



Good Gnus

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro, AR

Chuck Turner, President
retiredphoneman@prodigy.net

www.jonesborouu.org

Betty Stafford, editor
nestafford@sbcglobal.net

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“My soul can find no staircase to heaven unless it be through earth’s loveliness.”

—Michelangelo

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.; Spiritual Practice 11:45 a.m.

June 7 Annual Congregational Picnic.

Craighead Forest Park, Pavilion 3,
11 a.m. to ?? Please bring your favorite
easy-to-prepare picnic dish. Everyone
invited.

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

June 14 Brandon Rout will lead us in a Father’s
Day service.

*The second Sunday is Peanut Butter Sunday. Please
bring your contributions of peanut butter or other foods
for the Food Pantry.*

June 21 Julia Shackelford will present Summer
Solstice: A Historical Perspective.

*This is also our Third Sunday Pot Luck lunch to share
with friends.*

June 28 Chuck Turner and Friends invite us to a
Patriotic & Protest Music Sing-Along Cele-
bration.

July 5 No Services. Enjoy a safe 4th of July
holiday weekend.



The Fellowship’s **May contribution** to
the Pantry of peanut butter and other
nutritious foods was **83 lbs!**



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.

2015 General Assembly

GA will be held June 22-28, in Portland, OR, with the
theme **Building a New Way**, focusing on climate
justice and saving our Earth and ourselves in the face
of climate change. New approaches for working in
community, engaging in ministry, religious education
programming, fundraising, and congregation build-
ing will be featured in workshops and worship. **Com-
mit2Respond**, led by UU groups across our faith
movement, will have a strong presence.

Each year, the GA reaches out to the local commu-
nity with a Service Project. This year’s special oppor-
tunity features **Reentry Transition Center**, a Port-
land agency which facilitates the return to produc-
tive society of some 2,500 people yearly who leave
federal, state, or county incarceration and must find
housing, employment and worthwhile lives.

The provocative and influential **Cornel West** will
deliver the Ware Lecture, GA’s keynote address, and
Rev. Marlin Levenhar, senior minister of All Souls
Unitarian Church, Tulsa, will preach at the Service of
the Living Tradition.

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro
BUDGET 2015-2016, approved 5/17/15**

Income

Pledges & Weekly Offerings	\$14,435
Miscellaneous Contributions	800
Knotts Contribution	500
Knotts CD Interest	130
Reserves/Growth Fund Contribution	1,000

TOTAL INCOME \$ 16,865

Expenditures

Worship & Pastoral Care	
Sunday Services	700
Visiting Minister/Honoraria	1,200
Caring & Memorials	<u>100</u>
	2,000

Religious Education—Child & Adult	
Conferences, Training, & Meetings	2,700
Curricula & Teacher Resources	80
Craft & Educational Supplies	185
Printing	75
Child Care (\$20/wk/30 wks)	<u>600</u>
	3,640

Stewardship	
UUA GIFT Program	810
Leadership Development	1,200
Rent (Temple/Pavilion)	3,825
Fall Cluster Conference	200
Coffee Shop	600
Furnishings & Fixtures	150
Office (PO Box/Postage)	<u>120</u>
	6,905

Social Justice	
Helping Neighbors Food Pantry	600
Habitat for Humanity	100
Special Projects	100
Publicity & Advertising	275
Film Events (2)	<u>275</u>
Honoraria (event panelists)	175
Miscellaneous	<u>50</u>
	1,575

Communications	
Greeting (pamphlets/name tags/buttons)	150
Advertising	625
Newsletter	<u>400</u>
	1,175

Finance & Investments	
Knotts Fund	500
Reserve Growth Fund	<u>1,000</u>
	1,500

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$16,795

Officers 2015-2016

President	Arlene Dormio
Vice-President	Norman Stafford
Secretary	Sarah Rout
Treasurer	Betty Stafford

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

Spiritual is a difficult word, and for that reason many people avoid it. Jon Kabat-Zinn's comments are a good expression of this attitude—"As much as I can, I avoid using the word *spiritual* altogether," he says. "I find it neither useful nor necessary nor appropriate....I have a problem with its inaccurate, incomplete, and frequently misguided connotations."

I respect this attitude and, for a while, espoused it. But most people continue to use the words *spiritual* and *spirituality*, and I cannot find others that take their place more effectively. So I somewhat arbitrarily assign meaning to the words and thus have come to appreciate and value them.

The meaning of *spirituality* that I choose to embrace—for it is not only my definition—is the meanings and values by which you live your life, combined with, for believers, the way you experience the divine. The combination of God, meanings, and values is spirituality. But this does not exhaust the ways to define it, or indeed the ways to experience it—thus the value of the doubters.

I'm drawn to Brenda Ueland, who says "It is when you are really living in the present—working, thinking, lost, absorbed in something you care about very much, that you are living spiritually." Michelangelo expressed it this way—"It is well with me only when I have a chisel in my hand." It is exactly in those moments, when your meanings and your values and your awareness of God combine to create the energy that takes charge of your time, that you live life to the fullest.

--Dr. David Kundtz, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA



Religion in American Life

The Pew Research Center's new survey on changes in America's religious landscape is generating much discussion. The study finds that the number of Americans calling themselves Christians is declining and the number of people who say they are not affiliated with any church is growing. 7 in 10 Americans still identify with Christianity, more in the U.S. than in any other country. Protestant Christians now comprise only 46.5% of what was once a predominantly Protestant country.

