



Unitarian Universalist Village Church

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Jerry Offermann '16

FEBRUARY 2017 Theme — Religious Authority



A message from Rev. Ruffin

Religious Authority and Spiritual Practice

Of all the guidance I gleaned at seminary, one piece of counsel stands out. My *Introduction to Ministry* teacher, Associate Dean Dudley Rose, suggested that being a spiritual person was, most essentially, a side effect of spiritual practice. That is to say, he told us, it wasn't that "spiritual" people (like us) were the kind of folks who were inclined to meditate, or go on quiet reflective walks in the woods, or practice yoga, write poetry, pray, praise, sing, dance, paint, go fishing, etc. He said, rather, that spirituality was the outcome of having regular spiritual practices, such as those, in one's life. Spirituality was the outcome. The practices came first, shaping the practitioner.

Professor Rose strongly cautioned that if we "aspiring spiritual leaders," had the notion that we would finally commit to a spiritual practice ourselves once we got through the crazy insanity of graduate school when we were actually doing ministry... that we had another thing coming! Spiritual practice was the foundation of, not the icing upon, the spiritual cake of any spiritual guidance or leadership we could ever offer... or any spiritual personal life and "sanity" we would find along the way, for that matter.

I thought of this anew during my time down under where I was able to give spiritual practice the time it has been truly calling for at this stage in my journey. I was blessed with time for daily yoga and meditation, regular time in nature, opportunities to dance and sing, to play with my nephews, and enjoy regular spiritual reading and journaling. To be able to call upon so many of these anchors of spiritual practice in my life, powerfully re-shaped my experience of who I am over this last month, reconnecting me with the deeper mysteries of life... of consciousness and love, of creation and being itself, of all that is beyond and yet also within me.

In other words, "re-wiring" my brain toward my heart's deepest "spiritual" truth.

Our theme this month is "Religious Authority." In our tradition we place religious authority back in the hands of the people and their own personal experience. This is perhaps the greatest gift of our free faith... but it is also a sacred responsibility. Nothing makes you spiritual as a Unitarian Universalist besides the truth you find through your own living, your own "practice." So let's take that opportunity to heart.

FEBRUARY Sundays at UUVC

**December Attendance: All Souls webcast, 39
UUVC, 260**

Share the Plate: Bridges out of Poverty, \$1,029

February Share the Plate: Imagination Library

February 5, Worship, Rev. David Ruffin

February 12, Insight, Rabbi Levy, "Religious Authority"

February 19, Worship, Rev. David Ruffin

February 26, Insight, Arsalah Kahn, "Black History"

President's Column
UUVC President Court Mathey



This is a shortened version, "the Positive Approach", of what I wrote in the Spring of 1955, age 22, at speech class at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and also at Wesley Fellowship.

In everything we do can't we strive to do our best? Not only would we feel better, but our positivity would be reflected to others and they, too, would feel better. We would leave a bright path for others to follow. With our Christian belief and faith all this is indeed possible.

In the 71st verse of the 119th Psalm read these lines: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." We are all often afflicted with the hardships of life. One normal reaction is to groan under the load of our troubles; we don't stop to consider that others may have similar problems and many are worse off than we are. Those of some non-Christian religions who do not have a living God to turn to for help --- only a symbolic stone idol.

I suggest there are three recourses we can take.

The first is complete submission to our troubles. We decide that life not longer holds any meaning for us, that our lives of striving and toil have been worthless. Secondly, one could make a half-hearted comeback because of knowledge that life must continue, but without really trying to make the most of it.

The third reaction is the one true Christian way with a spirited rebound and real striving for the good from life. We only tend to make others unhappy when we allow ourselves to be subjected to our worries, but if we are as spirited as possible then others will be made happy by our presence.

If we can rebound in this true Christian spirit we will find several advantages. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." We can be proof to others that certain difficult conditions can be surmounted and each trouble will provide us with added strength to cope with future problems.

I'm grateful for the wonderful and dependable people of UUVC.

I would not have believed the gospel had not the authority of the Church moved me.

