



# Good Gnu

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

Ariene Dormio, President  
adormio@suddenlink.net

[www.jonesborouu.org](http://www.jonesborouu.org)  
[facebook.com/jonesborouu](https://facebook.com/jonesborouu)

Betty Stafford, editor  
nestafford@sbcglobal.net

## March 2016

"Dead my old fine hopes/And dry my dreaming but still.../Aris, blue each spring."

— Shushiki, Japanese Haiku

### 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.

**March 6 Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch**, Professor of History at ASU, will present "Better Living by Their Own Bootstraps: Rural Black Women's Activism in Arkansas."

Please remember the *Children's Shelter* with your donation of personal hygiene products. Especially needed are paper towels and 100% fruit juice.

**March 13 Norman Stafford** will explore "If the Stork Didn't Bring Us, Who Did?—The Centrality of the Cambridge Platform to the Birth of UUism." The unchanging core of our religion has led to its current success.

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.

**March 20 Jennifer Harris** will help us celebrate the First Day of Spring, when our days are now

longer than the nights, a time of happiness, rebirth, and life.

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

### March 27 Our Annual Flower Communion.

Betty Stafford will lead us in our celebration of beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and community. You are invited to bring a flower to help fill our festive vase.



### Mark Your Calendar

- ✓ **March 13 Daylight Savings Time Begins.** Set your clock FORWARD one hour before retiring Saturday night.
- ✓ **April 8-10 The Southwest Spring Conference**, at Wildflower Church, Austin, TX. Theme—Differences that Make a Difference: Multi-Cultural Justice-Making Inside and Out. Speaker Kathy McGowan will explore the differences in our congregations that help us shape the way we choose to be in the world.
- ✓ **April 29-30 The Spring Conference of the Arkansas UU Cluster**, Hot Springs Village, open to any UU wishing to attend.
- ✓ **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
- ✓ **June 22-26 UUA General Assembly**, Columbus, OH. Theme—Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect





The Fellowship's February contribution to Helping Neighbors Food Pantry was 89 pounds of peanut butter, and other foods. 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.

## DBLE

The **Dwight Brown Leadership Experience (DBLE)** will take place August 7-12, 2016, at the **4H Center, Little Rock**. DBLE is a full-immersion experience of five days, where participants become part of a covenanted religious community reflecting UU core values. Each day begins in worship that focuses on one of these core values—Hope, Love, Courage, Justice, and Joy. After worship, participants engage these values through individual learning and group work. Evenings are spent exploring different spiritual practices to enhance our individual spiritual lives. The days end in small group meetings which offer a space to practice deeply our covenant and process the day's core value.

DBLE pedagogy rests on the theory that leadership is about discernment, presence, and functioning of the self. Over the course of the week participants see how their individual gifts can help them develop as leaders in a spiritual community. Knowledge of systems and group dynamics are taught to reinforce each person's role in creating a vibrant religious community.

DBLE is an investment in the future of our congregation and UU. Graduates return with a deeper call to serve, function at a high level, and are able to inspire and invite others. The Fellowship can send and support 2-4 individuals. Nominees can apply until March 28, 2016. Contact Arlene Dormio if you are interested in attending DBLE in Little Rock.

## Encouraging Spiritual Growth

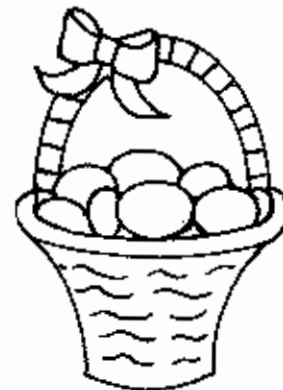
Not one day in any one's life is an uneventful day, no day without profound meaning, no matter how dull and boring it might seem....Because in every day of your life, there are opportunities to perform little kindnesses for others, both by conscious acts of will and unconscious example. Each smallest act of kindness—even just words of hope when they are needed, the remembrance of a birthday, a compliment that engenders a smile—reverberates across great distances and spans of time, affecting lives unknown to the one whose generous spirit was the source of this good echo, because kindness is passed on and grows each time it's passed, until a simple courtesy becomes an act of selfless courage years later and far away.

Likewise, each small meanness, each thoughtless expression of hatred, each envious and bitter act, regardless of how petty, can inspire others, and is therefore the seed that ultimately produces evil fruit, poisoning people whom you have never met and never will.

