

The Torch

FEBRUARY 20, 2017

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Upcoming Services

February 19, 2017

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
Religious Education at 11:00 am
“Understanding Narcissism”
-Rev. Tom Goldsmith

February 26, 2017

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
Religious Education at 11:00 am
“Class and the Beginnings of American Unitarianism”
-Rev. Tom Goldsmith

March 5, 2017

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
Religious Education at 11:00 am
Celebration Sunday!
“To Show an Affirming Flame”
Join our huge worship production including our entire religious education program, our entire choir, two ministers, and the Holy Spirit. (The latter has merely been extended an invitation, but we hope the spirit of generosity will join us in our Pledge Kick-off). Special coffee hour to follow.

Should I Pledge? Where does the money go? How much should I pledge?

-submitted by Julia Rossi, Pledge Committee

You may not realize it but the Unitarian Universalist Association website offers a world of information. I have attempted to briefly answer some of the big questions but you might just want to go there yourself! Congregational Stewardship Q&A (<http://www.uua.org/finance/fundraising/generosity/185418.shtml>)

Why do we pledge?

The church belongs to each of us. We pledge to fund the daily operations and to ensure that the church and its resources are here for us and for others now and in the future.

What is the money used for?

Pledges are a major component of our annual budget. The money supports our worship and music programs, religious education, adult programs, community outreach and the physical and environmental space where we gather. The annual budget includes salaries, benefits, maintenance, repairs, supplies, utilities, and more.

Is pledging a requirement of membership?

We expect that those who benefit from the church and participate in activities will share in its financial upkeep. Some members are able to pledge more but we can all share in pledging generously to our church.

What about the money I put in the collection plate?

The offering plate can be used to make a pledge payment as long as the offering can be associated with you, e.g. your personal check that indicates you wish it to go towards your pledge. However, collection plate contributions, while always welcomed, do not allow the church to create a budget that meets the ongoing needs of the church such as personnel salaries.

What if my financial circumstances change during the year, if I lose my job or have a financial emergency?

Lives are not static. Contact our church administrator, Hal Gonzales, if you need to adjust your pledge.

What is the best way to pledge?

The absolutely best way is to set up an automatic monthly withdrawal from your bank account. While some people chose to use their credit cards,

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All Torch articles are also published as separate news items in the “Latest News” section on the front page of our website.

the church loses quite a bit of the pledge money to credit card fees. In addition, credit cards can get lost or expire. It creates extra work on the part of our staff to track down the replacement credit card!

How much should I pledge?

I recommend consulting the The UUA Suggested Fair-Giving Guide online or ask Hal for a printed copy.

(http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/fair_share_contribution_guide.pdf)

Sharing Our Thoughts About Supporting Our Church

-Submitted by Julia Rossi

When I think about my own reasons for pledging, I can't help but wonder why other church participants pledge. And notice that I say 'participants' and not just 'members'. Everyone who attends our services, listens to our choir, brings their children for religious education, is challenged and inspired by what we offer, calls on the church when they have a life changing event is a willing participant in our church. And if we want our church to expand and thrive, we all must contribute. So I decided to ask past pledgers, why they pledge? Here is what I learned.

"I pledge because, as a member of this congregation and a participant in this community, it is the right thing to do." Sally Smith

"My support for decency and justice burns brighter at First Unitarian than anyplace else I know." Henry Whiteside

"I give because this is the place where I come to live my values. I am able to give to others through leadership, committee work, and joining the web of care. I come to meet my friends, to learn how to be a better person, to receive spiritual guidance. I give because you are the people whose spiritual guidance and generosity show me the way; who provide the service projects, discussions and actions that support our seven principles; whose company provides me with shared meals, laughter and fun activities. You are the ones who give me that opportunity. I give because not just my family, but all families, that come here will be treated with inherent worth and dignity rooted in a respect for, and service to, the interdependent web of all existence. This is home. You are family. Why do I give? That's easy. I give

because I belong to the Fellowship, and if you belong, you should give." Sandi Greene

I'd like to hear from you. Why do you pledge? Send me a quick email at jrossi1028@icloud.com and share your thoughts about pledging and what it means to you.

