

Good Gnus

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Jonesboro, AR



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"Religions are many and diverse, but reason and goodness are one."

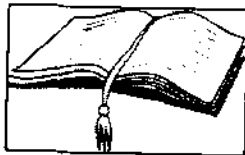
— Elbert Green Hubbard

Service Calendar

The Fellowship meets at Temple Israel, 203 W. Oak Ave., Jonesboro. Services 10:00 a.m. Social time 10:45 a.m. Children's Religious Education & Adult Forum 11:00 a.m.

August 15, 2010 Vacation Bible School and U(U)s

Norm and Betty Stafford will share some of what they learned in a bible study workshop at the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly (MUUSA). The service will explore recent biblical scholarship and its assistance in interpreting standard texts of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.



We will share our **Third Sunday Pot Luck**. Join in the conversation about what you may or may not know about the Bible and enjoy some good summer-time shared fare.

Next Meeting—September 12th

We celebrate the start of our church year with the annual **Water Communion Ceremony**. Please bring a sample of water that is important to you —as part of your summer experiences or reflective of a joy, a blessing, a concern, a part of your life.

In the District

The Southwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SWUUSI) will meet August 1-6, 2010, at the Western Hills Guest Ranch in Hulbert OK, part of Sequoyah State Park. The theme is "**Swimming in the Deep End**" and will feature the SWUUC's own District Executive Rev. Susan Smith; and Connie Goodbread, CRE, Faith Development Consultant for the Mid-South, Florida, and Northeast Districts.

Sunset Talks will be conducted by Rev. Aaron White, Associate Minister, First Unitarian Church, Dallas. Featured also will be Artist-in-Residence Nick Page from Boston. He is a composer, choral conductor, author, and song leader. He will offer performances and workshops and will lead two choirs, one of them multi-generational.

Our Democratic Process

Jonesboro voters will cast ballots on Tuesday, August 10th on the proposed **4-year half-cent sales tax increase to fund public safety**, specifically the police and fire departments. Early voting begins Tuesday, August 3rd at the Voter Annex on Jefferson St. Be sure to cast your ballot.



UUs in History



Two hundred years after the Rev. James Freeman Clarke's birth on April 4, 1810, his vision of congregational life still shapes UU practice. Though Clarke was influential in the fields of comparative religion, education reform, women's suffrage, and abolition, his greatest legacy was the work he did to re-imagine church life. Clarke graduated from Harvard Divinity School in 1833 and was ordained by the Second Church in Boston. In 1839 he married Anna Huidekoper, daughter of the founder of Meadville Theological School.

Clarke first served a church in Louisville, KY, to spread Unitarianism on the frontier, saying *"If I could make converts in a community where my belief is unpopular, I should be convinced of its adaptation to human needs."* But he also became convinced that to grow and thrive outside New England, Unitarian churches needed to reorganize church life.

Clarke returned to Boston in 1841 to form a church based on his vision of the ideal organization, radically different from any other Unitarian church in Boston. From the start the church attracted as many as 700 people on Sunday mornings. Expenses were covered by voluntary subscription rather than by pew rentals, the standard practice at the time, thus eliminating any class basis for seating. Clarke believed the pew system discouraged the poor from coming into the community.

The second of his reforms was the "social principle," wherein members got to know one another through a variety of activities beyond Sunday worship, including weekly discussion groups, social action, charity work, and other programs.

The final element of Clarke's church vision was to involve the entire congregation in worship services. One reform was to open communion to everyone, as opposed to most Unitarian churches, which, in keeping with their Puritan roots, permitted only church members to participate. Clarke encouraged sermons by laypeople and decision-making by

congregational committees —to determine church policy, plan charity action, supervise Sunday school, and select hymns.

In 1859 Clarke was elected secretary of the American Unitarian Association and helped establish the National Conference of Unitarian Churches in 1865. In 1885 Clarke outlined his "Five Points of the New Theology," which summarized commonly held Unitarian beliefs of the late 19th century:

- The fatherhood of God
- The brotherhood of man
- The leadership of Jesus
- Salvation by character
- The continuity of human development in all worlds, or, the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.

Clarke served his church until his death on June 8, 1888. —from uuworld.org

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

I wish to speak a word for the art of poking around. Although the art can be practiced in libraries and antique stores and peoples' psyches, the kind of poking around I am interested in advocating must be done outdoors. It is a matter of going into the land to pay close attention, to pry at things with the toe of a boot, to turn over rocks at the edge of a stream and lift boards to look for snakes or the nests of silky deer mice, to kneel close to search out the tiny bones mixed with fur in an animal's scat, to poke a cattail down a gopher hole.

People who poke around have seeds in their socks and rocks in their pockets. They measure things with the span of their hands. They look into the sun when they see a shadow pass across a field. They spit in rivers to make fish rise. When no one is looking, they may even rub their lips where beavers have chewed, just to get a sense of it. Often they stand still for a long time, listening, and then they follow the sound, sneaky as a heron, until they are close enough to see a

chickadee knocking on wood like a tiny woodpecker.

Poking around is more capricious than studying, but more intense than strolling. It's less systematic than watching but more closely focused. Unlike hiking, it has no destination. Poking around is a guaranteed way to learn. Ideas, after all, start with sense impressions; and all learning comes from making connections among observations and ideas. Insight is born of analogy. Everything interesting is complicated. Since truth is in the details, seekers of the truth should look for it there.

—Kathleen Dean Moore

In the State

Members of the UU Village Church in Hot Springs Village voted (75% in favor) to acquire the Village Church of Christ property, which had been offered for sale. The UUVC congregation has met for 12 years in the Village's community building. The Village Church is now embarking on a long-term building plan and capital campaign.

Our Interdependent Web

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative will pay farmers in portions of Arkansas and seven other states near the Gulf of Mexico to flood existing farmed wetlands, particularly rice fields, to provide habitat and feeding grounds for birds migrating south. The intent is to provide enough water, food, and shelter that migratory birds won't have as much need to stop in the Gulf of Mexico, especially critical after BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in April.

Fields that have not been flooded in the past will provide more opportunities for feeding and rest for those birds that have a long way to go, e.g., to South America. This is, however, not a perfect solution to saving these migratory birds. Because migration

behavior is so innate, these long-distance travelers may go where they always have gone. But they maybe enticed to stop over along the way, helping them to be more rested and strong.

The National Resources Conservation Service has identified 22 land, shore, and waterbird species to be affected by the initiative. Three of them —the masked bobwhite, seaside sparrow, and wood stork —are endangered species. Five others —the loggerhead shrike, reddish egret, king rail, black rail, and black skimmer —are "species of concern."

The MBHI is contracting with area farmers for three years and provides \$5.95 million for habitat creation. About 200 Greene County farmers have applied for compensation of over \$1.2 million. Farmers receive annual payments based on the total acreage of flooded land up to \$45 per acre. NRCS believes that flooding will have no adverse impact on the land or crop production.

Whether BP will provide any funding for this program is unclear.

—from John Griffith, Paxton News Bureau, 7/23/10

Speed Bump

