



The
**UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST**
Fellowship of Jonesboro

GOODGENUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

Click to skip to section

[Worship Service Calendar](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Article - The Search For Truth & Meaning](#)

[Community Events](#)

[Article - The Right to Flourish](#)

[Celebrations](#)

[Article - Our Interdependent Web](#)

[Contact Information](#)

[Links](#)

WORSHIP SERVICE

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.



Sunday, March 2, 2025

Dr. Ross Carroll presents: Buddhism, zen, and UU

Sunday, March 9, 2025

TBD

Sunday, March 16, 2025

Karen will tell us about Purim. Purim is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the salvation of the Jewish people from an attempted genocide in ancient Persia. It's celebrated with parades, costumes, feasting, and gift-giving.

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Jennifer will talk on lore of fertility gods and goddesses.

Sunday, March 30, 2025

Norman Stafford's presentation will be "Making FUUn of Ourselves Once Again, Part LXV." This April FUUL's Day Special presents an abundance of UU humor, with a smidgeon of wit from other religions, and a dash of sermonizing.

UU ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lunch Bunch - March 2nd

After service, we'll head to a local restaurant (chosen that week) for good food and even better conversation. All are welcome—come as you are and enjoy community with us!

Peanut Butter Sunday - March 9th

The Fellowship's January-February contribution to Helping Neighbors was 48 lbs. --- a much-appreciated gift at a very difficult time economically for those who rely on the Pantry's services.

Day Light Savings Time - March 9th

Mark your calendars! On Sunday, March 9, 2025, at 2:00 AM, we "spring forward" by setting our clocks one hour ahead. While we may lose an hour of sleep, we gain more daylight to brighten our days!

Third Sunday Potluck - March 16th

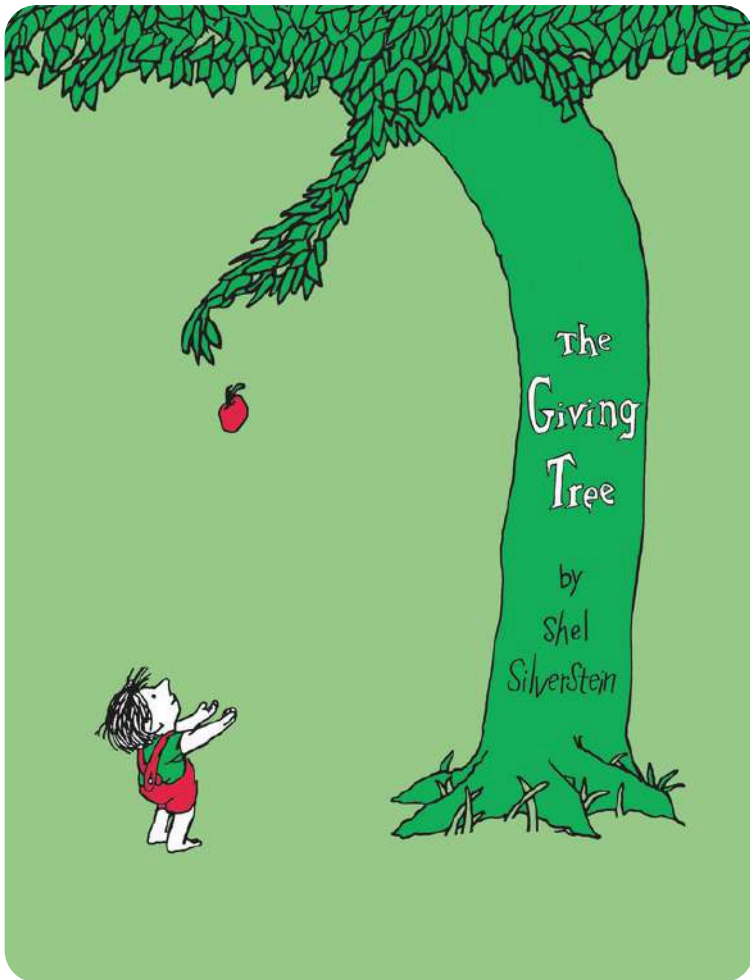
Bring a dish you love to share and join us following services for our monthly potluck.

