

The Torch

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Upcoming Services

September 25th (Services at 9 and 11:00 am)
"The Future of Liberal Religion" - Rev. Russ Menk joins Rev. Tom Goldsmith for a discussion on Liberal Religion's tenuous future. Russ is a former board president of our church. We welcome him and his wife Jackie back to their Unitarian roots in Salt Lake City.

October 2nd (Services at 9 and 11:00 am)
"Once Upon a Time" - Rev. Robert Fulghum

October 9th (Services at 9 and 11:00 am)
"And Then What Happened?" - Rev. Robert Fulghum

Reverently Yours (Rev. Tom Goldsmith)

There's an old axiom that suggests that UU churches swell in numbers in proportion to our nation's conservative leadership. In other words, UU churches flourished during the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan years, with a slight upbeat during the Bush years. The Obama years may have kept our country a little left of center, but his administration hurt our membership overall.

Although it's not a science, we can safely speculate about the correlation between the politics in the White House and whether or not liberals support their churches. It seems as though we don't feel urgency to sit in liberal pews as long as there's a sense that the political agenda moves towards a more just system. It makes UU ministers think twice about how they want presidential elections to turn out. On the other hand, if this year's nightmare gets elected, we may need to build a new church the size of the Tabernacle on Temple Square. A bump in membership comes at quite a significant cost.

I never have made sense of the ebb and flow of UU membership being somehow mystically tied to the party in office. It feels as though liberals have a liberal agenda, namely ensuring that those who live in the margins of society are not forgotten. The agenda includes hospitality to immigrants, equal opportunities for all races in education and employment, and also includes health care as a basic human right for all. But why don't liberals embrace these principles on a local level in their UU churches instead of believing (erroneously) that it suffices to have a liberal president? Is there a fear factor that drives prospective Unitarians to churches to do the work they are meant to do? Are our churches only meaningful to liberals in dark times, when our valued principles are threatened?

The correlation between who's president and who's in the pews makes UU churches appear far more political than they really intend to be. Although the seven UU principles encompass values usually attributed to people who aspire to make our nation more multicultural and diverse, care for the environment, and call to affirm justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, there is more to a liberal church community than its political agenda. We want our children educated in the value of helping others; we need community to celebrate and mourn; we want to enrich our spiritual lives and share this good life with the people who join us in worship.

Social justice needs persist on a local level regardless who's president. First Church provides opportunities for us to work meaningfully to make this little corner of the world more just. We fulfill an important niche in the liberal heart. It's not just about politics, but also a religious understanding that gives meaning to our lives. Let's build our church to where we are a sustainable institution into the future. It really shouldn't matter who wins an election. TRG

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In the Life (Rev. Matthew Cockrum)

...And we're off! Just a few weeks into the new program year (and a month or so into the academic calendar) and it feels to me like we're already at breakneck speed. It's the end of September and we're hurtling forward into plans for Halloween, Solstice and Christmas. It can make it seem as though summer was just a dream or is just a vague memory.

Over the summer I tried to return to a practice of focused reading. One of the texts I chose is a slim one which I commend to you, "An Other Kingdom," by Peter Block, Walter Bruggeman and John McKnight. The authors - a business consultant, a theologian and a community organizer - paint a picture of what it would be like to live into another kind of community, rather than one focused on success, consumerism and contracts. Their focus turns to collaboration, neighborliness, abundance and covenants. Over and over again I found myself thinking, "They're talking about Beloved Community! They're talking about Church!"

I share this with you for two reasons. First, I highly recommend this text for your reading. If enough of us take the time perhaps we could have a book discussion and then explore how we might implement these suggestions in the First Church community and our broader communities. Second, it reminds me that our work here is not just busy work. Strategic planning, religious education for all ages, small group ministry, social justice organizing...they're not just to feel good now, to accomplish an immediate task or to get us through another season. Our work in this great good place is, ideally, to shape us and our world more toward Beloved Community.

