

Good Gnus

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



Arlene Dormio, President
adormio@suddenlink.net

www.jonesborouu.org
facebook.com/jonesborouu

Betty Stafford, editor
nestafford@sbcglobal.net

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"All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."

—Charles M. Schulz

Worship Service Calendar

The Fellowship meets at Temple Israel, 203 W. Oak Ave., Jonesboro. Services and Children's Program 10 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

February 5 Brandon Rout will speak on "Joy in the Simple."

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



February 12 Cori Dyson will share a history of Valentine's Day. Chocolate snacks will be savored over discussion.

The Second Sunday is Peanut Butter Sunday. Please contribute peanut butter or other wholesome foods to the increasing needs of the Food Pantry.

February 19 Stephanie Barker, Northeast Arkansas Coordinator of Goodwill Industries' Transitional Employment Opportunities, will review TEO services to individuals reentering the workforce and community after incarceration.



Third Sunday Potluck will be shared! Please bring a dish you enjoy cooking and serving for all to enjoy together.

February 26 Karen Yanowitz and Brandon Rout will help us celebrate Darwin Day, which honors the anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin (February, 1809). Thanks in part to Darwin, we know that we are part of the inter-related and interdependent web of life.

UUA



The Rev. Peter Morales, UUA president, issued this statement following the announcement by Boy Scouts of America on gender identity—

"I applaud the Boy Scouts of America on their decision to accept and register youth in the Cub and Boy Scout programs based on the gender identity indicated on their application. This is a significant step in the direction of greater inclusion for the BSA.

As a faith community, Unitarian Universalists for many years have supported the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people in all areas of our society. Unitarian Universalists know that greater inclusion on all levels leads to richer relationships and experiences in our lives and communities.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with the BSA on implementing this new policy. Together, we will create a welcoming and inclusive community for all youth who want to participate in scouting."

---1/31/17

Vision, Mission, and Covenant

After the service on January 15th presented by Marlee McCampbell, we divided into groups to address the following issues—

Question 1—What do we want for the fellowship's future?

Group 1) More community involvement and activism to share our values and increase our visibility.

Group 2) Growth and visibility in order to contribute to the community.

Group 3) Engagement.

Group 4) A vibrant growing church that meets the needs of both members and the community; a shining beacon of liberal religion.

Group 5) Greater involvement in the wider community and support of our church community.

Question 2—For what do we want to be known?

- 1) A haven for people seeking a spiritual community outside mainstream religion; support and activism for marginalized communities.
- 2) A group that welcomes those searching, but which, at the same time, values open mindedness, intelligence, and justice in the community.
- 3) A beacon for informed compassion.
- 4) A place of acceptance, service, and support of liberal and progressive values, such as social justice and diversity.
- 5) An accepting, open home of liberal religion and activism.

Question 3—How do we want to behave toward one another?

- 1) To be open-minded, accepting, and supportive while challenging each other to be our best selves.
- 2) To treat each other respectfully but at the same time challenging and caring; in discussion, to address the topic with greater focus.
- 3) To explore each person's unique perspective.
- 4) To dwell together in peace and to work together with love, honesty, and commitment.
- 6) To be supportive, positive, and proactive when we come together.



The Search for Truth and Meaning

The Buddhists' concepts of right speech suggests that you ask yourself three questions before speaking— "Is it true? Is it kind? Will it help?" Other folks have added other questions. "Am I the right person to say it? Is now the right time to speak?" A friend said that a poster on her kid's wall at school said "THINK" in big letters, with each letter beginning a word— True. Helpful. Inspiring. Necessary. Kind. I'd remove "inspiring"; that's a high bar from my perspective. Maybe replace it with a simple "I?" As in, "Am I the best person to say that?" And maybe I'd replace "Necessary" with "Now?"

We might examine ourselves and what we say in many ways, and we will have countless opportunities in these days to try all of them. I have observed that tensions are high and that many people in social media speak before they think. We have elected a president who appears to speak without thinking, and such modeling can trickle down. Social media makes it so easy to respond reflexively, defensively, sarcastically. I mostly avoid temptation, but whenever I have not, I have regretted it!

The questions I learned in the first class I ever took in seminary and which I have always found useful when poking around at the deeper meaning of things, because they use plain English, are—What is the problem? What is the source of the problem? What overcomes the problem? What is the source of what overcomes the problem? What is the way forward?

One thread became exquisitely clear as we each responded to the final question—What is the way forward? The way forward is empathy and compassion. We are saved together or none of us is saved. Collective liberation. Deepening our awareness of connection. Spiritual practice and resistance, which we do together.

In these days ahead, I encourage us all to practice right speech, including when we call our elected representatives to speak truth and necessity, as well as when we speak to the ones closest to us to offer kindness and helpfulness. Do what you need to stay strong. Take care of your body and your heart and your mind and your home and your blessed spirit of resistance and your little bit of earth. We need each other in these days ahead.

—Rev. Meg Riley, Church of the Larger Fellowship, clfu.org

Declaration of Conscience

In a joint letter, UU Service Committee CEO Tom Andrews and UUA President Peter Morales invite you to sign the Declaration of Conscience, committing to put UU values into action to resist hate, fear and bigotry. The letter reads in part, "There is a sense of urgency, and a need for vigilance. And there is clarity that we must act, not alone, but together. We need everyone—including you, your congregation, your friends, and your colleagues. As a first step, we have prepared a Declaration of Conscience stating in the strongest possible terms our commitment in these troubling times. By signing the declaration, individuals and congregations will be affirming our core values and declaring our willingness to put them into action. Please read it and, with your signature, join us in standing on the side of love, protecting the most vulnerable among us, and defending core values that are under attack."