Board Meeting - March 23rd

The board will be meeting at noon on March 23rd. If you would like to have anything added to the agenda, please **email Karen** prior to March 16.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND MEANING

ADAM BLOOM, NATURE CONSERVANCY, JANUARY 2025



Once there was a story about a tree, and it divided people of all ages. For more than 60 years, the iconic green cover of Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* has adorned nightstands, classrooms, and bookshelves. The 1964 tale remains one of the most popular children's books—and one of the most divisive.

Silverstein's story centers around the relationship between a tree and a boy. At first, the boy enjoys climbing the tree and eating her apples. As he matures, his asks become more extractive—he wants her apples to sell, her branches to build a house, and her trunk to construct a boat. Wanting the boy's happiness above all else, the tree sacrifices her physical self to satisfy the boy's desires until she is no more than a stump—which she offers to the now-old man as a place to rest.

The deeper meanings and morals of this story have been debated across decades and platforms, from parenting blogs to theology symposia, and from law review articles to Reddit threads. Proponents of the book have often interpreted the book's central relationship as one of unconditional love, maternal or divine. Some critics have viewed this same relationship as abusive or patriarchal. Others see it as a warped

mother-child dynamic, a guide for raising a narcissist or a sobering glimpse at humanity's broken relationship with nature.

The Giving Tree was released at a time when the side effects of postwar America's industrialization and consumerism were becoming impossible to ignore. Air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, species loss and acid rain were all signals that nature was not a limitless resource.

Young parents who reread The Giving Tree for the first time since their own childhoods may find the experience jarring. What was once a melancholy but touching tale about the relationship between a tree and a boy is now—as adults more keenly attuned to the world's gravity (and its warming climate)—something far more ambivalent. Whether The Giving Tree is, in fact, a children's book depends on how you define the genre—Must the characters be role models? Must the book teach a clear lesson? Can it be ambiguous? Can it end sadly?

Ultimately, the moral ambivalence of The Giving Tree creates an opening—like a light-filled clearing in a forest after the fall of a large tree—to fill with our own interpretations. Maybe it can be different things to different people. Or perhaps the story simply helps children—the original intended audience—understand that nature can love them unconditionally. And that a tree can be happy.

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.



AROUND TOWN

Unitarian Universalist Medical Student Association

First Meeting: March 25 at 3pm
Location: Room 316

A space for all people,
all backgrounds,
secular and religious,

We come together to
discuss science,
philosophy, politics,
culture, and challenges
facing our communities.
Hope to see you there!

Contact Julianna Winkler for all Questions and Inquiries

JBurriss@NYIT.edu

Unitarian Universalist Medical Student Association Launches

First meeting is March 25th. Contact Julianna Winkler for more information.

THE RIGHT TO FLOURISH

*FROM GLAAD, GAY & LESBIAN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEFAMATION,
FEBRUARY 2025*



Each year on March 31, the world observes Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV) to raise awareness about transgender people. It is a day to celebrate the lives and contributions, the accomplishments and victories of transgender and gender-expansive people. Simultaneously it draws attention to the poverty, discrimination, and violence the community faces and the work still needed to combat discrimination and violence.

International TDOV was created in 2010 by trans advocate Rachel Crandall, the head of Transgender Michigan, because of the many media stories about transgender people focused on violence. She hoped to create a day where people could celebrate the lives of transgender people, while still acknowledging that, because of discrimination, not every trans person can or wants to be visible.

A minority of Americans say they personally know someone who is transgender. Thus the majority learns about trans people from the media—a problem because, as reflected in the Netflix documentary *Disclosure*, the media has misrepresented and stereotyped trans people since the invention of film. These false depictions have shaped the cultural understanding of who trans people are and have modeled, often

for the worse, how the average cisgender person should react to and treat trans people in their own lives.

