

The Torch

FEBRUARY 6, 2017

VOLUME 59, ISSUE 14

Upcoming Services

February 5, 2017

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
Religious Education at 11:00 am
"The Gift of Wonder"
-Rev. Tom Goldsmith

February 12, 2017

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
Religious Education at 11:00 am
"The Journey"
-Kathleen Cahill and the Worship Arts Committee

February 19, 2017

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

Among Ourselves

First Unitarian Church extends loving support to the family of Judi Evans who passed away on January 30th. A memorial service will be held for Judi here at the church on Saturday, February 4th at 11:00 am.

Reverently Yours (Rev. Tom Goldsmith)

Liberals have always had a long to-do list for fixing the world. A little call for justice here, a strong cry of righteous anger there, a meeting now and again, a protest march, and some social media commentaries often sufficed as the extent to which one had to be actively engaged to make the world a better place. Liberals have now come up against a wall, a wall that not only will keep Mexicans out, but a wall that keeps democratic principles out of our country like equality, free speech, and human rights. These walls have been constructed faster than a blink of an eye.

One man, without necessarily the support of his political party, has used his first ten days in the Oval Office to dismantle every sacred facet associated with a constitutional democracy. The rule of the land suddenly stems from one twisted mind whose paranoia about the world, narcissistic inability to empathize, and ignorance as to how the world really turns, has demonstrated single-handedly that freedom is as fragile as a rose: Beautiful to behold, but easily wrecked without proper care and nurture.

The painful lesson to be learned is that democracy requires more than liberal palaver and good intentions. In the void created by neglect, evil can dismantle the institutions once regarded as impervious to extremist politics. Our nation now understands that nothing as basic as voting can be taken for granted. In the president's breathless sprint to the right, we received a civics lesson that will be remembered for the ages. The relationship between maintaining democracy and persistent activism has been seared into the soul of lethargic liberals.

When the obvious stares you in the face and it's still overlooked, there is little blame to spread around. It feels like trench warfare now, and the new era has just begun. Houses of worship have a significant role to play, now and going forward.

One of the targets of the president's hatred is indeed a religion itself. One of the three great monotheistic religions of the world faces an illegal ban of entering our country as political refugees. Who else but the ecumenical community can and must display courageous support for each other, manifesting a loyalty that extends beyond the narrow confines of parochialism. Religious defiance of insane executive orders that reveal nothing but prejudice towards a specific religious

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expression, must show the world that ultimately justice is of a higher priority than creeds.

Religions must and will cohere to offer a vision that the world can unite around issues of compassion, justice, and peace. The role of judgment, pursued in such heavy-handed ways by this new president, has no place in a fragile world seeking redemption. Religious language as well as religious practices of hospitality and compassion will change the perilous course in which we are headed. Our church will play a significant role in maintaining safety in our local community, as the UUA will provide leadership with other religions to restore sanity for our nation.
TRG

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

"Look, in the sky...it's a bird! It's a plane! It's Superman!" This exclamatory statement comes to mind as we continue to wade into the waters of these troubling social and political times. So much of our public narrative, conscious and unconscious, religious and secular, is riddled with the "great man" vision of history: that a great, wise leader will rise up and save us all. Conversely, there's also the notion that one great anti-hero will spell the demise of a people, leading them astray.

Perhaps now more than ever it's possible to see how flawed these notions are. Though singular figures represent the best and worst of our human capacities, it is groups of humans that are organizing, engaging and struggling. Marches and protests rely upon the power of communities and shared wisdom, courage, outrage and passion.

This can be strugglesome for some of us, especially those who prize individualism and fear losing it, or rationalism and fear being caught up in group-think.

I share this with you now not only because of the challenging social times. I share it with you now because even in the realm of church work and congregational life it can be tempting to look for one great person to have *the answer*, *the idea* and *the insight* that will save us all and transform everything. My sense is that, truthfully, the *best answers*, *ideas* and *insights* emerge from group processes which reveal shared wisdom, passion and purpose.