--St. Augustine

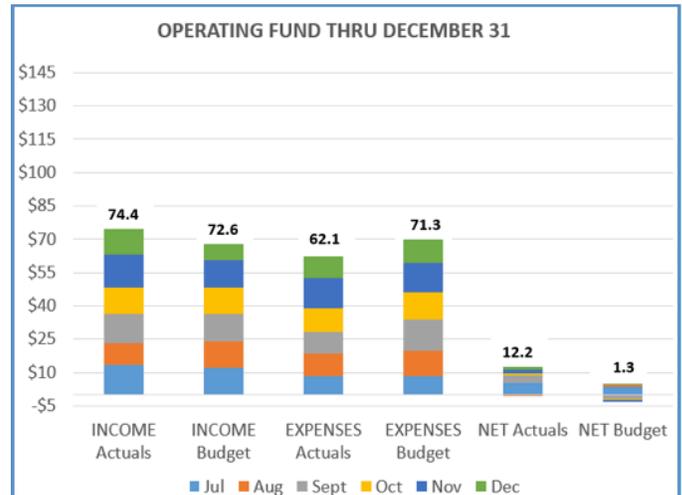
Treasurer's Report
Kim Townsman

The 2016 contribution reports were sent by email on January 13 and 14 to all members and friends making contributions of over \$70 during calendar year 2016. The contribution reports include donations made as operating fund pledge, building fund pledge, ministerial pledge, share the plate and general operating contributions. If you did not receive a report, please first check your email spam folder and if you cannot locate the report (subject line "UUVC 2016 Contributions Report"), send an email to my home email at townsaka@yahoo.com.

And speaking of emails, as part of the transition to a new website, the treasurer@uuvc.org email will also be transitioning to a new platform. And some folks have reported getting undeliverable messages to the treasurer@uuvc.org. Until the transition is complete, if you need information from me, please send to my home email at townsaka@yahoo.com.

As we are now more than half way through UUVC's fiscal year, I will be providing both operating and building fund pledge updates to everyone by the end of February. The time frame for completing operating fund pledge commitments is June 30. Building Fund pledges, which were committed to in November of 2014, are to be completed by October of this year.

Operating fund results through December are shown in the chart below.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Video equipment

Kim Harrison

For some time, several people on the Program Committee, the Choir and now the Technology Committee have thought it would be very nice to have a large monitor at the back of the sanctuary, so all of those up front during a service could see what all of you in the pews are seeing on the screen behind us (it would really help for songs not in the hymnal).

Loren and Dane have come with a scheme to do that. A large monitor at the back will not work – it could not be seen well enough from the front, but Loren has come up with a plan for a small monitor near the podium and a 55” monitor on the right side of the sanctuary, opposite the choir. The cost of this set up is \$390 for the podium monitor and \$781 for the choir monitor, including all the cables and other items.

Right now, the board doesn't think we have the funds for this project, but we were wondering if anyone in the congregation was getting ready to upgrade their TV and would donate a 55” TV for this purpose, or if anyone would like to contribute money for this. If you may be interested, please contact Dane Nielsen. Thanks!



Clarion Call

Alana Clegg

The committee met with Dr. Ben Wright to discuss his recently incorporated Clarion Call.

This organization is dedicated to the elimination of recidivism of men and women released from penal institutions. It is a spiritual society dedicated to change the perspective and behavior of convicted felons.

Upon release from prison, members of Clarion Call, known as Knights Penitentiary, serve one another as mentors in securing education and jobs. Knights are provided living accommodation after treatment for drug and/or alcohol addiction. They are expected to continue attending recovery programs for these addictions in addition to going to school or getting a job.

We would like to collect things that are needed at the safe houses referred to as Happy Destiny Homes. There are three, one for 5 women and 2 for 10 men, 5 in each. They need things such as food for the kitchen pantries, hygiene supplies and clothes, linens, detergent and other cleaning supplies.

Upon contact with Donnie Scott, Secretary-Treasurer, and Housing Manager, a more detailed list will be prepared and a place to collect items will be found.



Save the Date

On Feb. 12, after the church service there will be another Congregational Conversation lunch. See the roll-out of the new UUVC Website and learn about all the new technological changes that have been made. Please sign up in the Community Hall so that we know how many Subway sandwiches to get.

Liberty is the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making a mistake, the possibility of searching and experimenting, the

Possibility of saying "No" to any authority--literary, artistic, philosophic, religious, social, and even political.

--Ignacio Simone

What's Happening, cont.