Much good is afoot here - meals for the Homeless Youth Resource Center, a youth service trip to the Gulf Coast, activism to address climate change, white supremacy, international bullying, and opportunities to reflect, learn, grow and cultivate greater self awareness and self-culture (see Tom's sermon on 09/18/16 for more history on W.E. Channing's concept). I encourage you to scan the state of your heart and mind. What do you need? Now scan the state of the community around you. What does it need?

Now...what's stopping you?

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

More from Matthew:

Seeking the Sources - September 26, 6:45-8:45 p.m. in Eliot Hall. Join Rev. Matthew Cockrum in an exploration of the Sources and Principles of Unitarian Universalism. This is a monthly drop-in class. Come to one, a few or all! Each session will include movement, meditation and conversation. If you've got a favorite yoga mat or meditation cushion bring it along...or just come as you are! Sessions will be the last Monday of the month unless it's a holiday, in which case it will be on the prior Monday.

Information Session - Join Rev. Matthew Cockrum for an informal Info Session on the first Sunday of every month in the small chapel, immediately following each worship service. Coffee and light refreshments available with an opportunity to meet other newcomers and ask questions about this congregation and Unitarian Universalism. No RSVP needed. Interested in helping? Contact Matthew at clminister@slcuu.org or 801.582.8687 ext. 205.

A Night with Soul - September 30, 7 p.m. - Help our high schoolers and chaperones get to the Gulf Coast to be of service this summer! Plus have a night of great music, great food and great stories! First Church's Minister-at-Large, the Rev. Robert Fulghum will regale diners with amusing, touching and heartfelt tales between musical sets by The Disposable Thumbs, all while you dine on authentic jambalaya (vegans too)! Tickets are \$25 and are available in Eliot Hall on Sundays. For more questions contact organizer Kim Grob Lee at Kim@writeonnetwork.com or 801.879.9719.

Building a Beloved Community: Carol's Welcome Table Story

-submitted by Carol Romagosa

Back in November 2015, I was introduced to the idea of The Beloved Community by Mark Matheson, my Shakespeare professor. As director of the MUSE Project at the University of Utah, he wrote an introduction for U.S. Rep. John Lewis who would be speaking at the U. Lewis has dedicated his life to protecting human rights, securing civil liberties and building what he calls "the Beloved Community" in America and the goal of realizing the Beloved Community has guided every aspect of his activism and public service.

Through his writings, nonviolent direct actions and service as an elected official, Lewis has demonstrated the transformative power of this

ideal for the individual and its efficacy in creating social justice. Lewis learned of this ideal in the 1950s from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lewis has written that the story of his life can be understood in terms of his dedication to this single ideal which he defines as a truly interracial democracy based on nonviolence and simple justice that values "*the dignity and worth of every human being*. Is this not our Unitarian value?

The idea of the Beloved Community emerged in the late 19th century in the work of the American philosopher Josiah Royce. An important aspect of the Beloved Community is that it is based on the loyalty of the individual to the community but in the process the person does not sacrifice his or her individuality. Many churches, including UU's, have adapted the idea and practice for their groups and activities. I became instantly drawn to this ideal and knew that I wanted to practice it in my life and introduce into my life and my community at First Unitarian Church in Salt Lake City.

My personal background in coming to First Unitarian explains how I came to adopt the practice. Having been shy my whole life, in 2005 when I began attending First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City, I meditated at stop lights when driving to church on Sunday to tell myself that I could walk into Eliot Hall alone. Even so, I signed the book in 2005 because I had read Jack Mendelsohn's book *Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age* and discovered that this was where I needed to be.

However, many Sundays in Eliot Hall, very few, if any, individuals approached me to talk with me or welcome me. I gradually became more comfortable as I participated in more church activities and groups. But the fact remains that we need to be more welcoming to visitors, strangers, newcomers and perhaps even "oldcomers" in Eliot Hall before and after services. We most definitely need to approach people who appear to be standing around alone.