Reverently Yours (Rev. Tom Goldsmith)

Every day since the inauguration has felt anxious. Daily tweets fill the air with fetid forebodings. We wonder if reality has abandoned us.

Timothy Egan, an eloquent environmentalist from the Northwest, and New York Times columnist, wrote recently: "Every day brings some fresh affront to decency, some assault on progress, some blow to truth."

I think that's why so many of us feel just battered. There's a certain physicality that punishes the body as we lose freedom, rights, and moral grounding. We're knocked (literally) off balance by the blows to human dignity.

If you can stand to absorb even more visceral punishment, I highly recommend the documentary, "I Am Not Your Negro." It's a brilliant bob and weave of James Baldwin's commentary on race. It encompasses attitudes portraying black Americans in TV and film, white liberal attitudes about moving the conversation away from race, and an ode to three of Baldwin's murdered friends: Medgar Evers, Malcom X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. When asked by TV host Dick Cavett some 45 years ago if he had hope for the future of race relations in our country, Baldwin answered no.

For me, the most startling feature of this documentary is that the current situation in our nation, framed by Rodney King, Trayvon Martin, Ferguson, Black Lives Matter, to the latest display of cold ignorance when Trump referred to the abolitionist Frederick Douglas as a current civil rights worker who's doing a good job, gives credibility to Baldwin's bleak prediction. But even more disturbing than the persistent struggle of race in our country, was the documentary's expose of Americans from that time period who undeniably constituted the fabric that has now finally covered America with white nationalism. The contempt for anyone outside the white racist, sexist, xenophobic power wheel (when America was ostensibly great), was etched onto the faces of those who are

currently commanding the Trumpian disregard for a common humanity. Each cabinet appointment in the new administration is equal to giving the finger to any illusion of progress held dearly by humane citizens despised as "cultural elite."

My surprise, at what I considered a right wing fringe somehow emerging victoriously at the last election, is not a surprise anymore. In "I Am Not Your Negro," today's embarrassment to the civilized world is less an anomaly (pundits still trying to figure it out), than an evolution of a well-oiled machine of hatred and ignorance. The America which ties knots in our stomachs today, was present all along. We apparently were looking in a different direction, blind to the forces of evil.

My suggestion going forward as a congregation with a history of involvement in social justice is that we realize the issue for what it really is. The last election was not a fluke. It revealed a portrait of America we tried to ignore. Fostering resistance is good, but we are also required to build anew. Strategy will be best designed when we come together as a committed community. All our ideas and voices need to be heard. Our Social Justice Council extends to the entire congregation. Let's get to work. TRG

In the Life . . . (Rev. Matthew Cockrum)

I had no intentions of going to seminary when I first walked through the doors of a Unitarian Universalist church, back in Lexington, Kentucky in 1995. Sure, I'd had inklings of interest in ministry in years prior - first in an Assemblies of God church in high school, then again as a Catholic in college. But when I first attended the UU Church of Lexington, I was just looking for an inclusive religious community where my first husband and I could worship together as an openly gay couple.

As I became further involved in the life of the congregation - singing with the choir, assisting in worship services - I also received invitations to grow and stretch. The congregation's anti-racism committee challenged us to attend local public meetings (school board, city council and the like) with an eye towards racial dynamics. I was introduced to the notion of financial stewardship and eventually served on the pledge committee. (Ask me sometime about my first phone call with someone from the pledge committee. It wasn't foretelling of someone who'd eventually be

leading congregations and just goes to show how much we can grow in unexpected ways.)

The long and short of it is that in church - as in much of life - we are called to learn and grow in unexpected ways. Sometimes we resist. Sometimes we accept the invitation willingly. Sometimes we even seek it out. Always the invitation is before us (or within us). The pertinent question is how we will respond.

