



Encouraging Spiritual Growth

How do you access a sense of wonder? What does wonder feel like?

I remember how excited I always got as a kid at an approaching thunderstorm. It always started with me smelling the charged Earth in the breeze. Then the feel of warm wind mixed with cool. The fast-approaching thunder clouds signaled the parade of the oncoming natural light show. Fingers of lightning streaking across the deepening gray sky. Then the reverberating boom of cackling lightning growling down at us small people below. It always made me feel like a spy on Mother Nature's most active display of beauty. The thrill of such power felt like a roller coaster that never lets you down!

And the softening at the end of the great scene let me feel relieved that I wasn't set on fire on the spot by a stray bolt of lightning. Each time I watched a storm, I was aware of the danger it posed. In nature's everyday workings is wonder beyond my wildest dreams. A baby bird learning to fly, a car crash avoided in split seconds, a last minute three pointer from my favorite basketball player at the buzzer for the win.

All these things seem ordinary at first. But when observed, one can easily tell that there is a hint of brilliance hiding in every act. Once one realizes this fact, what is there not to find wonder in?

Russell, member, Church of the Larger Fellowship, incarcerated in Wisconsin

WANT TO ADD TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER?

Please email info@jonesborouu.org by the 25th of each month any information you would like included in the monthly newsletter. This includes any community events you would like to share, an article you found interesting on a UUA related site, a recipe to share with the fellowship, etc.

"There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; my philosophy is kindness."

The Dalai Lama



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro

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FEBRUARY FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship meets on Sundays at Temple Israel, 203 W. Oak Ave., Jonesboro. Fellowship starts at 10 a.m. followed by the sacred coffee and discussion ending at noon.

In the case of inclement weather, watch our Website, Facebook Page, and Email.

February 4

Jennifer Clay will discuss Love Languages - They Aren't Just for Romantic Couples.

February 11

Fellowship Member Relationships: Chuck will discuss strengthening our bonds of love. Followed by our Chocolate Communion in celebration of Valentine's Day.

Peanut Butter Sunday: The Second Sunday is Peanut Butter Sunday. Please contribute peanut butter or other wholesome foods to Helping Neighbors. The Fellowship's January donation to the Food Pantry was 42 lbs.

February 18 - Followed by Third Sunday Potluck

Shelby will be discussing Random Acts of Kindness Day and how if we all do one random act of kindness daily, we might just set the world in the right direction.

A special collection will be taken on this day to purchase birthday party materials to be assembled next Sunday, February 25th.

February 25

From making coffee in the morning to lighting our chalice, UUs engage in many repetitive activities. Are these habits or rituals, and is it worth turning habits into rituals? Karen Yanowitz will discuss the benefits of engaging in rituals in our lives.



As part of discussion time, we will take part in a hands-on social action project to help others engage in one of the most basic rituals in a child's (or adult's) life—having a birthday party! We will assemble birthday kits to donate to Helping Neighbors. Materials will be purchased from last Sunday's special contributions.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

If you are interested in joining a committee, please visit JonesboroUU.org/committees or scan the QR Code to the right.



Social Action

Our social action committee is dedicated to promoting and addressing issues of social justice, equity, and compassion within the context of the fellowship and community. The primary purpose of the committee is to help the fellowship to engage in activities that align with the teachings of justice, love, and service, as reflected in the UUA's principles and values.

Membership

The membership committee will actively engage in the recruitment of new members, foster a sense of belonging among existing members, and promote the overall growth and fellowship of the church community.

Budget Committee

The budget committee is appointed by the executive committee (board) to oversee and manage the financial planning and decision-making processes within the fellowship. The budget committee develops the proposed yearly budget for approval by the membership, ensuring responsible and transparent stewardship of the church's financial resources.

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee is a group of fellowship members that identify and recommend qualified candidates who are aligned with the Unitarian Universalist's mission, values, and goals for leadership positions on the fellowship's board.

Worship Committee

The worship committee is responsible for planning and executing the weekly worship services and fellowships that create a spiritually enriching, inclusive, and vibrant worship experience that reflects the core values and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association.



Celebrating Black History Month

Paying tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship in American life is the purpose of Black History Month. One compelling on-going story is that of Black Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing, comprising 8% of the more than 35 million Americans who consider themselves so (National Deaf Center, November 2023). In the dozens of videos she has posted on TikTok, Nakia Smith is drawing attention to a corner of the internet steeped in the history and practice of a language that some scholars say is too frequently overlooked —Black American Sign Language, or BASL. About 50% of Black people who are deaf use Black ASL, according to the Center for Black Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University, a private university in Washington, DC, for the deaf and hard of hearing

Similar to much of Black American history, Black ASL grew out of the immoral seeds of racial segregation. Schools for Black children in the U.S. began to emerge after the Civil War, with 17 states and the District of Columbia having black institutions or departments to serve those with deafness. The first permanent school for the deaf in the U.S., later known as the American School for the Deaf, opened in 1817 in Hartford, CT. The school enrolled its first Black student in 1825.

In the 1870s and 1880s, many schools serving whites with deafness were indifferent to the education of Black students with hearing difficulties. Segregation led to Black schools differing immensely from their white counterparts. Schools serving white students moved toward an oral method of learning with less emphasis on signing and more on teaching students to speak and lip-read. They also provided an academically-based curriculum

Black schools emphasized signing and offered vocational training. Black signers better retained the standards of ASL, and some white sign language instructors even moved to Black schools for the hearing impaired to continue these teaching methods. BASL users tend to manipulate more 2-handed signs, often placing signs around the forehead area, rather than lower on the body.

