



The  
**UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST**  
Fellowship of Jonesboro

# GOODGNUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025



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# 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, April 6, 2025

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Julianna will speak on processed foods

Sunday, April 13, 2025

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Karen will lead our annual Flower Communion.  
The Flower Communion is a cherished Unitarian  
Universalist ritual that celebrates beauty, diversity,  
and community. Bring a flower or plant to trade  
with a member of the fellowship.

Sunday, April 20, 2025

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No services

Sunday, April 27, 2025

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Jennifer will show a TED Talk on "The benefits of not  
being a jerk to yourself"

# UU ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Budget & Board Officers - April 6th

The budget and the nominating committees will present the proposed budget and the board officers for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Voting will take place at the annual meeting on May 4th.

## Lunch Bunch - April 6th

After service, we'll head to KPot for good food and even better conversation. All are welcome—come as you are and enjoy community with us! Please RSVP to Karen if planning to attend. karen\_uujonesboro@yahoo.com

## Peanut Butter Sunday - April 13th

The Fellowship's March contribution to Helping Neighbors was 18 lbs. --- a much-appreciated gift at a difficult time for those who rely on the Pantry's services, especially because of recent developments.

## Board Meeting - April 27th

The board will be meeting at noon on April 27th. If you would like to have anything added to the agenda, please **email Karen** prior to April 20th

## Urgent Need - Children's RE Coordinator

Unfortunately, our beloved Alex has taken a full-time job in her career path that requires her to work on Sundays. We are now looking to hire a Children's RE Coordinator. This job is for 3-4 hours per week. It consists of making weekly plans for the kids and managing the room on Sundays. Please help us spread the word. Interested people can apply here: <https://form.jotform.com/242365345091152>

# THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND MEANING

*TOMO HILLBO, MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL  
SCHOOL, CHICAGO, IL, AND SANTA FE, NM*



How do you experience rain? Not the rain on the weather maps, but the rain that falls on you?

All my life, I lived in densely populated areas. My skies were small spaces cut out by buildings, houses, and tall trees. So when a rain storm came, it enveloped me and made me feel like my whole world had become the storm. I wouldn't know when it would start or when it would stop. It came and went, and I was smack in the middle of it.

Then I moved to New Mexico. These big skies had been calling my soul for thirty years, and I now understand why—they aren't just beautiful; they're also changing the way I exist.

During the summer, the humid air from the Gulf of Mexico lifts to our high desert terrain and produces tremendous scattered thunderstorms. In the vast landscapes of New Mexico, and under its big skies, those storms appear as if they've been magicked out of the weather maps. I can witness the rain falling near and far—some softly and others in earnest cloudbursts—blue skies in between and beyond.

The storms teach me how limited my perspective is. When I'm in one of those storms, I am not aware of the blue skies behind the torrential rain. I also cannot experience what it is like to be in that storm when I am outside of it and observing it from a safe distance.

Life is full of events like those storms. Some are nurturing, others are destructive. A storm can land softly on some of us while bringing devastation to many of us. But blue skies are also possible between the storms.

Knowing this gives me the courage to go on. It also reminds me to keep widening my perspective, continuing to learn, and growing my compassion. When the storm is powerful, we need each other to weather it.

**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.

# DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENTS

At the end of January and into February, as the new administration took office, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture opted to "pause" funding for multiple agriculture programs, including Local Food Purchase Assistance. Arkansas' LFPA program established cooperative agreements between food distribution networks and local and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers to provide fresh, nutritious foods to underserved communities and thus strengthen Arkansas' local food system.

(BTW, John Boozman [R-AR] is chairman of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee.)

It's unclear how long the pause will last, and exactly how it impacts current LFPA spending. The Northeast Arkansas Food Bank has reached out for an update, but has heard nothing more. Therefore, the Food Bank is pausing all LFPA ordering until it has more information. This means, starting in March, the Food Bank will have no LFPA inventory to distribute to the Jonesboro Food Pantry.

In light of these circumstances, please be generous with your contributions for Peanut Butter Sunday.

# THE RIGHT TO FLOURISH

On Tuesday, April 15, 2025, 9 pm, Arkansas PBS will broadcast *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War*. This 2016 documentary film is directed by Ken Burns and Artemis Joukowsky\* and tells the previously untold story of Waitstill and Martha Sharp, a Unitarian minister and his wife, from Wellesley, MA, who committed to a life-threatening mission in Europe. Over two dangerous years they helped to save scores of imperiled Jews and refugees fleeing Nazi occupation.

Nazi Germany invaded the Sudetenland in 1938, occupying the northern part of Czechoslovakia. Lives immediately unraveled. Thousands of people migrated away to seek safety.

