



Good Gnu

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro, AR
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"Freedom is nothing but a chance to be better."

—Albert Camus

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*.

**July 3 Chuck Turner** will coordinate "**Patriotism & Liberal Religion.**" Quite a few people deeply involved in the Revolutionary War belonged to Unitarian or Universalist churches (Benjamin Rush, John & Abigail Adams, John Murray, Samuel West, etc.). The connection between patriotism and liberal religion continued through the middle of the 20th century. Members and friends are invited to select a song or an event in U.S. history involving liberal religion with meaning for you and introduce it. Live music, displays, or skits are welcome.

Please remember the *Children's Shelter* with your donation of personal hygiene products.

July 10 Bryan Pierce, with ASU's Heritage Studies Program, will speak on the Southern Tenant Farmers Union Museum, in Tyroneza.

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.

July 17 Cori Dyson will explore "Ganesh Today" — how to understand this Hindu god, his origins, why he is worshipped, what he means to people throughout the world, and how he could help and/or inspire our lives today.



Third Sunday Pot Luck will be shared. Bring a cool and easy-to-do summer treat to enjoy as we visit with friends.

July 24 Lisa Bohn will present "Queering the Seven Principles," reflecting on the LGBTQ+ community and how the Fellowship can serve as allies and advocates. Lisa is head of A-State's SafeZone Training program and a member of the inaugural class of The Reformation Project, a Christian direct action organization that promotes LGBT inclusion by reforming church teaching on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Lisa's presentation is the first of several worship services and workshops to complete the work of **Revisiting our Welcoming Congregation** status with the UUA.

July 31 Chuck Long,* the Education/Outreach Coordinator with the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission at the Forrest L. Wood Nature Center in Jonesboro, will update us on the activities at this inviting facility.

*subject to change





Orlando Victim Support

Two quality organizations doing incredible work to support the LGBTQ community in Orlando, FL, following the horrific shootings in June are overseen by Equality Florida (<https://www.gofundme.com/PulseVictimsFund>) and The Center (<https://www.gofundme.com/29bubytq>).

Equality Florida is the largest civil rights organization dedicated to securing full equality for Florida's LGBTQ community. Through education, grassroots organizing, coalition building, and lobbying, EF is changing Florida so that no one suffers harassment or discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The mission and values of **The Center** are to promote and empower the GLBT community and its allies through information, education, advocacy, and support, and to transform the community by inspiring and connecting people and organizations promoting acceptance and inclusion, empowering them to achieve their potential.

When we are concerned that marginalized communities will be ignored in a crisis, we UUs often do our own fund raising and organizing. In this case, I believe attention is where it needs to be, and we have no need to duplicate efforts at this time.

Thank you so much for your care and concern.

Rev. Kathy Schmitz
First Unitarian Church of Orlando

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

A few years back, I went with my family in North Carolina to a big amusement park. After turns on the merry-go-round, the water slide and the roller coaster, our sights turned towards the bungee jump. My sister, my nieces, and I stood watching the huge crane lift two people at a time up and up to the height of a 10-story building, then drop them towards the pavement. My sister and one niece immediately said, "No way!" My other niece Lauren and I stepped bravely forward.

We lay down on our stomachs on a mat and were strapped into connecting vests with a large metal hoop on the back. The bungee cord hook clicked in, and the crane started to draw us slowly up into the air. The parking lot, the Ferris wheel, my family were all getting smaller and smaller. My adrenaline started to flow, and the fight-or-flight instinct kicked in fiercely. I had an overwhelming feeling of wanting escape, yet there was nowhere to go. Lauren, only 13, started to whimper, then cry. "I can't do this, Aunt Louise. I want to get down!" "It's too late, Lauren; they can't hear us," I said. "We are going to have to let g..." The word "go" stuck in my mouth because we suddenly were plunging to the earth on a bungee cord. The air was whipping by our ears and all was a blur. I felt a surge of true terror, shut my eyes tightly, and screamed spontaneously at the top of my lungs, along with Lauren. We dropped endlessly, it seemed, and then, at the bottom, something fantastic happened.



We bounced up and down, and then launched into flight. The bungee cord contraction and release sent us into an arc, and we were swinging back and forth like a pendulum. Our eyes flew open in astonishment. Following the horrible seconds of falling there came an exhilarating flight—the flying of birds, or planes, or vivid dreams. We gazed out in delight and laughter, watching the amusement park swing by, the larger landscape to the horizon, all the way to the distant toy skyline of downtown Charlotte. It was quiet and peaceful, absolutely calm. We had completely let go—no choice really, once we hooked onto the cord and crane—and the result was a freedom to fly that we had not imagined. We saw the wide earth below us.

The bungee cord, the plunging, the bouncing—all of that is life. The arc of the pendulum; the flight after you are forced to let go—that is grace. It's not what you expected; it might come after a hair-raising drop or challenging event—and still, grace arrives as a gift you did not know you would receive. Perhaps you have your own description of the sensation. Grace is the absolute calm of being caught. Grace is the peaceful knowing you are beloved. It is ending your scream, opening your eyes, and smiling at a new landscape.

—Rev. Louise Green, Minister of Congregational Life, River Road UU Congregation, Bethesda, MD

To Our Honor Congregations



June, ending the UUA's fiscal year, is often a scrambling month as UUA personnel reach out to those who have not yet completed their UUA GIFT pledge. We lift up with gratitude those who have fulfilled their commitment at the 7% or more level of investment in our larger ministries, and **the Jonesboro Fellowship is on that list!!!**

Presidents Convocation

This year's Southern Region Presidents Convocation will be held in Dallas, TX, July 8-9. We will come together in a learning community, to network, share, and deepen our experience. Far too often congregational presidents come into office with an incomplete understanding of the resources available to them outside their individual congregations. The President's Convocation is an opportunity to gather with other congregational Presidents and Regional Staff and learn from one another, to open up possibilities, share expertise and stories, and develop friendships.

from the UUA



"I am profoundly disappointed in the U.S. Supreme Court's 4-4 decision in *United States v. Texas* upholding a lower court decision that struck down President Obama's executive actions on immigration that expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and created Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA). My thoughts are with the millions of immigrant families whose lives are made harsher by this outcome.

