



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

October 2016

“We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through.
Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love....and then we return home.”
—Australian Aboriginal Proverb

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.

October 2 Cori Dyson will present a service on Creativity among Unitarian Universalists.

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

October 9 Karen Yanowitz will explore the “Autumnal Equinox: Its Traditions and Balance.” Various customs have developed to celebrate this time of year when we experience (approximately) equal hours of light and dark and seek stability our lives.

We will also recognize new members, **Andrea Walker and Jeff McLaughlin.**

*The Second Sunday is also **Peanut Butter Sunday**, when we remember our neighbors with contributions of peanut butter and other nutritious foods to the Food Pantry.*

October 16 “Each and Every Person Is Important.” Our children and Religious Education Director, **Karen Brown**, will conduct a service emphasizing our First Principle.

*Our **Third Sunday Pot Luck** will be shared. You are invited to bring an easy-makin’ dish to enjoy along with visiting and conversation.*

October 23 Micheal Sullivan, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, will help us understand the work of the Jonesboro affiliate, active since 1992.

October 30 Sarah Rout will conduct our annual **Day of the Dead** service, a celebration of those no longer with us. You are invited to bring a photo or memento of someone you want to remember and share that memory with the congregation.



Our Fifth Principle

The General Election, for national, state, district, and local candidates will be Tuesday, November 8th, with **early voting beginning Monday, October 24th**. Several ballot issues will also be decided.

If you are not registered to vote, that deadline is **Monday, October 10th**. Please exercise your right to vote.



Social Justice in Jonesboro

More than 30 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly took an important step in promoting the idea that everyone deserves a decent place to live—the UN declared the first Monday in October as **World Habitat Day**. On October 3rd, Habitat for Humanity joins with partners around the world in recognizing the basic right to adequate shelter. Habitat for Humanity invites you to support this message of opportunity for a better future—that a decent place to live can remove barriers to health and success, barriers which might have been part of a family's life for years, even generations.

Habitat for Humanity has grown from a grassroots effort on a community farm in southern Georgia in 1976 to a global nonprofit housing organization in nearly 1,400 communities across the U.S. and in over 70 countries. Families partner with Habitat to build or improve a place they can call home and pay an affordable mortgage.



Jonesboro is one of the U.S. communities with an affiliate, and, aside from the Fellowship's annual financial contribution, many opportunities for advocacy and for actual building with Habitat are available. **Everyone can help** families achieve the strength, stability, and self-reliance to build better lives through affordable housing.

See Betty Stafford for information, and learn more about the local affiliate at services on October 23rd. Through shelter, we empower.

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

Some time ago a good friend of mine died. He was English, a witty, elegant, many-faceted man. One morning in his sixty-eighth year he simply didn't wake up. Which was about as easy a way as he could possibly have done it. But it wasn't easy for the people he left behind because it gave us no chance to say good-bye.

A couple of months later my wife and I were staying with his widow overnight, when I had a short dream about him—he was standing in the dark guest room

looking very much the way he always did, and I told him how much we missed him and how glad I was to see him again. Then I said, "Are you really there, Dudley?" I meant, was he there in fact-and-truth, or was I merely dreaming he was? His answer was that he was really there, and then I said, "Can you prove it?" "Of course," he said, and he plucked a strand of blue wool out of his sweater and tossed it to me, and I caught it between my index finger and my thumb, and the feel of it was so palpable and real that it woke me up. That's all there was to the dream.

When I told that dream at breakfast the next morning, my wife said she had noticed the strand of wool on the carpet when she was getting dressed. I rushed upstairs to see, and there it was, a little tangle of navy blue wool. The dream may very well have been just another dream. And you certainly don't have to invoke the supernatural to account for the thread on the carpet. Maybe my friend really did come—in my dream—or maybe all that's extraordinary about it, is the fuss I'm making.

Dreams like that happen every day to somebody. They're a dime a dozen; they may mean absolutely nothing. Or, dreams like that are momentary glimpses into a mystery of such depth, power, and beauty that if we were to see it head on, in any way other than in glimpses, I suspect we would be annihilated. If I had to bet my life, and my children's lives, my wife's life on one possibility or the other, which would I bet on? Which would you bet on? On "Yes, there is God in the highest"? or if that language is no longer viable, "There is mystery and meaning in the deepest"? Or "No, there is whatever happens and it means whatever you choose it to mean, and that's all there is"?

Of course, we can bet yes today and no tomorrow. We may bet one way with our lips, our minds and our hearts and another way with our feet. But all of us bet, and it's our lives themselves we're betting with, in the sense that the betting is what shapes our lives. And of course we can never be sure we bet right because the evidence both ways is fragmentary, fragile, ambiguous. A coincidence, as somebody said, can be God's way of remaining anonymous or it can be just a coincidence. Is the dream that brings healing and hope just a product of wishful thinking, or is it a message from another realm? Whether we bet yes or no is equally an act of faith.

---Frederick Buechner, DD

The Fellowship's September contribution to Helping Neighbors Food Pantry was 53 pounds of peanut butter. Thank you for your concern for needy families.

An additional way to support the Pantry is through FEED THE NEED—at Harp's, Hays, and Kroger. Take off a ticket or two at checkout. 100% of Feed the Need contributions goes to the Pantry.