In 1939, the Sharps accepted a request by the American Unitarian Association to travel to Czechoslovakia to assess the situation that had been described to the Association as dire by Rev. Norbert Chapek, minister to the largest Unitarian church in Europe. Rev. Chapek is familiar to us in this Fellowship as the originator of the Flower Communion, which we will learn more about in our own celebration of this event on April 13<sup>th</sup>. What Chapek observed in his country was great numbers of refugees fleeing Germany and Austria, most of whom were Jews, but also dissidents of many backgrounds.

In the '30s, Czechoslovakia was independent and provided safe haven for these refugees. Not really knowing what could be or should be done, the Sharps left their two young children in the care of family and friends, arriving in Prague on February 24, 1939. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia, and the Sharps' situation became more precarious, just as their activities became more widely known to the Czech underground.

A great part of their mission was to identify, contact, and secure safe passage for a number of dissidents out of the country, and into neutral countries at the time—the Netherlands and France—and, when these havens were overrun, to Portugal, and ultimately to the U.S. and Canada. As countries, one by one, fell to the Nazis, the Sharps' tasks became increasingly more difficult and dangerous. Their American passports and the fact that the U.S. had not yet entered the war was to their advantage, but helping a wanted person escape was a crime no neutrality would have helped.

In spiriting out refugees, the Sharps were also up against a State Department, which in the 30s and early 40s was openly anti-Semitic, and enforced an immigration policy designed to limit the number of refugees. (Sound familiar?) The evacuees with whom the Sharps worked needed valid travel documents, for which they often had to travel distances and needed money to obtain—identity cards, money, passports, visas, tickets, and more money, visiting consulates—French, Spanish, Portuguese—and long lines everywhere.

They had to document passage on a ship bound for the U.S. or Canada; they needed to document a job in their new country and a place to live. They also had to locate the individuals to be given safe passage, not easy to do if you spoke only some passable French. They also had to develop a relationship of trust with people who were often in hiding. How was a wanted refugee to know if these Americans were the “real deal”?

The network of assistance the Sharps created in Europe, along with American Unitarian Association personnel in the U.S., became in 1940, the Unitarian Service Committee, which morphed into the UUSC in 1961, with the merger of the Universalists and the Unitarians.

You are invited to watch/record the Ken Burns film on April 15<sup>th</sup>.



# April Celebrations

Happy Birthday to  
Ashe - April 4  
Andrea - April 7



Thanks to Zach and Ethan  
for putting together the  
first UU Social  
Get-together!

## WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER?

Email [info@jonesborouu.org](mailto: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

ROSE DAVIDSON, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS



Our planet is an amazing place, but it needs our help to thrive! That's why each year on April 22, more than a billion people celebrate Earth Day to protect the planet from things like pollution and deforestation. By taking part in activities like picking up litter and planting trees, we're making our world a happier, healthier place to live.

The first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970, when U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin organized a national demonstration to raise awareness about environmental issues. Rallies took place across the country and, by the end of the year, the U.S. government had created the Environmental Protection Agency. By 1990, Earth Day was an event celebrated by more than 140 countries around the globe.

The number of garbage trucks Americans fill each year would stretch halfway to the moon. Toilet paper tubes, made from cardboard, take two months to decompose in a landfill. A plastic bottle sticks around for way longer—it can take over 450 years to break down! But instead of turning to the trash bin, we can turn these items into an awesome telescope or a flower planter.

Before we throw something away, let's think about whether it can be recycled or repurposed. We can also limit waste by reducing the number of things we buy. For example, check the library for that book you have to read before visiting the store to buy it.

Researchers estimate roughly 15 billion trees in the world are cut down each year. We can help offset that loss by planting a tree of our own. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen for people to breathe. They also provide shelter and food for animals such as squirrels and owls. Depending on where trees are planted, their shade can even reduce the need for air-conditioning in hotter months. How many more reasons do we need to go green?

Does that lamp really need to be on while the sun is out? Electricity doesn't just happen—it has to be produced from things around us. Many times it comes from fossil fuels (such as coal, oil, or natural gas) that contribute to climate change. But electricity can also be made from renewable sources like wind, water, the sun, and even elephant dung! No matter where it's coming from, we can try to conserve electrical energy by using only what we need.

It might seem like it's everywhere, but clean, drinkable water is a limited resource. In fact, less than one percent of the water on Earth can be used by humans. (The rest is either too salty or too difficult to access.) Turning off the faucet when you brush your teeth can conserve up to eight gallons of water a day. To help save even more water, challenge yourself to take a shorter shower (but still get clean!)

We can volunteer to pick up trash at a nearby park, start a collection drive for recyclable items, or organize a screening of an environmentally themed movie. By getting involved and working with others, you're not just helping the Earth—you're making new friends too!

# BE A PLANET HERO!

- In its lifetime, one reusable bag can prevent the use of 600 plastic bags.
- Recycling one can of soda will save enough energy to power a tv for three hours.
- Shutting down a computer when it's not in use cuts energy consumption by 85 percent.
- For every mile walked instead of driven, nearly one pound of pollution is kept out of the air.





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## THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF JONESBORO

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Betty Stafford, Editor

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