Carolyn McCaskill, founding director of the Center for Black Deaf Studies at Gallaudet, started to lose her hearing around age 5. She attended the Alabama School for the Negro Deaf and Blind in Talladega and later enrolled as one of the first Black students at the Alabama School for the Deaf. But, she observed, no one expected Black children with deafness to continue their education or be prepared for college.

McCaskill noted that “code switching” allowed her to fit in with white students, while also preserving her Black ASL style. She estimates that about 50 percent of Black people with deafness use Black ASL. Now, young Black signers, like Nakia Smith, are celebrating the language on social media, alerting millions to the history of a dialect preserved by its users and enriched by their lived experiences. Users of Black ASL are often confronted with the assumption that their language is a lesser version of contemporary ASL, but several scholars say that Black ASL is actually more aligned with early American Sign Language. Robert Bayley, linguistics professor at UC Davis, noted that this “Black dialect, developed in the most oppressive conditions, somehow . . . wound up to be more standard than the white counterpart.” Nakia Smith has a simple explanation of how the two languages differ—“BASL got seasoning.”

A 27-minute video “Signing Black in America” is available on YouTube. A comprehensive examination of the language, drawing on interviews with about 100 subjects across six Southern states, is compiled in *The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL*, authored by McCaskill, Bayley, and others.

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



UU World

UUA Service Committee

Donations to Guest at Your Table help advance community-led human rights initiatives around the world.

To donate

- via the Fellowship, bring your contribution to Betty Stafford at the Temple on February 4th.
- online, use uusc.org/givetoguest
- by mail, make checks out to "UUSC" with "Guest" or "GAYT" in the memo field, and send to: UUSC • PO Box 808 • Newark, NJ 07101-0808.

Any individual's unrestricted donation of \$150 or more is eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.

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.

HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION YET?

Please click the link below or scan the QR code to submit or update your information for the fellowship. Your information will be used for internal communication, creation of name badges, an internal membership directory, and business purposes.

It is important to fill this out even if you have been a long time member or have been visiting for a while!

**[MEMBERS & FRIENDS
INFORMATION FORM](#)**



"Don't move those, that's my emotional support pile of unread books!"



Our Interdependent Web

In mid-January, extremely cold Arctic air and severe winter weather swept southward into much of the U.S., breaking daily low temperature records from Montana to Texas. Tens of millions of people were affected by dangerously cold temperatures. Heavy lake-effect snow and snow squalls had severe effects across the Great Lakes and Northeast. These cold events occur when the polar jet stream—running along the boundary between Arctic and more temperate air – dips deeply southward, bringing Arctic air to regions that don't often experience it.

An interesting aspect of these events is that they often occur with changes to another river of air even higher above the jet stream—the stratospheric polar vortex, a great stream of air moving around the North Pole in the middle of the stratosphere. When this vortex becomes disrupted or stretched, it can distort the jet stream as well, pushing it southward and causing cold air outbreaks.

The recent Arctic blast fits into this pattern, with the polar vortex stretched so far over the U.S. in the lower stratosphere that it had nearly split in two. Multiple causes may have led to this stretching, but it is likely related to high-latitude weather in the prior two weeks.

After Earth just experienced its hottest year on record, it may seem surprising to set so many cold records. But does this cold snap contradict human-caused global warming? Mathew Barlow, Professor of Climate Science, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, says “absolutely and unequivocally, it does not.” No single weather event can prove or disprove global warming. Many studies have shown that the number of extreme cold events is clearly decreasing with global warming, as predicted and understood from physical reasoning.

Whether global warming may, contrary to expectations, be playing some supporting role in the intensity of these events is an open question. Some research suggests it does. The February 2021 cold wave that severely disrupted the Texas electric grid was also associated with a stretched stratospheric polar vortex. Barlow's research suggests that Arctic changes linked with global warming have increased the likelihood of such vortex disruptions. The effects of the enhanced high latitude warming known as Arctic amplification on regional snow cover and sea ice may enhance the weather patterns that, in turn, result in a stretched polar vortex.

More recently, Barlow and his team have shown that for large areas of the U.S., Europe, and Northeast Asia, while the number of these severe cold events is clearly decreasing – as expected with global warming – it does not appear that their intensity is correspondingly decreasing, despite the rapid warming in their Arctic source regions.















So, while the world can expect fewer of these severe cold events in the future, many regions need to remain prepared for exceptional cold when it does occur. A better understanding of the pathways of influence between Arctic surface conditions, the stratospheric polar vortex, and mid-latitude winter weather would improve our ability to anticipate these events and their severity.

EarthSky, 1/24/24

February



2024

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2  | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10  |
| 11  | 12 | 13 <i>Happy Galentine's Day</i> | 14  | 15  | 16 | 17 |
| 18  | 19  | 20 | 21 | 22  | 23 | 24  |
| 25 | 26 | 27  | 28 | 29  | | |

- 2nd - Groundhog Day
- 7th - National Periodic Table Day
- 7th - Rose Day
- 8th - National Boy Scout Day
- 9th - National Pizza Day
- 8th to 9th - International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- 10th - Chinese New Year - Year of the Dragon
- 11th - Superbowl Sunday
- 12th - Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- 13th - Galentine's Day
- 14th - Valentine's Day

- 15th - International Childhood Cancer Awareness Day
- 17th - Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 19th - President's Day
- 22nd - International Thinking Day
- 22nd - National Margarita Day
- 24th - Full Snow Moon
- 27th - Polar Bear Day
- 29th - Leap Day!

All Month Long

- American Heart Month
- Black History Month
- Canned Food Month
- National Bird Feeding Month
- Spunky Old Broads Month



24th - Jennifer Clay
26th - Ashley Stone