



Encouraging Spiritual Growth

Most of the apartments I've lived in have had drafty windows. In winter, I cover them with big sheets of clear plastic that seal out the cold air. But once I put them up, I can't open the windows until I take them down. So every fall, a spiritual crisis—is today the day to put the plastic up? If it is, I'm giving up fresh breezes until spring. Can I accept that it's just going to be cold now, for months? Ugh.

The cold, short days come, regardless of my feelings. When do I surrender and accept it? In the winter they arrive no matter what I do. Living things slow and withdraw; some enter a kind of enchanted sleep. Though next year's buds are already on the tree, they're protected from the cold by thick scales, waiting for spring before they erupt. Nature rests.

The culture around us sets accomplishment above rest. I often return to Wayne Muller's book Sabbath, which begins — "In the relentless busyness of modern life, we have lost the rhythm between work and rest." It's hard to surrender to a winter rhythm that includes dormancy. And what would it look like to not just accept and survive our times of rest, but to delight in them? cont. p2

"Snow was falling, so much like stars filling the dark trees that one could easily imagine its reason for being was nothing more than prettiness."

Mary Oliver



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro

201 West Oak Street, Jonesboro, AR 72401
PO BOX 1414, Jonesboro, AR 72403-1414

info@jonesborouu.org

www.JonesboroUU.org

facebook.com/JonesboroUU

Instagram.com/UUJonesboro

Board Members

Dr. Karen Yanowitz, President

Dr. Norman Stafford, Vice President

Betty Stafford, Treasurer

Sue Garrison, Secretary

Newsletter

Betty Stafford, Editor

Jennifer Clay, Layout



Encouraging Spiritual Growth

In the Jewish practice in which I was raised, Sabbath is a day set aside each week to cease from work—whether that work is complete or not—and make space for renewal and delight. Judaism gets specific about what counts as work to abstain from, as well as what practices to seek out to add to our joy—shared meals, singing, time to read and learn. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heshel writes that Sabbath is “a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord.”

And in seminary, it blew my Jewish mind when my professor Rev. Brita Gill-Austern suggested that one could have Sabbath at any time you intentionally set apart!

What would happen if you set apart a regular Sabbath time? If you decided what to let go of during that period—specific apps on your phone? planning?—and what to engage in—time in nature? thoughtful reading? reaching out to loved ones? I recommend adopting a ritual to remind yourself that you’re entering—and then exiting—a special time. Maybe lighting a candle, taking three long breaths, or singing a song. Notice how it feels to practice Sabbath time, what insights come, how it shapes your week.

May you savor your winters and your Sabbaths. May they renew you and reconnect you to what’s most important.

Rev. Joanna Lubkin, Acting Minister of Faith Formation & Congregational Life, UU Area Church, Sherborn, MA

DECEMBER FELLOWSHIP

DECEMBER 3

Norman Stafford will try to answer the question---"What Is Love?," providing a historical historical and UU perspective on the different meanings of love.

DECEMBER 10 - NOTE FELLOWSHIP WILL START AT 11 AM FOR OUR HOLIDAY PARTY FOLLOWED BY A POTLUCK.

Annual Winter Holiday Party

Join us for our annual Holiday Party, starting at 11 a.m. A short service, probably followed by a seasonal craft, definitely followed by carol singing and Bingo. Please bring 1-2 wrapped presents for Bingo, \$7-10 range. No time or \$\$ for a gift? Come anyway; your company is most important.

Bring your favorite holiday fare for all to enjoy at our potluck winter party.

Peanut Butter Sunday: The Second Sunday is Peanut Butter Sunday. Please contribute peanut butter or other wholesome foods to the increasing needs of the Food Pantry. The Pantry is especially short of supplies at this season. The Fellowship’s November contribution was 39 lbs.

DECEMBER 17

Jennifer Clay will discuss the meaning and traditions of Yule and the winter solstice. We will have a Yule Craft during discussion. Because, we love crafts!

DECEMBER 24

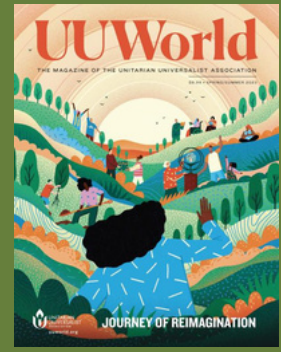
No fellowship. Enjoy the holiday weekend with family and friends.

DECEMBER 31

No fellowship. Enjoy welcoming in the New Year! We will see you in 2024!!

Weekly services are planned by the Worship Committee. If you would like to join the Worship Committee or have an idea for service, please email info@jonesborouu.org.

*We need not to
think alike to
love alike.*



UU World

INFO BOARD

**PLEASE SUBMIT ANYTHING
YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE
INCLUDED IN OUR
NEWSLETTER BY THE 20TH
OF EACH MONTH.**

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN
JOINING THE WORSHIP
COMMITTEE OR SOCIAL
JUSTICE COMMITTEE?
PLEASE EMAIL
INFO@JONESBOROUU.ORG**

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF JONESBORO

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

We come together in freedom,
for pursuit of truth,
service to humanity,
and fulfillment of self.



"Help me eat this turkey-mashed-potato-cranberry-sauce-apple-pie sandwich so we can move on with our lives."

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped with the Open House. We had a great turn out and met several new friends.



