



Encouraging Spiritual Growth

“Sometimes I need/only to stand/wherever I am/ to be blessed.” –Mary Oliver, from "It Was Early"

We can be many things. Friday afternoon? We were traffic. Car traffic. You usually find both of us on bicycles to com-mute, but work took us too far that day. My colleague lives on the way, so I offered to drive. At day’s end, we were departing downtown.

Theoretically, we were heading towards his home. In practice, we lingered on the same block, advancing one car length per light change. It felt like the street was doing an award-winning performance of a parking lot. I had tried to bypass the highways by cutting through downtown, but a street was closed and the traffic lights were out of sync. It took time.

There was not a single indication of frustration in my colleague’s body, words, or demeanor. I didn't have to be elsewhere for a while. Conversation came easily. I do enjoy his companionship. At the same time, I felt guilty for how long it was taking. *cont. p2*

“Sometimes I need/only to stand/wherever I am/ to be blessed.”

Mary Oliver



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro

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Reflecting on the experience, I realized that I wasn't impatient for impatience's sake. It was more that I feel almost a moral obligation towards advancement. It's all progress, improvement, efficiency, the next thing. It's capitalism, it's white supremacy, it's a deeply and viscerally internalized cultural ethic towards forward momentum. It permeates my entire perspective. My discomfort was the dissonance of failing to meet that expectation. There I am, present in necessary stillness, and my body tingles with a version of the same anxiety I feel when I sense my career is stagnating, or I'm failing to become better in all the ways our society suggests we should. Miles per hour or milestones per lifetime— it all feels the same.

When I could be present in the moment, sitting in the car, relaxing my sense of obligation towards speed. That let me recognize the true experience—good company and conversation. Connection makes life rich. This mindset towards "progress" sets me up to miss it.

What other circumstances am I failing to recognize when I don't embrace the necessary stillness? Where else am I failing to see that the need to exist in the moment is a required part of whatever journey I'm taking? When else am I failing to understand that maybe life doesn't have to be ever-upward in order to be well-lived?

May patience teach us presence; may presence show us all the blessings of the moment and keep our attention on what truly matters.

Christine Slocum (she/her) is a UU whose work in Buffalo, NY, facilitates housing for people experiencing homelessness and severe mental illness.

JANUARY 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. Decisions will be made the Saturday prior to fellowship.**

January 7

Brunch Time, 10 a.m., an informal get-together to begin a New Year. Bring your easiest-to-make goody to share.

January 14

Norman Stafford will address "Martin Luther King: Justice, Talk, and Action."

Peanut Butter Sunday: The Second Sunday is Peanut Butter Sunday. Please contribute peanut butter or other wholesome foods to Helping Neighbors. The Fellowship's generous December contribution to the Food Pantry was 179 lbs!

January 21

This day, World Religion Day, was initiated in 1950 by the Bahai community. It celebrates the principles of the oneness of religion and supports the idea that the spiritual principles underlying the world's religions are harmonious.

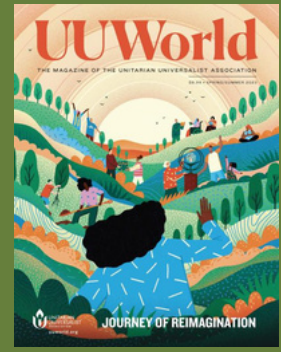
Karen Yanowitz will lead us in a service and discussion about how this holiday might be a natural one for UUs to celebrate. Could looking at religion in this way help members of our diverse community on their journey, whatever that may be?!

January 28

Jonathan Berman will explore "The New Phrenology: Challenging hereditarian views on intelligence, the g factor, misunderstood genetics, and racist implications."

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.



Book Club

January: "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Discussion leader is David Parker*

February: "The Family" by Jeff Sharlet, *Discussion leader is Sue Garrison*

For more information on the month's meetings, please contact the discussion leader.



Our Interdependent Web

One of the most epic, and dangerous, journeys on the planet is that taken by the Monarch Butterfly. Though monarchs live throughout the world—in South America, the Caribbean, Australia, Europe, and elsewhere—North American monarchs are distinguished by their extraordinarily ambitious seasonal migrations of up to 3,000 miles. Two distinct monarch populations are separated by the Rocky Mountains. The western residents over-winter in California, while the eastern group that we observe here in Arkansas, over-winters in high elevation Oyamel Fir (*Abies religiosa*) forests in central Mexico. (A small non-migratory population in Florida breeds year-round.)