Ouachita Children's Center Arts and Crafts

Pati Trippel



Many thanks to Cindy Strong, Cindy Perez, Janet Enders, Pati Trippel and Carol & Howard Freeland who led a jewelry making Arts and Crafts class at the Ouachita Children's Center on January 21st. Thirteen youth were in attendance and they kept our Master "Beader", Cindy Perez, very busy crimping and attaching jump rings and lobster claw latches to their finished products. Many of the children made jewelry for themselves, friends and Moms (with Valentine's Day coming up).

So much of what we do as volunteers is to sit and listen to the children as they share their sorrows, tribulations and passions in life. Please consider helping with the arts and crafts class in the future. Our classes for the rest of the year will be on the third Saturday of each month. If you would like to help out with our next class on February 18, please let me know- Pati Trippel, at ptrippel@hotmail.com or on my cell at 501-209-9079.

Ouachita Children's Center Mystic Krewe of Liberi Charity Ball

Pati Trippel

The Ouachita Children's Center will be hosting the 4th annual Mystic Krewe of Liberi Charity Ball at 6pm on Saturday February 18th, 2017 at the Historic Hamp Williams Building, 510 Ouachita Avenue. This is the largest fund-raising event OCC holds each year. Without the support of our community, OCC would have a very difficult time meeting the needs of the youth we serve.

The emergency shelter has beds for 20 youth ages 7-18 years old. It costs OCC \$157 per night to keep a child at the facility- this covers facility, food, programming, case management, administration, etc. Contracts with the Division of Child and Family Services and Division of Youth Services only fund two thirds of that amount. The remaining one third must be raised through grants and generous donations from our community.



The event is a lot of fun and includes music, a Coronation, Cajun Cuisine, Live and Silent Auctions. Costumes are encouraged, but Cocktail attire is just fine. Tickets for the Ball are \$75 each. If you are interest in attending, contact Pati Trippel, at ptrippel@hotmail.com or cell at 501-209-9079 or call OCC directly at 501-623-5591. If we get enough UUVF folks, perhaps we could get our own table!

Point in Time Homeless Count

Pati Trippel

On January 24th, Dane Nielson, Penny Beed, Peggy McCoy and Pati and Alan Trippel participated in the Point in Time Homeless Count in Hot Springs. HUD declares the last 10 days of January across the United States as the Point In Time Homeless Count. Each Continuum of Care picks one of those days- for Arkansas it was January 24th. Our coalition, the South West Arkansas Partnership (SWAP) covers Garland, Hot Spring, Clark, Pike, Montgomery and Nevada counties. The count determines the amount of money HUD gives to each state for the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). Within the state HUD gives each area of the state a percentage of the money based on their count. The more people we count, the more money comes to our community to serve the homeless in our area.

Our team was assigned the Jackson House and we interviewed folks as they waited for lunch to be served. We should all be proud of our volunteers as they passed out goody bags of personal care supplies, water, clothing, sleeping mats, books and candies to the homeless as they answered our short survey forms. We all learned quite a bit from the homeless as they shared their experiences with us while completing the surveys. A win-win for us and the homeless. If you would like to participate in this rewarding event next year, please let me know and I'll put you on the list. Pati Trippel, at ptrippel@hotmail.com or on my cell at 501-209-9079.

Social Action Committee

Alana Clegg, Chair



The SAC meeting covered the ARUU Justice Ministry questionnaire sent by Steve Rittenmeyer. Some of the members had sent their votes to Steve and we, as a group, selected economic justice, racial justice, and reproductive justice as our top 3 priorities as a focus for 2017.

Martha Thomson told us a little about the Christmas Baskets we delivered. Two to Jessieville, one in Hot Springs and one in Fountain Lake. Everyone was very grateful and delighted with the contents but also because the plastic laundry basket and snap lid container that they received can be very useful as well.

Jackson House

The UUVF Food Drive continues to be a great success. The SAC has delivered 53 bins of food to the **Jackson House Food Pantry**. The workers at Jackson House Pantry say they are in desperate need of cereal. Other items requested are: pasta, pasta sauce, peanut butter, canned fruit and small packets of dried milk. If you have already made food donations, a BIG THANK YOU. Please keep these Food Pantry requests in mind--of course, anything you donate is accepted with gratitude.

Jackson House Thrift Shop

Men's **used work jeans** are in high demand and gratefully accepted.

Generosity by our UUVF Members/Friends knows no boundaries. Give yourselves A BIG HUG!!

