examples: attending Mike Watson's performance at Alive After Five and attending the plays of Jeff McLaughlin and Tim Bohn that they direct at the Fowler Center).
2. For the UUFJ to work together as a congregation to create a written covenant, vision, and mission for the congregation.
3. To hold monthly Board of Directors meetings to which every person is invited. Committees are expected to report to the Board regularly, and anyone is always welcome to speak at Board meetings.
4. To hold quarterly Congregational Meetings.

MSP Garrison/Dormio that Committees can use their budgets as assigned without Board approval with the caveat that any expenditures over budget will require Board approval.

Board meetings will be held the second Thursday of every month. The next meeting is July 14th at 5:30 p.m.

UUs Helping UUs

Launchpad is an outreach ministry of the Oak Ridge (TN) UU Church, designed to assist small to mid-size congregations across the UUA landscape. Although we formally report to the ORUUC Board of Trustees, we are forming a national UU advisory board. Launchpad collaborates with The Church of the Larger Fellowship in the production of the new **Faith Rocket** worship materials and provides the following services—

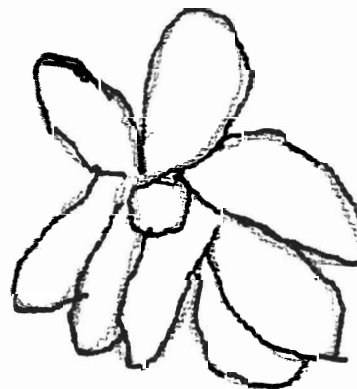
Faith Rocket is an off-the-shelf, turn-key theme-based ministry resource subscription your congregation will receive monthly—high-quality multi-media resources to enliven your ministry while lightening your load.

Launchpad Ready provides the administration and communication elements for "doing church right" and creating the foundation for growth—database, contribution tracking and pledge management, website design and maintenance, and on-line newsletters—designed to free up over-worked volunteers and staff to allow them to focus on core ministries.

Launchpad Able understands that fundamental skill sets are required for a faith community to reach its full potential, including understanding group dynamics, holding space for differences, developing a clear and shared vision, negotiating change while holding on to shared values, finding consensus without forfeiting authenticity, and establishing clear roles, procedures, and responsibilities.

Launch services equip faith communities with the skills and knowledge to respond to the call to transform the world with spiritual integrity, sustainable ministry, and community impact—to transform communities that will transform the world. It's all about growing our UU faith, through strengthening existing congregations and planting new ones.

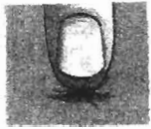
To learn more, visit www.launchpad.faith.



---art by Lyn Clements

Lyn

Our Interdependent Web



We squash mosquitoes with our enormous hands. We poison-bomb them from spray trucks and airplanes. We irradiate them, drain their habitats, and breed them experimentally in laboratories to confound their DNA. We've known for more than a century that a mosquito's bite can pass on brutal disease—Zika is the virus receiving the most attention now, but scores of thousands die from yellow fever and dengue (all transmitted by *Aedes aegypti*). Malaria alone (from the *Anopheles* mosquito) kills more than 400,000 people a year. To this day, insects smaller than a child's thumbnail remain the most dangerous nonhuman animals on the planet.

The ability to quickly alter the code of life, especially through the uncanny accuracy of Cas9/CRISPR technology, has given us unprecedented power over the natural world. The question is—Should we use it? That's what researchers wanted to know when they studied the biting midge, a tiny bloodsucker that can spread diseases to animals and filarial worms to humans. What Dr. Dina Fonseca and other Rutgers University entomologists learned is that the biting midge is the only known pollinator of cacao. Eradicating that particular disease vector may also eliminate chocolate—catastrophe!?!?

Humans haven't completely wiped out a mosquito species yet and studied the consequences. Should we paint a target on the back of *Aedes aegypti*? Although the loss of the passenger pigeon is sad, ecosystems did not collapse. But Fonseca is not worried about exterminating an invasive mosquito which specializes in feeding on people—"The result of removing them is health to humans and more people." David Magnus, director of Stanford University's Center for Biomedical Ethics, agrees—"We could probably eliminate mosquitoes without too much harm to the environment."

Aedes aegypti live in tropical and sub-tropical regions, probably hitchhiking to the Americas in the 1600s on ships from Africa. They thrive in urban environments, especially in poor areas without running water, laying their eggs in containers where people store water. Half the mosquitoes that hatch stay around the house. The others don't stray far enough to places where bats or birds might have a

chance to eat them. We can't predict with certainty how ending this disease-carrying species could affect the ecosystem because there hasn't been much research around this topic. But the evidence scientists do have shows the impact would be small. *Aedes aegypti* are not a big food source for animals, and they don't pollinate plants.

That's not to say that everyone's on board with wiping out even one type of mosquito. "I don't think most people are going to be comfortable with the idea of eliminating a species just because we might be able to," says Bruce A. Hay, at CalTech's Division of Biology and Biological Engineering. "We have to be humble in recognizing the limits of our knowledge," warns bioethicist Magnus. "We ought to be very careful before we do anything that has irreparable consequences." Nonetheless, he's on the side of elimination when it comes to *Aedes aegypti*: "As long as we're aware of the consequences of the change, it could be consistent with our obligations to being good stewards of the environment."

Jorge Rey, professor at the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory, agrees. "We don't know what the impacts are of eliminating these mosquitoes, but I wouldn't make an argument for keeping them, either," he says. "Eliminating the disease is priority one. Despite the consequences, it still has to be priority one."

—Matthew Twombly, NPR 7/22/16; *National Geographic*, August 2016; and *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 2016