Last week I had the privilege of welcoming fifteen folks to membership at First Unitarian Church. Among them were folks who are returning to First Church after absences, folks who have been here for months or even years. All of them were people who were saying "yes" to the invitation to deepen their commitment - not only to themselves and their own spiritual and intellectual growth, but also to this congregation and its mission and ministries.

Along with those newcomers, veteran members were also asked, "What parts of the congregation's mission speaks most to you? How might you deepen your commitment to that at this time? What would it look like in your life?"

So now I ask you: How might you deepen your commitments at this time? What would your spiritual and intellectual growth look like if you did? How might actively engaging in building a progressive and just world become a more integral and intentional part of your life?

Whatever brought you through the doors of this congregation...whenever you came and however long you've been here...the mission and ministries of First Church need you in these challenging times now more than ever. And the world needs engaged congregants like you now more than ever.

The invitation is at your in-box.

How will you reply?

Here's to The Work, Friends!
Peace, Faith & Passion,
Matthew

More from Matthew

Adult Religious Education Offerings

- Owing Your Religious Past - Tuesdays, March 14, 21, 28 and April 4. 6:45-8:45 p.m. -

Join Revs. Matthew Cockrum & Tom Goldsmith in this powerful 4-session series designed to assist participants in examining and exploring their religious past while also articulating their present and future. These sessions are open to all and will contain elements specifically geared towards those with LDS background. Register with Rev. Matthew Cockrum via e-mail (clminister@slcuu.org) or phone (801.582.8687 ext. 205) or at the Congregational Life table.

- Seeking the Sources - Mondays, February 27, March 27, April 24 & May 22, 6:45-8:45 p.m. Room 201 - Join Rev. Matthew Cockrum in movement, meditation and inquiry of how we might benefit from accessing the six sources of our living tradition. No registration required, drop-ins encouraged. Come as you are. Bring your favorite yoga and meditation gear if you have any.

Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser - Sunday, February 26 after each service. Have a tasty breakfast at church and support our high school youth in their June service trip to New Orleans. Want details or to help? Contact Nancy Moos at ut_moos@yahoo.com or Lori Shields at lshields.sl@gmail.com

Info & Orientation Sessions - The monthly informal Info Sessions following Sunday services will not take place in March due to scheduling conflicts and Celebration Sunday. Next Info Sessions will be April 2 and May 7 (following each Sunday service) and Tuesday, May 9 (7-9 p.m. - registration required to Rev. Matthew Cockrum at clminister@slcuu.org or 801.582.8687 ext. 205).

CORC - Coalition Of Religious Communities - Want to engage the state legislature with other Unitarian Universalists? The Coalition of Religious Communities builds on a broad base to engage shared values for compassionate change in social issues. This year's focus is on ending youth homelessness. Join other Unitarian Universalists along with our Jewish neighbors at the State Capitol on Tuesday, February 28, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Check out the event on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/218512665256777/>. "Come tour the Capitol, meet legislators and help reduce the number of children who become homeless in Utah. We will meet in

the Aspen Room, which is near the cafeteria in the Senate Building (located to the northeast immediately behind the Utah Capitol Building).

Parking at the Capitol is scarce. We recommend carpooling or finding a public transportation route at:

<http://www.rideuta.com/Rider-Tools/Trip-Planner>. For more information contact Bill Tibbitts at Crossroads Urban Center, bill@crossroadsurbancenter.org or 801-364-7765 ex 107."

Religious Education Corner

It's hard to believe that Spring is close at hand and we are approaching the final quarter of our Religious Education program for 2016-2017.

Our theme for RE in 2017-2018 will be "Faith in Action" with an emphasis on the Golden Rule as it is reflected in religions worldwide. We plan to examine diverse cultures and find ways to embrace diverse peoples and backgrounds.

Perhaps one of the best ways to help our students navigate through these goals is through Social Justice projects, meaning activities and curricula that will help students develop a mindset of concern for inequities in wealth, education and privilege.