Autumn—As the days get shorter and cooler, the eastern monarch migration begins. Most adult monarchs live 2-5 weeks, but the generation that migrates to the winter ground lives eight times longer and travels 10 times farther. This group is often called the “super generation;” they are in a state called reproductive diapause. In diapause, they biologically cannot mate or lay eggs. This mechanism allows monarchs to conserve energy and live up to nine months. A supply of late blooming nectar plants is important to fuel their migration and store fat for the winter.

Winter—Monarchs congregate in clusters in Mexico’s Sierra Madre Mountains, roosting at the same fir tree sites that generations before them were the preceding year.

Spring—Around March, the over-wintering group will break diapause and begin to migrate north. They are now biologically able to mate and reproduce. All subsequent monarchs this year will be from this “super generation.” The flyers will lay eggs on milkweed plants along the way. This entire generation will die, but the next cohort will continue. It takes 3-4 generations to reach the northern U.S. and Canada. Arkansas plays an important part in the migratory flyway, providing critical quality habitat for monarchs, including both milkweed as a host plant for caterpillars and nectar resources for the adult butterflies.

Summer—The summer is spent mating and breeding in the northern U.S. and southern Canada, eventually giving birth to the “super generation” that will migrate south in the fall.

Without habitat throughout their range, the entire population of monarchs is at risk. In the U.S., where lawns and other residential landscapes cover nearly 140 million acres, tens of thousands of people are turning their outdoor spaces into habitat for monarchs and other species.

To join the movement, focus on supplying monarchs with their 2 basic needs—a place to breed and fuel—

- Offer milkweed, the essential breeding habitat. It’s easy to grow in beds or container gardens.
- Select milkweed best suited to Arkansas, avoiding tropical milkweed, whose year-round flowers may delay or interrupt migration.
- Choose native perennials that will produce blooms and nectar at different times throughout the growing season.

Arkansas Monarch Conservation Partnership and National Geographic, January 2024



OUR WORLD COMMUNITY

“Imagine, if we take the time to connect more deeply with strangers year-round — truly seeing and hearing one another. Imagine, if we start by offering gratitude. Giving thanks even in the face of all that is broken. UUSC’s partners model this kind of belonging, compassion, and care every day. Instead of viewing each crisis as separate, they recognize that all op-pression and injustice are connected. And that we are con-nected. This interdependence in our struggle for justice points the way forward.”

- Mary Katherine Morn, UUSC President

Donations to Guest at Your Table, the Service Committee’s annual fundraising program, helps the UUSC and its partners act on today’s extraordinary human rights challenges, address the root causes of injustice, and build capacity to respond to future crises.

GAYT supports UUSC’s work in over 25 countries, with thou-sands of individuals involved in and benefiting from the work that members make possible. This program is an opportunity to celebrate grassroots partnership and support human rights.

All GAYT gifts earn UUSC membership, so you’ll be part of a shared vision of a world free from oppression and injustice. The date to turn in your GAYT box and contribution to Betty Stafford is January 14, 2024, or you may contribute directly by visiting the UUSC website and clicking “Donate.”



In loving memory

KATHY HEFNER PROFFITT

Our loving friend, Kathy lost her battle with cancer on Monday, January 1, 2024.

Graveside services will be announced shortly.

Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near. Still loved and missed and very dear.

January

2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	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 			

- 1st - New Year's Day
- 2nd - Science Fiction Day
- 4th - National Spaghetti Day
- 5th - National Bird Day
- 6th - Cuddle Up Day
- 9th - Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
- 10th - National Houseplant Appreciation Day
- 14th - World Logic Day
- 15th - Martin Luther King, Jr Day
- 19th - National Popcorn Day
- 20th - World Religions Day
- 23rd - National Pie Day
- 27th - International Holocaust Remembrance Day

- 28th - National Lego Day
- 29th - National Puzzle Day
- 31st - National Hot Chocolate Day

All Month Long

- Dry January
- National Blood Donor Month
- Braille Literacy Month
- National Hobby Month
- Hot Tea Month
- National Oatmeal Month
- National Soup Month