The year 2024 has seen intensified backlash toward trans people. The ACLU reports that 479 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced across state legislatures. The AMA declared an epidemic of direct physical violence since 2019, disproportionately affecting Black trans women, the majority being young people of color. In February in Oklahoma, Nex Benedict, a 16-year-old Indigenous and 2STNC+ (Two Spirit, transgender and gender nonconforming+) sophomore, took her own life, underscoring the severe and significant impact of bullying and discrimination.

Trans people must be seen through authentic, diverse, and accurate stories which reflect the actual lived experiences of trans people, both for themselves and for the people who believe they've never met a trans person.

Without trans people, including trans experts, weighing in, and without trans representation in newsrooms to help guide coverage, anti-trans discrimination is often misrepresented as a "culture clash" rather than as willful misinformation and targeted hate. Acceptance continues to rise with personal familiarity and exposure to trans stories in media.

TDOV is only one day out of 365 that gives allies the chance to uplift and celebrate our trans loved ones.

We need not to think alike to love alike.

March Celebrations

Happy Birthday to
Jonathan W. - March 18

Happy Anniversary to
Zach and Jay - March 22



We are overjoyed to
welcome new members
into the Unitarian
Universalist Fellowship!

Pictured are Zach and Jay.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER?

Email info@jonesborouu.org by the 20th of the month to have your article, community event, announcement, or contribution added to the next month's newsletter.

OUR INTERDEPENDENT WEB

CINDY KAPLAN, NATURAL HISTORY, FEBRUARY 2025



At age ten, I was sent to a sleepaway camp outside Kerrville, TX, in the Texas Hill Country. Camp Arrowhead provided a life-changing experience for girls from elementary school age through teenage years. The very structured program included the usual camp activities. However, my epiphany did not come from the interesting nature study curriculum, but rather from an experience I had one morning while getting ready for the day's activities.

The bathroom cabins, which were separated from the sleeping cabins, were equipped with standard toilets, sinks, and showers. Above each sink was a small wooden shelf that could hold toiletry items. While I was brushing my teeth, I noticed a very small, red, round rubber band near my toothpaste on the shelf. Looking more closely, I spotted a small ant—not a large carpenter ant—facing the rubber band. It stayed there motionless for at least 10-20 seconds.

Next, I watched as it made its way up the wall, disappearing into a crack. Less than a minute later, having not yet finished at the sink, I noticed six ants emerging from the crack in the wall. They marched single file down the wall directly to the rubber band. To my utter amazement, they spaced themselves

evenly around the rubber band and proceeded to hoist it, carrying it up the vertical wall and into the crack. The ants were too small for me to discern how they were holding onto the rubber band, but they managed quite handily (without hands).

Awestruck, dumbfounded, I mulled over the following questions—Why did the original ant want the rubber band? How did it assess the rubber band’s weight and surmise that six ants could carry it? How did it know that the rubber band would fit through the crack in the wall (which I did not think it could)? How did it pick out five other ants and communicate to them? Was this ant of average ant intelligence, or did it possess extraordinary engineering and communication talent? Even my 10-year-old brain recognized that what I had witnessed was not ordinary ant behavior, such as a leaf-cutter ant carrying a leaf with many of its comrades back to its nest. This incident also seemed to involve more than merely aping the tool use of fellow chimpanzee companions pushing a stick into a termite mound. I have always wondered how those ants used that rubber band.

These days, scientists are finally coming around to considering the possibility of animals other than human beings sentient creatures—having the ability to perceive or feel things, not strictly automatons that act only by instinct. The use of tools used to be the criterion for an animal’s ability to think and figure things out. It seems we need to broaden further our understanding of what constitutes sentience and intelligence.



*Love is the power that holds us together
and is at the center of our shared values.*



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THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF JONESBORO

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