We'll be working on projects that empower our children through awareness, advocacy and activism. Ultimately, we should be able to help our youth make connections between Unitarian history, culture, science and economics. Our upper-grade students, of course, will continue on their journey of self-reflection and openness.

Travel plans for our upper-level RE program is expected to shift to an every-other-year basis, with out-of-state travel one year followed by a year of social justice outreach in our own backyard.

Just around the Corner in RE...

- 2/19/17 - Sandwich Sunday for younger RE children
- 2/26/17 - Pancake Fundraiser event for YRUU after each service
- 2/28/17 - Applications for RE Youth Advisor closes
- 3/19/17 - RE Council meets, location TBA

- 4/2/17 - Return to traditional curriculum for lower grades (PreK-5) through May 28

In Service,
Julie Miller
Director, Religious Education

Social Justice Film - March 11th

-submitted by Barbara Taylor

The Social Justice Committee and Just Peace in the Holy Land invite you to a showing of the documentary, "the Settlers," Saturday night, March 11, Elliot Hall and we would love it if you would come.

Trump who presented himself as a staunch supporter of settlement expansion during his campaign, has back pedaled in recent days. King Abdullah of Jordan flew to Washington, uninvited to give the president some advice: "Settlements are an obstacle to peace." Luckily, the president often agrees with the last person who whispers into his ear.

However, since Mr. Trump's inauguration Mr. Netanyahu's government has announced the construction of 5,500 new houses in the occupied West Bank and has raised the idea of building the first entirely new settlement in years. He is still upset that the US (under President Obama) did not veto a Security Council resolution condemning Israel for building settlements.

Mr. Netanyahu might as well admit his intention is to physically break up the Palestinian territories so thoroughly that there is no possibility of a Palestinian state.

What is the motivation behind the settler movement? The Israeli government lures incoming refugees to move to the Occupied Territories by offering them condominiums, swimming pools, good schools, homes with no down payments and low interest rates. Others move there for religious reasons claiming the land was promised to them by God.

We will examine attitudes on both sides of the issue, Saturday night, March 11, 7 pm in Elliot Hall when the entire congregation is invited to view a film, "the Settlers," directed by Jewish film maker, Shimon Dotan. We hope to have a lively discussion. Save the date.

Rev. Matthew's Congregational Life Report - Feb. 25th

-Submitted by John Rasmusson

When you read the Strategic Plan on the Church website, you'll find it has a Congregational Life Objective that calls for addressing "the needs of our congregants in all stages of spiritual, theological and social development." The plan stipulates that church leaders "will complete programming assessments and report on the results." And so they will! On Feb. 25 at 9 a.m., our consulting minister, Matthew Cockrum, will report on his assessment of the Congregational Life Objective. Don't miss this opportunity to see what progress we have made and where additional effort is needed. All are encouraged to attend and participate.

Environmental Ministry News

-Submitted by Joan M. Gregory

2017 Environmental Ministry Series: Effective Action in a Trump Administration!

FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION: BREATH OF LIFE
Tuesday, February 21, 7PM Eliot Hall Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1218425024873178/>

Spectacularly photographed in Europe, Scandinavia, North America and Hawaii, BREATH OF LIFE travels the globe in search of the truth behind what appears to be a looming environmental catastrophe. Everyone is telling us how we are destroying our world. BREATH OF LIFE shows us why. This stunning documentary transcends the usual experts and captures the mind-bending insight of the world's greatest evolutionary scientists, down-to-earth farmers and Hawaiian wisdom keepers. It will change forever the way you view the world and provide a roadmap to the future you can actually use. Following the film, we will explore the question: what does effective action look like in the face of the realities of climate change?

Co-Sponsors: Association for the Tree of Life, Climate Emergency Coalition, and Environmental Ministry – First Unitarian Church of SLC.