All human lives are so profoundly and intricately entwined—those dead, those living, those generations yet to come—that the fate of all is the fate of each, and the hope of humanity rests in every heart and in every pair of hands. Therefore, after every failure, we are obliged to strive again for success, and when faced with the end of one thing, we must build something new and better in the ashes, just as from pain and grief, we must weave hope, for each of us is a thread critical to the strength—to the very survival of the human tapestry.

Every hour in every life contains such often unrecognized potential to affect the world that the great days and thrilling possibilities are combined always in this momentous day.

—Dean Koontz, from *From the Corner of His Eye*, 2000





## Action in the Food Chain—Justice for All

What does “good food” mean to you — great taste, a meal shared with friends and family? Whether it uses local ingredients, organic vegetables, free-range chicken? What about the environmental impact of your meal or the working conditions of the people who got the food to your table? In our interdependent world, people are asking these questions—and UUSC wants the answers to be a matter of policy, not just individual preference. UUSC has been partnering with the **Food Chain Workers Alliance** since 2011 to address human rights violations throughout the food chain. The FCWA is a coalition of worker-based organizations whose members “plant, harvest, process, pack, transport, prepare, serve, and sell food.” The food chain employs 20 million workers and accounts for more than 14% of U.S. gross domestic product.

In 2012, the Los Angeles Food Policy Council developed the pioneering **Good Food Purchasing Policy** that guides the purchase of food in the interest of justice—for workers, for the environment, and for local communities. The GFPP’s guidelines enable institutions to “work with food service providers, distributors, processors and growers to create a transparent ‘farm-to-fork’ food supply.” Standards are based on five factors—local economies, environmental sustainability, fair labor, animal welfare, and nutrition. This policy has the capacity to shift the economics of the food system, and UUSC works with FCWA to make that happen.

First, UUSC is supporting a series of trainings on the principles of GFPP and the skills to advocate for the policy in local areas. The goal is to generate 3-5 local GFPP campaigns throughout the U.S., in locations with the political climate and local capacity to make success highly likely. The pilot training took place in Chicago in September 2015, engaging local interfaith and UU activists along with workers from Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, and Ohio. UUSC also launched a Food Justice Activist Network to support faith-based participants in helping move GFPP forward. These trainings are grounded in the needs of workers throughout the food chain and attract a large base—23 coalition organizations with a collective membership of 300,000, while remaining in close contact with the needs of workers.



UUSC and the FCWA are also teaming with a larger coalition to move GFPP further—into the realm of corporate food purchasing—and is currently pressuring the **Darden restaurant company** (Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Longhorn), which has more than 1,500 restaurants with 150,000 employees and serves 320 million meals a year, to ensure at least 20% of its food procurement abides by GFPP principles. The coalition includes 51 groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, and Friends of the Earth, who have, as of December 2015, collectively rallied 41,000 people to sign a petition to Darden.

## Why Sing in Church??



Hymn singing is a purposeful way of—

- Forcing people to stand at regular intervals so they cannot snooze through the service. Not that our folks generally do, but you know what I mean.
- Making people breathe together — that’s what a conspiracy is, it’s breathing together. Breathing together causes entrainment. For a few minutes our breathing and brain waves sync up, causing a big spike in happy brain chemicals, which, seriously, is one of the reasons people come to church.

—from “A Drunkard’s Walk through Singing the Living Tradition,” via Chuck Turner

## Good Reads



While coming to terms with the grief from her father’s death, **Ann Neumann** set out to answer the question, if a good death exists, what does it look like? Neuman’s journey took her across the country, talking with patients, doctors, academics, prisoners, and activists to understand the intricacies of what it means to die in America.

At a time when debate about the care and treatment of the aging U.S. population is fiery, Neumann’s **The Good Death** provides a timely and realistic look into our legal, medical, ethical, and social policy and the emotional implications of the way Americans die. The book is now available at inSpirit UU Book & Gift Shop, at a 15% discount using the code **GD316**. Look for a conversation of the book on Twitter and Facebook, using hashtag #UUReads.

## Our Interdependent Web



Swainson's warbler, a rare and secretive North American songbird, isn't ready to sing its swan song yet. With its natural habitat mostly gone, it has found a surprising workaround—it's thriving in the industrial pine plantations of the southeastern U.S. Farmed loblolly pines are becoming its main breeding habitat, a welcome discovery. The pine industry doesn't care about conservation, and only accidentally are they generating more habitat for this secretive bird than the federal government, state governments, and NGOs combined. This warbler has been adapting to the South's changing landscape ever since it was described by John James Audubon in the 1830s.