Each and Every Person Is Important

Our children are wondrous images
Who reflect us
As we forget we were and, as they see, we
Still are.

The children act out our unconscious fantasies
And the young sing the dreams
We gave away.

It is hard to love our own lost courage.
To free love requires the recapture of courage
Everyday.

The young have an unerring sense
Of who will and who won't
And the days when we can
And the days when we can not.

Today, if I can be who I am
Without apology
What dazzling courage
The young will see and
What possibility there is for love.

—Mary-Ella Holst, former DRE,
Unitarian Church of All Souls, New York City

Greetings!!

Our newsletter goes out with an invitation to join us some Sunday morning at 10 A.M. We are a **diverse community** welcoming everyone—thinkers, agnostics, atheists, free-thinkers, humanists, traditional theists, and "nones." At the Jonesboro Fellowship, who you are is more important than what you believe and what you believe is respected. We hope to see you soon.

UUFJ Board Minutes

9/8/16

Present—Arlene Dormio, President; Marlee McCampbell, Vice-President; Sue Garrison, Treasurer; Karen Yanowitz, Worship Committee Chair

Secretary Appointment—Upon the resignation of Sarah Rout as Secretary, the Executive Committee agreed to name Gin Sturgeon to that position.

Executive Committee Structure—Representing members of the Religious Education and Worship Committees, Karen shared concerns that the Executive Committee was not using the leadership model implemented last year and that a board of 3-4 people did not represent the membership of the congregation. She requested that the Executive Committee give that leadership model another try.

Bylaws Task Force—Karen also discussed the work of this group appointed by the Board last church year; the Task Force will meet October 25th.

Job Descriptions—Sue presented job descriptions for the Treasurer and Social Justice Committee Chair.

Committee Structure

- Sue suggested that the description of the Stewardship Committee include sub-committees—Hospitality, Facility Set-Up, Long-Range Planning.
- Chairs are needed for both Stewardship and Social Justice

Church Calendar Additions—

- Arlene will write to Andrea Levy & David Levenbach about additional use of the Social Hall on Thursdays
- October 6th—UU History—Norm Stafford
- October 25th—By-Laws Task Force

Executive Session—Officers agreed to include committee chairs as board members.

Next Meeting—October 13, 2016.

Standing on the Side of Love



In April 2016, the first-ever **retreat of UU transgender and genderqueer ministers and religious educators** was held, in Pacific Grove, CA. Attending were UU religious educators, ministers, and ministerial candidates. Thirty-some people were invited; those who declined either had scheduling conflicts or were not comfortable at this time being publicly identified as trans—a requirement given the public and historic nature of this first retreat. With grants from the UU Funding Program and the UUA, the gathering was organized by TRUUsT (Transgender Religious UU professionals Together), founded in 2004. Highlights of the retreat included worship, the naming of truths, the telling of oral history, and the creation of a timeline of UU trans history.

Participants also engaged in conversation with the two UUA representatives attending about the needs of this community, particularly the ways in which trans people are being harmed by the UUA, which was called on to create, in partnership with TRUUsT, structures to consistently and competently support trans people in the UU movement; to hold its staff accountable for doing no harm to trans people in general and trans religious professionals in particular; and to support a second TRUUsT retreat next year.

---Alex Kapitan, Congregational Advocacy and Witness Program Coordinator, UUA

Our Interdependent Web



University of California scientists have answered a burning question central to the **charm of sunflowers**—Why do young flowers move their blooms to face the sun over the course of a day? And, once sunflowers reach maturity, why do they stop tracking the sun and only face east? According to a recent article in *Science*, the young plant's sun-tracking can be explained by circadian rhythms—the behavioral changes tied to an internal clock that humans also have, which follow a roughly 24-hour cycle. A young flower faces east at dawn and greets the sun, then slowly turns west as the sun moves across the sky. During the night, it slowly turns back east to begin the cycle again.

Researchers found that the plant's *turning* is actually a result of different sides of the stem *elongating* at different times of day—high on the east side during

the day and low at night, whereas on the west side growth rates were low during the day and higher at night. The higher growth rate on the east versus west side of the stem during the day enables the shoot apex to move gradually from east to west. At night the higher growth rate on the west side culminates in the apex facing east at dawn.

The researchers tied plants up so they couldn't move, or turned them away from the sun. Those flowers eventually had “decreased biomass and less leaf area” than flowers that could move with the sun. And in support of the circadian rhythm theory, plants exposed to artificial light at different intervals could reliably track the movement and return at night when the artificial day was close to a 24-hour cycle, but not when it was closer to 30 hours.

Mature sunflowers respond differently to the sun. As overall growth slows, the circadian clock ensures that the plant reacts more strongly to light early in the morning than in the afternoon or evening, so it gradually stops moving westward during the day. Mature flowers facing east attracted five times as many helpful pollinators. Why? Because east-facing flowers heat up faster, and **bees like warm flowers**.

Just like people, plants rely on the daily rhythms of day and night to function. Like solar panel arrays, sunflowers follow the sun from east to west. These researchers think the connection between circadian rhythms and growth is probably applicable across a broad range of traits and species as they respond to environmental signals.

---from Merrit Kennedy, NPR, 8/5/16