Blocking the DACA and DAPA programs is a betrayal of our country's immigrant roots. The American justice system has failed millions of people who are living in fear of deportation. These immigrants daily face the possibility of being torn from their loved ones and homes.

For years, our UU community has supported immigrant families and immigration reform. In 2010, I was arrested for non-violent civil disobedience along with dozens of people of faith protesting SB 1070,

Arizona's inhumane anti-immigrant law. In 2012, the UUA focused its General Assembly on social justice for immigrant reform and migrant rights. In 2013, GA delegates passed a statement of conscience declaring immigration to be a moral issue. The UUA has also re-committed to the Sanctuary Movement, where congregations provide safety, housing, and assistance for individuals facing deportations. **And still it is not enough.**

We cannot rest until the U.S. Congress passes comprehensive immigration reform. No one should have to live in the shadows based on their immigration status. Together, we can light the way to a path to citizenship for millions of hard-working people in this country. As a nation of immigrants, we must shape our laws, practices and policies to support immigrant families. As a religious community, we cannot ignore the moral call to help those who are suffering. And as citizens of the world, we must remember that love has no borders."

---Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President, 6/23/16

And from the UU Service Committee



More people than ever before, nearly 58 million, have been forced to flee their homes, from Syria to Central America—refugees, asylum seekers, and people currently displaced within their own countries by humanitarian crises. Despite this, the U.S. continues to fall short of its pledge to open its arms to Syrian refugees, and continues to detain men, women, and children that have entered the U.S. to escape the violence south of the border. The shameful anti-immigrant rhetoric currently spreading throughout the country is bleeding over into how we react to and treat refugees. The UU Service Committee believes that the U.S. must change its course and provide a meaningful opportunity for those fleeing violence to find safety and healing.

To mark **World Refugee Day, June 20th**, UUSC launched a Refugee Response Network to (1) provide Americans with resources to stay informed and to act as a meaningful force for change in the response of the U.S. and its citizens to humanitarian crises and (2) to encourage the U.S. to open its arms to the world's refugees. For more information, see uus.org—**"Rights at Risk."**

Our Interdependent Web



A Poem about Moths, by Steve Tomaska

Butterflies schmutterflies. They get most of the press, and *all* the poetry. Didja know that for every damn fitterin' kinda butterfly there's sixteen of us moths? No? Of course not! Didja know that we pollinate flowers too? Yup, jus' that we work quiet-like in the background of night not lookin' for glory struttin' around in all our flutterin' foo-foo clothes in the broad light of day as if to say "damn, ain't we just fine? Ain't we just the prettiest damn little dainty things you ever did see?" Hey, we got beauty too, we're just not show-offs. We're moruva practical sort. Our outer wings? Drab, yeah, but that's to help us hide. Make us look like bark, a fallen leaf, even a bit of bird doo-doo.

But our underwings, whoa! We jus' don't go around flauntin' 'em all the time. And we do have our out-and-out beauties. Even seen a Luna moth? Ethereal as hell, that guy. Some think we mostly fly at night 'cause we like to lurk in the dark or we're afraid of birds. But, hey, someone's gotta pull the night shift. And we gotta deal with bats. Bats got sonar. Blind as a bat, hell, give me a bird any day. I'll letcha in on a little secret. Some of us can jam that sonar. I won't lie to ya. We got our bad apples. The clothes moths, or those guys that get into yer cupboard and eat yer dried goods. But, every group has their bad seeds, know what I mean? Like I said, we don't go aroun' struttin' our stuff for all to see. We're more like, understated, underrated, under-appreciated, undercover sorts. But really, we're not complainin' none. We don't want none of that pomp and circumscribe, or what have ya. Like I said, really, it's ok. We're not about self-promotion. We just do our jobs and know in our own one-chambered hearts, it's a job well-done.

--Tomaska has an MS in Entomology, UW-Madison, which is probably why insects often creep their way into his poems.

National Moth Week is held annually the last full week in July (23-31, 2016) and brings together citizen scientists around the world to celebrate these amazing insects. With more than 10,000 species in North America alone, moths offer endless options for study, education, photography, and fun. Moths can be found everywhere, from inner cities and suburban backyards, to the most wild and remote

places. The diversity of moths is astonishing. Far more complex than the wool-munching varieties that often spring to mind, moths include more than 150,000 species, whose wingspans range from one foot to half the width of a pencil eraser. Vital flower pollinators and a food source for many bats and birds, moths face numerous threats. Loss of native habitat has endangered many species, making protecting important moth habitat, such as **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**, more important than ever. Their colors and patterns range from bright and dazzling to so cryptic that they define camouflage. Moth shapes and sizes span the gamut, with some as small as a pinhead and others as large as a hand. Most moths are nocturnal and must be sought at night to be seen, but others fly like butterflies during the day.

Finding moths can be as simple as leaving a porch light on and checking it after dark. Serious moth aficionados use special lights and baits to attract them. Popular interest in moths is growing rapidly. The new *Peterson Field Guide to the Moths*, moth caterpillar guides, and a vast number of moth-oriented internet resources are just some examples of the moth's growing popularity. "Moth Nights" are often held by nature groups and provide an opportunity for either an introduction to the creatures or a venue for more serious pursuits.

--Environmental Education Resources and the Nature Conservancy, June/July 2016

Speed Bump