UUVF volunteers for the months of October, November, and December made and served 391 lunches at Jackson House. Many thanks to the kitchen crews who donated their time, service and love.

UUVF volunteers also helped out in the Jackson House Thrift Shop. Every dollar spent in the store provides \$3.00 worth of food for the Food Pantry at Jackson House. Once again thank you for your time, service and love!

UUVF VOLUNTEERS ROCK!!

Social Committee

Cindy Nance Bari Searls

The Chili Cook-off will be Saturday, March 4th at noon. A sign-up sheet will be in the community hall. The social committee will provide cornbread muffins, saltines, cookies, beer, be able to blind taste all the chilies and vote 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded. Last year this was a really fun event and we had about 20 crockpots of chili, some vegetarian. If you are bringing chili, please bring it to the kitchen to register and the social committee will put it out to be served. The cost is \$5.00 per person.

If you would like to help the social committee with the Chile Cook-off, please come to the February 7 meeting at 10:00am at UUVF meeting or let Cindy or Bari know.



4th at noon. A sign-up sheet will provide iced tea and coffee. You will on your favorite. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded. Last year this was a really fun event and we had about 20 crockpots of chili, some vegetarian. If you are bringing chili, please bring it to the kitchen to register and the social committee will put it out to be served. The cost is \$5.00 per person.



Fourth Friday Film Fest

Cloe Bayer

The movie being shown on Feb. 24th will be "Florence Foster Jenkins", starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant. Directed by Steven Frears, it tells the real life story of a wealthy New York heiress in the 1940's who attempts to become an opera singer despite her horrible singing voice.

Frear's film is really cheery and relentlessly good hearted, which also saves it from being a movie that's just about people laughing at someone who happened to have been born without a good voice conducive to good singing. That's where the film truly succeeds; Frears doesn't treat Florence like a joke, and neither does Streep.

The real Florence Foster Jenkins was quite famous in her time. "With Streep in grandstanding form and Grant given a rare chance to show his acting range, this is an intelligent 'dramedy' which moves and amuses."

This movie has been on our wish list for several months, so we hope you will join us is viewing it as February's movie of the month.



Update, Get Your Update Here!

Dane Nielsen and Katherine Wheeler



The theme for January was creation and that is what the Technology and Communication Teams did--created a new website.

A lot is the same:

- URL is still www.uuvc.org
- Detailed information about our Mission, Values, Principles, and History can be found on various links from the Who We Are and Congregational Life menus
- Access to the newsletter and calendar are also a click away under Congregational Life. You can read them in the browser or download a copy
- Access to the Church Library content and Rev. Bud's Corner under Congregational Life
- For Member and Friends, the password protected area with directories, meeting minutes, by-laws, and financial documents are all available (an email was sent with the new password on 1/22, if you did not receive it, please contact the office)

A few new features:

- A shorter home page containing service information, our location and a link to Google Maps followed by our Vision and Mission, active links to other sites and contact buttons
- Under Who We Are you find descriptions of our services, music and art, education options, a FAQ list, and information about our minister and leadership team.
- A new item under Congregational Life is a description of Covenant Groups and an updated interest groups list.
- Community Beyond is an exciting page – It details our social justice and action programs. From the Share the Plate details to UU-C4K (don't know what that is? Check out the page) to our work with Jackson House and the Sleeping Mat program. Read more about our other committees like the UUSC.
- A new feature for Members and Friends is a page for the care and concern neighborhood groups. The Personal Planning Sheet is still available under miscellaneous documents---be sure to get this completed and turned in to the office.



The site is responsive to the type of device you are using so it will look and operate a bit differently from a laptop/desktop computer to a tablet to a smartphone. The one to be most aware of is on a smartphone. The menu items will show a small gray (yes, small and yes, light gray) arrow next to the title; you tap on that to open the menu options.

We plan a show and tell overview on February 12. There will be time to ask questions. More additions are planned such as slideshows of past events, videos of the services, and the ability to make donations online, either one-time or recurring. We are working out the details and as the features are available, they will be added.

The site will not be static. We are working on a process for you to submit feedback and suggestions for the site without your emails being lost in someone's inbox.

Happy Surfing (the new site)!