Rev. Matthew, our Consulting Minister for Congregational Life, arrived in August 2015. When he announced he was forming a Hospitality Committee, I personally was experiencing a lot of personal anxiety. So the opportunity to be involved in making our church more welcoming was intuitively a very welcoming idea for me. When I met with Matthew and learned of "the Work," the very important and necessary Work, this committee would be doing, I chose to work on the

Welcome Table. The committee decided to separate the Welcome Table from a Congregational Life Table that offered information on all the church's activities. The Welcome Table would "welcome" people by helping them feel comfortable and inform them where to find information on church activities, if they were interested.

The Hospitality Committee decided to move the Welcome Table to outside the Chapel door and to maintain the Welcome Table during the summer Forums. With the approval of the committee, I chose to "dress up" the table to make it more attractive. This summer, I spent every Sunday in Eliot Hall to welcome those who showed up on time or late, some of the most satisfying work I have ever done. I also discovered there is a great need for at least one person to be "on duty" in Eliot Hall throughout the service.

I believe in the need for someone in our Beloved Community to be present to welcome those who do visit the table. If we do not create a welcoming and caring presence for everyone who comes to us, we are not honoring our Seven Principles and we are not creating our Beloved Community.

Endowment Committee Report

-submitted by Cathy Chambless, Chair of Endowment Committee

The Endowment Committee wishes to thank the following donors for their thoughtful gifts to the Church Endowment Fund in memory of members who have recently passed:

In memory of Janet Minden

Betsy Minden
Carol Blackwell
Cosette Joesten
Paula Julander
Lex Hemphill and Nancy Melich

In memory of Alice "Pat" Capson Brown

Virginia Rothstein
Anne Holman/ King's English
Evelyn D. Bennett
Richard and Helen Wolford & Family
Miriam C. Bushnell

Have you heard about the Emerson Society?

Individuals who have included the First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City in their will or estate plans

are inducted into the Emerson Society. A wood and brass plaque on the south wall of the Chapel lists the names of Emerson Society members.

If you would like more information about how to include the Church in your will or estate plans, Endowment Committee members are available to meet with you to discuss several different options for making bequests.

The Endowment Committee wants to know if you have already provided for giving to the Church in your will or estate plans but have not notified the Church. It is important to let the Endowment Committee know your intentions – not only to honor you (if you wish), but to ensure your wishes are respected.

For either purpose, contact us at Endowment@slcuu.org or pick up a request form at the Congregational Life table in Eliot Hall after church services.

Religious Education News

New & Improved Youth Start-Times & Locations -

It's a new year and we've moved things around somewhat when it comes to the upper grades (6th-12th) in our youth ministries. In order for youth and teachers to have the best possible religious education experience, please do your part to get youth to their classes on-time. As a reminder, here's the schedule and locations for these classes:

6th & 7th Grade - World Religions - 11:00-12:15 - Parlor (Room 225)

8th & 9th Grade - Our Whole Lives - 10:45-12:15 - Room 218

10th - 12th Grade - High School - 10:45-12:45 - Haven (Room 214)

Questions? Concerns? As always, ask any of our Religious Education Staff Team - Matthew Cockrum, Lissa Lander and Julie Miller - or stop at the Religious Education Table in Eliot Hall on a Sunday morning.

Think Globally, Act Locally

-submitted by John Rasmusson

Think Globally: More people have been displaced from their homes by conflict than at any time since World War II.

Act locally: Salt Lake City is one of 29 places in the U.S. that receives refugees sponsored by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Working in concert with the IRC, our Refugee Resettlement Committee (RRC) provides opportunities to serve this critical humanitarian effort. You can act locally by donating furniture, joining the volunteer ranks of the RRC, mentoring a refugee family....Act today by calling Joe Dubray at (904) 527-9773.

Social Justice News

Film Screening Oct. 21st

Have you read in newspaper that US just signed a deal to give Israel 3.8 billion a year, which is up from the 3.1 billion we used to give? Do you ever wonder why Israel receives so much military aid? Israel is number 1 on our list of aid, 4 times higher than number 2 on the list- Egypt. All the other countries in Africa that are facing civil war and starvation are bundled into a tiny bucket of aid. Is our aid going into the right place?