On Saturday morning, February 25 (9-noon), I'll be facilitating a session titled, "Consulting with the

Consultant," in an effort to share my feedback about First Church and solicit some of yours about our work together. As tempting as it is to play the role of the expert, I also want to use the opportunity to continue to investigate, learn more and uncover the wisdom of those gathered. In that vein I ask you, whether you'll be attending that day or not, to consider and share your answers to the following questions as they pertain to the realm of Congregational Life:

- In your estimation and experience, what's worked well in Congregational Life these past 18 months? (Newcomer sessions, adult religious education, youth ministry, small group ministry, worship, social justice coordination, other)
- Similarly, what could have been better in Congregational Life? What would you liked to have seen improved?
- Finally, what do you see as the biggest challenges facing Congregational Life in the future at First Unitarian Church?

If you're unable to attend the February 25 meeting, please share your musings with me by e-mail or in a personal conversation. I plan on delivering some of my own responses to these questions at the event as well as in writing afterwards. I trust that by engaging together we will be able to discover new, shared, powerful possibilities.

"We are the ones we've been waiting for," the prophetic poet, June Jordan, reminds us, in the shadow of South African apartheid.

Here's to The Work, Friends.
Matthew

More from Matthew

First Church Info Sessions - Sunday, February 5 after each service - Join Rev. Matthew and other newcomers for a brief, informal gathering to learn more about First Church and Unitarian Universalism. Meet Matthew at the piano at the end of the service. Invite your friends and family who are new!

An Evening with the Grand Fromage - Sunday, February 12, 4-6 p.m. Ready to commit to membership and pledging at First Unitarian Church? Join Revs. Tom & Matthew along with leaders from the Board and other ministries at this special, RSVP-only event. If you've been around

First Church and are ready to take this next step, please contact Rev. Matthew Cockrum (clminister@slcuu.org or 801.582.8687 ext. 205) to reserve your spot.

Pancake Breakfast - Sunday, February 26 - you know what sounds great after a provocative sermon? Pancakes!! First Church high schoolers and their parents will be serving a pancake breakfast after each service on Sunday, February 26. All proceeds go to support upcoming New Orleans service trip. Bring an empty stomach and a full wallet! :)

Seeking the Sources - Monday, February 27, 6:45-8:45 p.m. Looking for an opportunity to deepen your spiritual journey? Join Rev. Matthew Cockrum and others in this monthly drop-in, adult religious education offering. Through movement, meditation and conversation participants explore the sources of our liberal tradition (more here: <http://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/sources>). Come as you are or dressed in comfortable clothes and with your favorite meditation and movement supplies (yoga mat, cushion, etc.) Questions? Contact Rev. Matthew Cockrum at clminister@slcuu.org or 801.582.8687 ext. 205.

Ending Child Homelessness Sabbath February 3-5, 2017 - This weekend a variety of churches, synagogues and other faith communities are including prayers for homeless children in their worship services. We are doing so because we believe child homelessness is a problem our state has the resources to solve. Thank you for joining us in praying that we will collectively have the resolve to do so.

How many Utah children will be homeless in 2017?

- When Utah counted homeless people statewide on one day in 2016, we found 620 children from 298 families that were homeless.
- Over the course of an entire year, about 10 times that many children will experience homelessness in Utah.

How does a period of homelessness impact childhood development?

- Studies show that homeless children are two times as likely to have learning disabilities and three times likely to have an emotional disturbance as children who are not homeless.

- One half of homeless students are held back for one grade. Twenty-two percent of homeless students are held back for

multiple grades.