Our Interdependent Web

About 15 years ago, my husband and I embarked on a radical shift in our lifestyle. We moved from a high-rise urban condo in Houston, TX, to a 2-room log cabin in Alaska... with an out-house. There was nothing in my background that prepared me for this rigorously self-reliant lifestyle. I was a mediocre Girl Scout. I am still afraid of daddy long legs.

Now, though, instead of weekly trips to the supermarket and restaurants, I raise and forage 65 foods. We make most foods and cleaning supplies from scratch, such as dog treats, shampoo, home remedies, beer, wine, and bread. Since we live so remotely, we receive none of the municipal utilities or services that I took for granted in a city. To heat our home and tub, we cut 10 cords of firewood each year. For water, we dug a well.

How and why did we do this? In the early 2000s, we decided to live very intentionally. We were inspired by UU's 7th Principle to deeply experience the interconnected web of life, and, of course, by the writings of Thoreau and Emerson, on which I delivered a number of sermons and Adult Ed classes at UU churches around the country.

We started simply, by asking ourselves what we valued. What did we want to learn? How did we want to live in better synchronicity with our values? This led to decisions about how we wanted to utilize our time, space, and money, and prioritizing people we really valued. It was liberating to purge clothes we did not wear, books we would not read again, sports equipment gathering dust. We donated our TVs. I got rid of many chemicals and small appliances and furniture. We shed many time wasters.

Through this process, it was obvious that we could live in a much smaller home, with no debt. When we got serious about moving to Alaska, I took courses in permaculture, master gardening, master naturalist, furniture building, herbalism, and ethnobotany. I climbed a STEEP learning curve to gain skills and knowledge. Emotionally, I was equally challenged. I was overwhelmed doing everything our-selves. At first, I was intimidated by the silence, and the visitations of self-recrimination that bubbled up, without all the noise and entertainment of a city to keep them at bay.

But over time, this intentionality changed me. As I gained competence and confidence, I developed a stronger sense of agency in my own life. There is no one-upsmanship, or keeping up with Joneses or virtue signaling living like this. I cut wood and tote water every day.

Living very simply and self-reliantly has granted me the gifts of personal humility and awe of the strengths and generosity of Nature – food to eat, water to drink, wood to heat, as well as the lessons She teaches me.

Intentional living is not just for individuals. Congregations can ask these questions too!

Has your group:

- Implemented permaculture or xeriscaping. How much water did that save?
- Planted a community garden for the congregation or community. What were the results?
- Worked to ameliorate food deserts in cities, and heat islands? EG, maybe your congregation volunteered to tear up an asphalt playground surface and replace it with turf or wood chips? Or start a community garden in another neighborhood? Plant trees?
- Lowered your own dependence on fossil fuels in ways that others can implement, e.g., replacing plastic with wood or bamboo products or building or redesigning with zones to lower heating/cooling bills?
- In both our individual lives or our congregations, we can find ways to implement the 7th Principle.



OUR WORLD COMMUNITY

The Guest at Your Table theme for 2023-2024 is Pursuing Liberation. The alarming rise of fascism, authoritarianism, and nationalism in the U.S. and in many places around the world puts the lives of people, and the sustainability of the planet, in critical danger. These far-right forces have co-opted the word “freedom” for their own purposes, but the concepts of liberation and freedom mean something very tangible to **UU Service Committee grassroots partners in communities the world over**. Whether they are fighting for the right to seek safety in Mexico and the U.S., convincing the UN’s International Court of Justice to address human rights threatened by the climate crisis in the South Pacific, or replenishing the energy of human rights activists in eastern Europe by addressing burn-out, Service Committee partners invite us into an expansive, regenerative space to pursue liberation.

UUSC believes that the transformational solutions we need come from communities most directly impacted by injustice. UUSC partners are addressing immediate injustices – as well as seeking the collective liberation they envision for the future. The Service Committee believes their stories will offer inspiration and guidance on the path toward justice and liberation for all.

Their accounts are available in the Stories of Hope booklets you will find at the Temple. If you need a Guest box for your dining table, they will also be at services on Sunday. Drop some coins in at each meal. In January our boxes will be collected and contributions forwarded to the Service Committee. Or you may contribute directly via the UUSC website, uusc.org.



GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Guest at Your Table is an annual tradition in which congregation members take home a box featuring people that the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has worked with recently. These people are your 'guests,' and you are asked to share your blessings with them each meal by putting your spare change in the box.

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT

DECEMBER 2023

					1 	2
3	4	5 	6	7 	8	9 
10 	11	12 	13 	14	15 	16
17	18 	19 	20	21 	22	23
24 	25 	26 	27	28	29	30
31 	<p>1st - National Christmas Lights Day 5th - Day of the Ninja 7th - 15th - Hanukkah 9th - Christmas Card Day 9th - Christmas Carol Day 10th - UU Winter Holiday Party 12th - Gingerbread House Day 13th - National Cocoa Day 15th - National Ugly Sweater Day 18th - National Twin Day (celebrate our favorite twins!) 19th - National Emo Day 21st - Yule 21st - Winter Solstice 24th - Christmas Eve 25th - Christmas 26th - Jan 1st - Kwanzaa 31st - New Years Eve</p>					

UU Fellowship Sundays at 10am

DECEMBER 3 - What is love?

DECEMBER 10 - Winter Holiday Party

NOTE STARTS AT 11AM

DECEMBER 17 - Yule

DECEMBER 24 - NO SERVICE

DECEMBER 31 - NO SERVICES

Details on page 2