Come see a free movie in Eliot Hall, Friday night, Oct 21, 7 pm sponsored by the Unitarian Social Justice Ministry and Utahns for a Just Peace in the Holy Land. "Budrus" is the true story of a father and daughter who together fight and inspire their village to stand up to the Israeli Army, known as IDF. Join the conversation after the showing and learn more about the Middle East.

Anti-Racism Committee Class

-submitted by Catherine Parnell

White Privilege, White Shame, Black Pain is an eight-week course that will help students understand race as an emotional experience that has been perpetuated by historical and contemporary attempts to consolidate rather than share power. As a group we will aim to reveal the ways in which racism harms both people of color and white people, and we will strive to imagine the ways in which we can dismantle these racial barriers by looking inward at our privilege and personal experience, and outward at our relationships and institutions. The class will meet at the church from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. on Thursdays, from September 29th through November 17th. We will read two books, Learning to be White and The New Jim Crow, which must be purchased by the start of the class. Register here: <http://tinyurl.com/SLCUU-WhitePrivilegeWorkshop>

Congregational Briefs

Dinner and Dialogue

Have you heard about DINNER AND DIALOGUE? It's a great way to socialize and meet new members and friends outside of the traditional church setting. Participants gather in small groups and share a meal together in one home. You may sign up as a HOST where you set the date, time and the menu and decide how many guests you can accommodate. Or you may choose to sign up as a GUEST where you will attend and contribute by bringing a dish to share (appetizer, salad, dessert, beverage, etc. assigned by the host). Either way you choose to participate, you are guaranteed to make new FRIENDS! Our goal is to have a couple of these each month. I will coordinate by getting the guest names to the host and assisting in any way possible. There will be a table set up at our Activities Fair on September 18 so you can sign up or ask questions if you wish. After that, we will have our Dinner and Dialogue book at the Congregational Life Table in Eliot Hall for the remainder of the year.

If you are unable to sign up to participate in Dinner and Dialogue at our church service or have questions, feel free to contact me, Darlene Thayne, at 801-455-6553 or send an email to suppers@slcuu.org. I have gotten to know some very lovely people through this activity. Why not give it a try?

Mindfulness Group

Every Sunday, meditation is offered as a time to pause, practice calming our thoughts and setting an intention to be mindful in our daily life. Guidance for developing meditation practice is shared along with suggested websites and reading. Alone, together helps to stay with the intention and to learn the benefits of being mindfully aware. 9:45 am to 10:30 in the Parlor. All are welcome.

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.

- September 25: The Garage (1199 Beck Street)
- October 2: Trio Café (6405 South 3000 East)

- October 9: The Copper Kitchen (4640 South 2300 East)
- October 16: Indochine (230 South 1300 East)

Important Dates and Events

September 26th: Seeking the Sources Adult RE Class

September 29th: Anti-Racism class begins

September 30th: "A Night with Soul" fundraiser, Eliot Hall, 7 pm

October 2nd: Information Session for Newcomers following each service in the Little Chapel

October 3rd: Family Fun Night, 6 pm

Wednesdays: Choir rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Congregant Forum

It Just Happened - submitted by Nicholas Shifrar

The energy is a peaceful morning vibration. It's not the frenzy of a festival. It's not the excitement of a campus during the first weeks of fall or spring. It's the steady radiation of an engaged movement. Some set tables with fliers and sign-up sheets on the patio. Others are parking their cars, locking up their bikes, and walking through the front doors to snag a seat in the red-padded, white-wooden pews. The choir is rehearsed and ready to groove. It's 8:55am and the service is about to start.

I'm on the fly. Jog at 5:50, breakfast and an email or two at 6:20, work by 7. God supposedly set this day aside for rest. But I'm a Unitarian, I'll rest when the world is just. My employer gave me a two-hour window to attend the Sunday service that I cherish. I'm grateful for this. Unfortunately, it means I'm unable to stand at any table or chat with the active members to hear about their organizations and commitments after the service. The Unitarian Universalist Young Adult table, the Social Justice table, the Environmental Justice table, the Choir table, to name a few. They're all set up on church's front patio beneath a solid blue September sky ready to re-enlist folks or to sign them up to various activities for the first time. I walk briskly through the small crowd and swoop in to snatch a seat with the choir. So, maybe my sense of the air isn't fully encompassing. I'm fallible and finite, but service is about to start with the singing of "Welcome, Welcome," by Clif Hardin. I'll nip the rumination in the bud.