The Coalition of Religious Communities brings people from different faith communities together to address poverty in Utah. Learn more: www.religiouscommunities.info www.crossroadsurbancenter.org 801-364-7765 ex. 107

Religious Education Corner

Submitted by Julie Miller, Director of Religious Education and Lissa Lander, RE Assistant

Well, it looks like we've reached mid-year-point in our Religious Education program. We've just concluded an 8-week cycle featuring guest speakers representing seven world religions and the critical issue of social justice:

Tibetan Buddhism

Judaism

Hinduism

Unitarian Universalism, with Barbara Creek from our own congregation

Christianity

Baha'i

Islam

Reverend Harold Straughn, speaking in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King

Beginning in February and running through the end of March, we'll embark on an 8-week cycle of arts-infused curricula for our RE children, ages 5-11. Please note that Arts classes will be suspended on Sunday February 19 (President's Day Weekend), but we will continue with our Sandwich Sunday Project, and will provide alternative activities for children attending service on that Sunday.

And speaking of Sandwich Sunday, food donations are always appreciated for this project. Specifically, that means sliced cheese, loaves of bread, chips or pretzels, cookies, fruit snacks, small carrots and pre-packaged drinks. Donations may be dropped off Sunday 2/19 in the little RE Kitchen on the main floor near the Little Chapel. If you can donate, please advise Lissa or Julie prior to 2/19: reassist@slcuu.org or dre@slcuu.org.

Our religious/academic year concludes with an 8-to-9 week cycle of traditional UU curricula, along with a session of Our Whole Lives (OWL) classes for first and second graders. **OWL registration** for this group begins on Sunday February 12 and closes on Sunday March 5. **Classes start** April 2 and end May

28. Registration will be available online or in person starting February 12 at the RE Table in Eliot Hall. A donation of \$25.00 per student is suggested to cover curriculum costs; a parent or guardian is required to attend these classes with their child/children.

Junior Choir sings this Sunday at the 11am service only. Rehearsal for Junior Choir members will be in the Choir Room prior to the performance, from 10:15 to 10:45am.

Family Fun Night resumes Monday February 6, with dinner from 6-6:30 followed by a presentation with our own Reverend Tom Goldsmith, from 6:30-7:30. Reverend Tom reveals "The Inside Scoop on Our Church's History." Childcare will be offered 6:30-7:30 for infants and toddlers through age 4. An activity will be planned for 5-12 year olds.

The Religious Education Council meets Sunday March 12 from 12:30-2. This meeting is open to staff and members of the congregation who are interested in programs and services for our youth. We'll cover topics including a budget update, curricula review for next year and organization and structure of the Council for 2017-1018.

We welcome new members to our congregation and look forward to getting to know you and your family.

In service,
Julie Miller

Celebration Sunday Theme

-submitted by Julia Rossi

The theme of Celebration Sunday is 'Show an Affirming Flame,' the last line of a famous, albeit controversial, poem written by the famous poet, W. H. Auden in the throes of World War II. In an article written in the New York Times (shortly after September 11th), journalist Peter Steinfels asks "...would a contemporary version of the 1939 poem be found guilty of what has come to be labeled "moral equivalence"? Was Auden shifting moral responsibility from totalitarian evildoers to past misdeeds by those under attack and to a universal human egotism in which everyone was more or less equally complicit?"

This poem was selected by Dylan Zwick, Chair of our Pledge Committee. Here are his thoughts:

Our theme for this year's pledge drive, "Show an Affirming Flame", comes from the final line of W.H. Auden's poem "September 1st, 1939". Written at the start of the Second World War, its title references the day Germany invaded Poland, and it became obvious and inevitable that, despite the horrors of their recent past, Europe and the world were to suffer war again. The poem is mostly a meditation and analysis upon the madness, both in human culture and the human psyche, that led to this disaster, but it ends with a pledge. The pledge is not a statement of uplift, but an affirmation of support for what is best within humanity, and a wish to stand with those who uphold it in the darkest times. We are now at the beginning of another version of madness in our own country. We have yet to see how far it will spread, and how much harm it will do, but we hope as a church and as a blessed community to show our own affirming flame within these times. I pledge as part of an effort, beleaguered by negation and despair though I may be, to do what I can within our congregation, our community, our country, and our world. I wish I could give and do more, but if we all give and do what we can, I believe we can fuel a powerful and beautiful chalice.