Read the full letter (<http://tinyurl.com/jdd8kug>), and sign the Declaration of Conscience today—
<http://tinyurl.com/z4pxf4l>



SouthWest UU Women's Conference

This annual conference will be held at the Magnolia Hotel, Dallas, TX, February 10-12. Keynote speaker will be Helen Bond, percussionist of intricate melodies and polyrhythms of West African music. Also performing and leading a workshop will be Going Native, a vocal group of three women who also do keyboard and guitar. Some of the workshops include—

- Making Self Care a Priority
- Dialogue with the Self
- After Incarceration
- Reproductive Justice
- Spirituality of Laughter
- Art and Activism
- Barriers to Abortion Access
- Wake Up to Water!

Go to www.swuuw.org to register.

Board Meeting Minutes, January 12, 2017

Present—Arlene Dormio, Sue Garrison, Marlee McCampbell, Karen Brown, Brandon Rout, & Andrea Walker

Arlene called the meeting to order at 5:58 pm, after check-in and chalice lighting.

Treasurer

- a. Sue presented her report, with no changes since the December meeting.
- b. Sue has developed a donation/pledge letter and pledge forms and will distribute them this month. She posed the following questions—
 1. Should those who have not completed a pledge form recently do so now or wait until the end of this pledge period (May)? The group agreed on March so that the budget committee can have this information to develop next year's budget.
 2. Why is our fiscal year June 1-May 31? The group agreed that this is a By-Laws question.
- c. The new hymnals (*Singing the Journey*; otherwise known as the "Teal Hymnal") have been ordered, and Sue has asked a pianist to record piano tracks for use in worship.

Worship Service January 15th

The service addressing Vision, Mission, and Covenant was discussed, as well as the plan for completing this work in March. [See pg. 2 for a summary of group work on the 15th.]

Books for Knowledge

The group reviewed expenditures from this fund—*Building Your Own Theology* and *Books for Knowledge*. About \$300 remains, which Karen Brown suggested might be used to purchase a larger/taller bookcase; Karen has catalogued the Fellowship's books and has 3-4 boxes of them at her house. Arlene wondered if some of these funds could be used to purchase materials from the UU Bookstore; no decision was made.

Google Education Account

Andrea explained that this account is free to us as a nonprofit and would allow us to keep information in a central location and set up email accounts.

Secretary Needed

A Board Secretary still needs to be recruited.

Action Items

- 1) Arlene will develop materials for new members/visitors/friends on service opportunities.
- 2) Karen and Sue both asked about our recorded physical address. Various sources list it differently, and GPS cannot find the Temple's recorded address. "Near 1014 Madison" gets those using GPS to the parking lot.

The Fellowship's January contribution to Helping Neighbors Food Pantry was 59 pounds of peanut butter.

Thank you for starting off the New Year so generously with your concern for needy families.



Our Interdependent Web

It's likely that the only time you really notice one of your neighborhood broadcast and cell towers is at night when they're lit up with conspicuous bright red lights. Those lights help pilots see the huge metal structures that can reach 1,000 feet into the air — but they can spell disaster for birds. In 1976 in Gun Lake, MI, one tower killed over 2,300 birds in one night. Thousands of towers are strewn across the country, and, as you go across the world, the numbers are staggering. In North America alone, an estimated 7 million birds smash into towers every year. But until recently scientists didn't know why it was happening.

Figuring that out became biologist Joelle Gehring's mission. She led a study in 2003 to find out what could be done. At a broadcast tower in rural northeast Michigan that belongs to the local radio station, every morning in the spring or fall — the peak migration season — Gehring and others had the unpleasant job of counting dead birds at the base of these towers. What she discovered was surprising. Bird deaths occur most frequently among Neartic-Neotropical migrating songbirds. (The *Neartic* realm covers most of North America, including Greenland, to the highlands of Mexico.) "We were able to reduce the numbers of bird fatalities on communications towers by simply extinguishing those non-flashing lights," she says. "Fatalities were reduced by as much as 70 percent."

Exactly why isn't yet clear, but she has a theory. "Some research has documented that when birds are exposed to long wavelengths of light, such as red or white, that it actually interferes with their ability to use magnetic fields for navigation," Gehring says. This is especially true on cloudy nights when birds can't navigate by the stars. The towers' steady red lights seem to confuse them. Flashing red lights don't.

In 2015, the Federal Aviation Administration changed regulations on new towers requiring they all be built with only flashing lights. Gehring, who now works for the Federal Communications Commission, spends much of her time contacting people who run towers built before 2015, encouraging them to switch to blinking lights. "When we drive back and forth around those beautiful Great Lakes at night, we see more and more communications towers that are lit with only flashing lights at night, and my son always points out 'another bird-friendly tower, Mom,'" she says.

However, tens of thousands of towers are still not bird-friendly, with birds drawn to those solid red lights. Gehring and others will continue to try to save migrating birds by doing one simple thing — by having those tower lights changed.

—Ben Thorpe, NPR, 1/24/17



"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, let me present the alternative facts of the case."