After the song, it's Rev. Matthew's turn. He moves up to the pulpit. "Come in," he says with a

peaceful, welcoming voice. "Come in, you agitators and thinkers." I can feel the space opening up with the characteristic language of our engaged progressivism like the first deep breath of the day. His voice is smooth and warm like a space heater in winter.

"But seriously, come in."

The doors are then opened for those agitators and thinkers who are currently categorized as latecomers. We're all settled in now and at the end of the opening words, Rev. Matthew lights the chalice. We're here to reconnect with Hope and Knowledge and for a weekly reorientation to the infinite possibilities of Love.

Today's sermon from the great Rev. Goldsmith is many things. It is an extraction of Thoreau's Walden-grown wisdom; it is a relaying of history from William Ellery Channing to the American Unitarian Association to the convergent evolution of Unitarians and Universalists and their merger in 1961; it is a lesson on the non-dogmatic, non-creedal, universally applicable bylaws established by the UUA in 1984. If, though, I were to whittle it down to a single thing (and the last time I whittled thusly I told my date that the grand October sky this evening was "Blue. And beautiful,"), I would whittle it down to a call. It was a call for us attending members to engage in the Unitarian Universalist tradition.

The rich history of agitators and immense minds is why I am here. I sit in the chapel this morning because Thoreau didn't reject the world, he criticized it on his quest to live the good life. He dismantled cultural practices to better understand purpose and intention. He sojourned in a natural setting to discover the worth of patient, determined, simple labor and to uncover the meaning of a person's encounters with the surrounding world: the occasionally overwhelming and perpetually perplexing *umwelt* of the human organism.

It seems to me that we sit in church on a Sunday morning because this religious alternative is one that embodies positive change for the sake of our earth and each of its beings. The transcendentalists reawakened the divinity in our own breast; the humanists gave us a manifesto to centralize our humanity, and raise our attention to the responsibilities bequeathed by that humanity;

the early Unitarian ministers like Theodore Parker pushed the limits of what could be said behind a pulpit and uncovered the tendency of some preachers to conceal things that should be said behind a pulpit. This church is a piece of a great movement. We are its rational and compassionate agents.

I sat in my little chair feeling the undercurrent of history's unseen ocean moving within me. From Rev. Goldsmith's soul emerged the meaning of the word soul. It isn't an irrational concept or unscientific, otherworldly thing. The soul is a person's relation to the beauties, the mysteries, the simplicities, the mundanities, the profundities of an individual lifespan caught in the molecular shaking of a cosmos that has temporarily coalesced into the spherical rock we call Earth. I could simplify this. The soul is our connection to the many fragile and finite things of this life as well as our connection to the infinite. The soul is a way to express the ideals contained within us or the fears we never thought we'd have or the ones we face daily. The soul is the mind's ruminations about our mortality and meaning that sometimes are manifest into speech or writing and other times drift off into the graveyard of thought. The soul is the connection to grandma's cooking, the expansive evening sky, and the writings of 19th century New England essayists. It is everything we are, seen and unseen.

This sermon was a call to sustain our engagement, to walk forward with principle, and to understand again the lineage behind our forward motion. Coming from Rev. Goldsmith who has been a minister for Salt Lake's First Unitarian church for almost a quarter of its history, we are given greater reason to step up. Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. Those who are ignorant of history miss out on its bone-quaking inspiration. Those who engage in history write it.

It's not possible to portray each detail of the sermon or the service. That doesn't mean erasure. It means there's unexplored stardust in this universe of experience. From Rev. Cockrum's playful musical antics and wit to David Owens' outstanding musicianship and ever-present empathy, this is a small reflection from the First Unitarian church in Salt Lake City. These details are not lost on open souls.