September 1, 1939

British Poet W. H. Auden

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,

Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.

Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow;
"I will be true to the wife,

I'll concentrate more on my work,"
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

Listen to this poem read by Dylan Thomas (he includes some stanzas not in this version of the poem. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ED4sN16x1Is>)

Consulting with the Consultant

-Submitted by John Rasmusson

Looking at a glass of water, the optimist says, "It's half full." The pessimist says, "It's half empty." The consultant says, "It's twice too big."

Looking at First Church, the optimist says "It's a flawless organization." The pessimist says, "It's riddled with problems." The consultant says....

Come to Eliot Hall on Feb. 25 at 9 a.m. to find out what Consulting Minister Matthew Cockrum has to say about our church as an organization after working with us for 18 months.

(Spoiler Alert: It is not twice too big, but it is not without flaws.)

After hearing the consultancy's findings, congregants will have the opportunity to offer their own perspective on Matthew's report.

Please join Tom, Matthew and the church's leadership cadre for this important event.

All are welcome.

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

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 Salt Lake City

Congregational Briefs

Social Justice Film On Saturday, March 11, Eliot Hall, 7 pm, we will show the film, "the Settlements," a documentary directed by Shimon Dotan, a Jewish professor at NYU. The film interviews people who represent many sides of the issue, including Zionists and Palestinians with new and varied viewpoints. We look forward to a passionate Q&A following the film. Mark your calendars and save the date.

Fill in the blanks: The **Refugee Resettlement Committee** urgently needs s ___ s, c ____ s, and t _ _ _ s to furnish apartments for incoming

families. If you wrote socks, chains and tulips, you haven't been paying attention. If you wrote sofas, chairs and tables, Joe Dubray will deliver your prize when he picks up your donation. Call him at (904) 527-9773.

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 5th: Vertical Diner (234 West 900 South)
- February 12th: East Liberty Tap House (850 East 900 South)
- February 19th: Taqueria 27 (1615 South Foothill Dr)
- February 26th: Shanghai Cafe (145 East 1300 South)
- March 5th: Sage's Cafe
- 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)

"In the Spotlight". . . Meet Marc Peterson

-submitted by Jan Crane

I am 60 years old, my wife's name is Vickie and we live in Cottonwood Heights. We have a 30-year-old son who also lives in Cottonwood Heights, but not with us. I grew up on a small dairy farm in Smithfield, UT.

In July of this year, after 30 years of service, I retired from General Electric. I primarily worked in electrical energy generation areas, mostly in sales. The last 16 years my team and I were involved in large wind energy projects in the western half of the US and Mexico. Working for GE, we lived on the east and west coasts and then finally found

our way back to Utah. I traveled often in my work with GE, and weekends were spent doing the things I couldn't get done during the week. . . and in the winter, skiing, of course. Now that I'm retired, and living in Utah, I can finally correct earlier career decisions and be that ski bum I always should have been.

We enjoy watching and attending college sports, reading (I've read the last few Open Minds Book Group discussion books without knowing they had selected those books.) And, we also enjoy attending musical and theater events.

Our first interaction with the First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake was at a household items swap event a couple of years ago where we brought a few items to donate. I picked up a pamphlet and saw a photo of John Adams on the wall, as being one of the early American members of the Unitarian Church. I had recently read his biography and that peaked my interest.

My naïve view of religion was that all churches were primarily interested in their specific doctrine and following those rules were more important than being a good person and doing good things. Once I started to research the Unitarians, I was very surprised to find how closely my beliefs and interests matched those of the church. It is very rewarding to find, after only 60 years, a group of like-minded people! We started to attend services this summer after I retired.

My participation in the church has so far has been a donated a couch to the refugee effort and participation in the roadside clean up event this fall. It is important to me to feel officially connected to First Church and all of the things it supports. I do pledge, for the same reasons.