Nearly 23% of all U.S. adults now say they have no religious affiliation, a significant uptick from 2007 when Pew conducted its last survey on religion. One explanation could be that as people become wealthier and more educated, they become more secular. In addition, people are not engaged as much as groups—they're living more independently with more solitary activities—which might explain church membership. Pew notes that the millennial generation is much less likely to be affiliated religiously than baby boomers ("generational replacement"); 35% of millennials are religiously unaffiliated. In addition, among those who are unaffiliated, is the number who say they are atheists or agnostics. In 2007, some unaffiliated religiously said that religion in general was still important, but in 2015 the number of atheists and agnostics has grown.

The greatest declines are in mainline denominations—mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics—with smaller declines, but declines nevertheless, in evangelical Protestants and in historically black Protestant denominations. One explanation for these smaller declines may be that intermarriage occurs less frequently in those groups. When people of different faith traditions marry, some loss of religiosity may occur. Pew also identifies a high degree of "religious switching," growing up in one faith tradition and switching to another. 34% of American adults have a different religious identity now than that of their childhood. 20% of people raised as Christians say they are no longer Christian, perhaps because of intermarriage. Those denominations with less intermarriage seem to hold steady.

While Christianity's numbers have declined, Judaism and Buddhism are stable. Islam and Hinduism have seen numbers rise slightly, perhaps because of population factors—immigration and higher fertility

rates. The study found that evangelicals are the largest religious group, more than 25% of the population. The religiously unaffiliated are now the second-largest group with nearly 23%. Catholics make up about 21%, mainline Protestants close to 15%, and other faiths 5.9%. Overall, America is about 70% Christian. In 2007, the country was about 78% Christian.

—Tom Gjelten, NPR, 5/12/15, & *Christianity Today*, 5/15/15

Reeb Fund

In connection with the Fellowship's celebration of Selma Sunday, a donation of \$362 was forwarded to the UUA in support of the James Reeb Fund for Multicultural Growth. A letter of acknowledgement for this gift notes that it supports the UUA's "continued justice work, including our voting rights campaign and training and mentoring program for religious professionals of color." Thanks for your support of the Reeb Fund.



Whatcha doin' this summer?

Summer is a great time to bring our UU faith into family life. Parents and caregivers are the primary religious educators of their children. Start the summer reading list with the recently published *Creating Justice Together* by Susan Dana Lawrence.

This collection of multigenerational service projects from the Tapestry of Faith curriculum series is suitable for families and other multigenerational groups. It helps adults engage with children in practicing and exploring a living faith that is active, expresses caring intention, and changes the world. Each project offers a conscious, intentional experience for all ages, from cooking in a homemade solar oven, to writing to a soldier serving overseas, to making a welcome kit for a new neighbor. Each project guides children and adults to connect experiences with values and to share or journal reflections so that growth in faith can be rich, personal, and long lasting. Available from www.uuabookstore.org.



Our Interdependent Web

They beam phone and TV signals around the globe. They peer into enemy territory. And since 1972, with the launch of the US Landsat 1, satellites have kept watch over the planet's natural resources, tracking deforestation and urban sprawl. But they have increasingly taken on an urgent new role as human rights watchdogs. UN satellite whisperers (UNOSAT) watch the migrations of people displaced by war and target aid to the right people at the right time. UNOSAT used satellites to monitor the pace of Ebola treatment center construction in West Africa and to confirm that crowds of Yazidis were stranded on Mount Sinjar amid attacks by the Islamic State.

Such advances stem in part from greatly improved photographic resolution. The first nonmilitary satellites struggled to tell a football field from a forest, but new models can distinguish a sedan from a pickup. The number of nonmilitary earth-observing satellites in orbit has also grown by 65% to 152, according to the Satellite Industry Association. In 2008, a U.S. policy change made Landsat images free over the web, and more than 20 million have been downloaded. Andrew Woods, a professor of international law at the University of Kentucky, imagines a future in which satellites reduce war crimes. And Robert Walker, a University of Missouri anthropologist, believes high-flying modern technology can protect the world's least modern people.

Walker is making innovative use of satellite imagery to assess the last remaining Amazon tribes that have limited or no contact with the outside world. The Amazon holds the world's largest concentration of isolated communities, 50-100. Some are so small they face another threat—a shortage of healthy mating partners. Walker has identified three villages that “face an imminent threat of falling below a minimum viable population.” Those villages consist of no more than 9 huts on 9 acres of cleared land.

Walker has analyzed 27 communities of “uncontacted” people in Brazil, and one each in Colombia and Peru. Poring over high-resolution images purchased from commercial satellite companies, he sizes up each village, measuring gardens and counting huts. His goal is to share data with governments

and advocates so they can better protect villages from threats, such as logging, mining, drug traffickers, and encounters with outsiders who carry infectious diseases against which natives have no immunities.

Even so, satellite data are not a quick fix. The Brazilian and Peruvian governments rely on satellite images to monitor isolated Indians. These findings aren't made public, and advocates are often left in the dark. According to Survival International (the global movement supporting the rights of tribal peoples), the Brazilian agency that oversees territories inhabited by uncontacted tribes, “is under constant attack from the ‘agribusiness block’ of politicians in the Brazilian Congress determined to overturn hard-won indigenous rights.”

Walker's publications don't pinpoint where villages are located, but he acknowledges that someone might be able to exploit his data to discover the Indians. That possibility worries Glenn Shepard, an anthropologist at Brazil's Goeldi Museum. “If anyone can find them, what's to keep some unethical reality TV producer from trying to go in and make a show?” Walker defends the research as critical—“We want people to be knowledgeable about the problem and thinking about solutions.” Woods agrees that satellites can send a clear and strong message to potential perpetrators that someone is watching.

—from *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 2015