The tiny, plain-colored birds were first discovered in dense thickets of giant sugarcane known as canebrakes, where they could nest out of sight and forage for insects on the swampy ground. If it weren't for its loud, ringing song, the presence of the species might go completely undetected. Canebrakes once covered the southeastern U.S., but European settlers quickly converted the land to agriculture. Swainson's warblers then moved into bottomland forests on public lands often logged for timber. But when clear-cutting was abandoned in the 1970s, young forests began to mature and lose the thick underbrush that the songbirds used for protection.

A sudden paradox developed—public land supervisors managed for old-growth forests and, in the process, removed habitat for our tiny warbler. Although weighing in at half an ounce and fitting in your palm, Swainson's warblers require territories of 7-45 acres each, a reason their numbers are so low. The total population is estimated at 90,000. With native and adopted habitats removed, the warblers were thought to be in decline—until they started popping up in tree farms.

On a pine plantation, timber is grown, harvested, and regrown every 25-35 years in patches, meaning that some patches are always at the right age for Swainson's warblers. Sunlight beaming through the thin canopies supports bushy thickets that make ideal hiding and foraging locations. Loblolly pine farms cover 30 million acres in the South, which has become the world's "wood basket" and supplier of cheap pulpwood. Current projections suggest their total acreage could double in the coming decades. Pine plantations took off in the South in the 1970s,

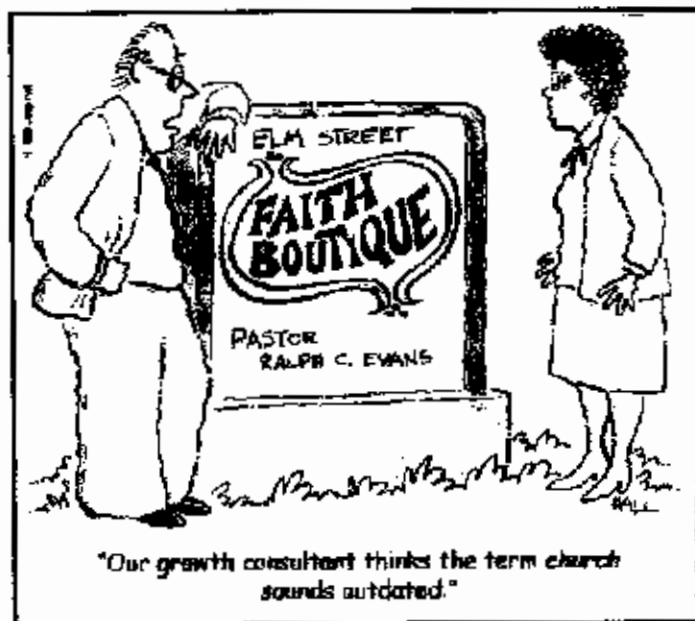
replacing degraded farmland as well as native wildlife habitats. That, along with their unnatural configuration—monocultures in neat rows intensively managed for optimal timber growth—led ecologists to characterize the tree farms as "biological deserts." The revelation that they can support Swainson's warblers demonstrates the importance of considering "alternative habitats" in conservation, including those historically unheard of.

But the presence of one rare species of songbird doesn't mean pine plantations are teeming with life. Though they benefit certain wildlife, the farms are species-poor systems overall. Frogs and amphibians have lost wetland habitat. Even among birds, the red-cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species, remains a vexing symbol to the timber industry, which has replaced its long-leaf pine habitat with the more profitable loblolly variety. Providing the habitat for our tiny songbird is a rare feather in the industry's cap. In the interests of keeping its bird tenants happy and burnishing its own image, it ought to avoid environmentally harmful practices like spraying herbicides. Then they can say that, although they can't create habitat for every species, they can do a good job creating habitat for some, and a few rare ones too.

—Linda Qiu, *National Geographic*, Nov 2014

NB—Surveys of hardwood forests in eastern and northern Arkansas were undertaken in 2000-2001 to document the status, distribution, and habitat requirements of Swainson's warblers in Arkansas. They were detected at 16 sites in deciduous forests at the Buffalo National River, 11 locations at the St. Francis National Forest, 19 sites at the White River National Wildlife Refuge, and 10 sites in the bottomlands at the St. Francis Sunken Lands.

—Dr. James Bednarz, ASU, et al, March 2002



"Our growth consultant thinks the term church sounds outdated."