Be Part of the Solution! Let your Voice be Heard!
The Utah State Legislature is in session!! Websites for tracking legislation: Utah State Legislature:

<http://le.utah.gov/> - schedules, news, legislator contact information, a bill tracker <http://le.utah.gov/asp/billtrack/track.asp> and a direct link to the General Session: <http://le.utah.gov/~2017/2017.htm>. Find YOUR legislator: <http://le.utah.gov/GIS/findDistrict.jsp>. Many local organizations track bills of interest. Alliance for a Better Utah: <https://betterutah.org/issues/2017-legislative-session/>, HEAL Utah: <http://www.healutah.org/bill-tracker/>, Utah League of Women Voters: <http://www.lwvutah.org/get-informed/legislative-advocacy>, and Utah Clean Energy: <https://utahcleanenergy.org/issues/policy/item/351-2017-legislative-session>, are just a few. Let your Utah legislators know how you would vote on the legislation.

Nationally, there are many reasons these days for contacting your 2 U.S. Senators and 1 U.S. Representative every day. What to call them about? Whatever you just saw in the newspaper or wherever you get your news. Call the capitol switchboard at 202-225-3121. Ask for your Senator or Representative by name, and give your zip code. [OR look up your Senators: <https://www.senate.gov/> and Representative: <https://www.house.gov/> and put their numbers into your cell phone]. Introduce yourself to the person who answers the phone letting them know you are a constituent, and ask to speak to your member of Congress (MoC). If your MoC is unavailable, ask to speak to the aide who deals with the subject you are calling about. If all else fails, leave a voice message for your MoC regarding your concerns or your support. If the phone line is constantly busy, send a message to your MoC via their web contact form, typically in the CONTACT section of their website.

Congregational Briefs

Arts Fair April 22nd The Annual First Unitarian Church Fine Arts and Crafts Festival will be held on Saturday April 22nd from 5 to 10 pm and Sunday April 23rd till 1:30 pm. Artists: Please register using the online form found on the Church Webpage: <http://www.slcuu.org/component/rsform/form/7-artist-registration-form>. This is a fun family event with food and entertainment provided. Artists can show their art for fun at no charge. All sales are handled by the church. Church retains 25%, artist receive a check from the church for 75%. All arts and crafts welcomed. Display space is limited, so

sign up early. If you have any question please contact Bill Reed at wbreed@gmail.com.

Refugee Resettlement Committee Needs Donations

Like a stone tossed into a still pool, President Trump's executive order on immigration rippled into Salt Lake City with destabilizing effect. A planned apartment set-up by the Refugee Resettlement Committee was cancelled by the International Refugee Committee (IRC), citing Trump's "reckless and discriminatory executive order." As protests erupted like flash mobs around the country, IRC announced that furniture donations would continue to be collected so long as it had capacity to store it. Call Joe Dubray at (904) 527-9773 for details. Those interested in contributing money to the IRC can do so on its website.

Dinner and Dialogue Dinner and Dialogue is going strong! There have already been several dinners, and we have many more in the works clear through May. Feel free to sign up in the white binder in Eliot Hall at the Congregational Life Table to host or attend a dinner in order to connect with people in our congregation. If you have any questions, please call Darlene Thayne at 801-455-6553 or send me an email to suppers@slcuu.org.

Mindfulness Group Sundays Following the end of the first service, in the Parlor.

UU Lunch Bunch A family-friendly group for anyone and everyone who would like to get together for lunch and chat with like-minded people. Meet at the Restaurant on Sundays at noon during the summer. For more information contact Sonia Carnell at (801) 262-1151 or lunchbunch@slcuu.org.

- February 19th: Taqueria 27 (1615 South Foothill Dr)
- February 26th: Shanghai Cafe (145 East 1300 South)
- March 5th: (Location Change!) Citrus Grill (3977 S Wasatch Blvd)
- March 12th: Cafe Med (420 East 3300 South)
- March 19th: Pho Thin (2121 McClelland St)
- March 26th: Saffron Valley East India Cafe (22 E Street)