Membership Corner

Bill Mulcahy

A Debt of Gratitude

Meg Koziar

We at UUVC express our gratitude to Carl Ford, who developed our church website and maintained it for the last seven years. We especially appreciate that Carl responded so graciously to the changing array of people at UUVC who sent him information to post. He also reconfigured the site a number of times, working with various committees to incorporate their ideas. Those of us who have worked on the development of our new website have some idea of how very many hours Carl has contributed to keep our site updated and looking good, and the additional hours of help with the transition. Our website has served us well, keeping members and friends informed about our operations, and has brought us quite a few visitors, some of whom are now part of the congregation. As others take over this aspect of our communications, we thank you, Carl, for your generous work over the years.



The Membership Committee wishes to congratulate 5 people who have been members for 10 years. They are: Jay Williams, Elizabeth Foster, Bette and Merrill Clark, and Junell O'Hara, not pictured.



Building notes...

The Christmas decorations have been put away for another year. Some Building Committee members brought out the packaging materials, and staged them in preparation for the removal of the decorations. Marilyn Matzek, Tom Tirrell, Court Mathey, Kim Townsan, Pam Harrison, and Cloe Bayer assisted in the removal.

The Social Committee put the decorations away for the Community Hall tree.

PLEASE COPY BOTH CLIFF HARRISON AND TERRYLYNNE MARX FOR ANY REQUESTS or CHANGES FOR ROOM SCHEDULING.

They come to church to share God, not to find God.

—Alice Walker



Birthdays

2/5	Andria Arlotta
2/6	Kim Harrison
2/8	Ed Miller
2/13	Bill Lammers
2/17	Elaine Parfitt
2/19	Tom Drake
2/19	Tom Tirrell
2/21	Jerriann Nielsen
2/24	Ron Nance
2/27	John Achor



Anniversaries

2/14	Liz & Ed Miller
2/14	Joyce & Rocky Peebles
2/15	Penny & Doug Beed
2/23	Ronnie & Lee Zuege

Resolve Your Conflicts

Steve Rittenmeyer

The Conflict Resolution Committee stands ready confidentially to assist members and friends in resolving disputes and misunderstandings with other congregants that affect their lives in church. For more information about the conflict resolution process, please contact:

Steve Rittenmeyer, 915-0575,
SD-Rittenmeyer@wiu.edu

or

Cloe Bayer, 922-3810,
cloebayer29@sbcglobal.net

New Year Resolution

Janet Enders

We have already bid farewell to 2016 and are starting a New Year. Many of us have made New Year resolutions to make positive changes in our lives. After reflecting on our behavior and habits during the past year, we then determined in what areas we want to improve and what actions we must take in order to achieve our goals.

One of the most common goals many have set for 2017 is to improve their physical appearance, particularly to lose weight. Determination and self-control are necessary to obtain this goal.

Others have chosen to modify what they consider their mental or emotional shortcomings. It is not an easy task to break long time habits and change certain behaviors. However with adjustments and perseverance, progress can be made and our relationships can improve. First, we need to address the negative behaviors we want to change and then determine a plan of action. This is especially important for mediators who are working on resolving conflicts or disagreements for other parties.

The following are examples of some undesirable behaviors and possible adjustments.

Impatience

How many of us become impatient and rudely interrupt before speakers are finished expressing themselves? Irritability and stress in our personal lives can affect relationships with others. Sometimes we push people to discuss issues before they are comfortable and ready, or we start to speak while they are speaking about what is important to them.

We can slow down and be mindful of other people's needs. Breathe, realize your impatience and why. Gain perspective and empathy for others.

Bluntness

If we are too blunt and without tact, the truth we present might be too hurtful. Think before speaking.

Reactive and Emotional

If we are stressed, we will handle situations badly. People might be hesitant to talk with us because of our possible emotional reactions. We should concentrate on the solution to the issue, while

(continued on next column)

Poetry Corner

How do I love you? I could never say
how much, how deeply—idle questions these.

A building can be measured or a hill,
but never love. Words just get in the way,
and metaphors that often come at will
know the task is hopeless and stay home.

But I do love you, as I know you know.

A gentle word at morning or at noon,
a soft glance often or a tender touch.

I've seen love die protesting overmuch,
burned out by passion. Ours goes on serene,
year in, year out, with roses in between.

—Glen Emmons



understanding and acknowledging our feelings about it. This leads to less frustration and emotional upheaval and we have a better chance of reaching our goals.

Now we are at the beginning of 2017. It is time to assess how well we are progressing with our New Year resolutions. We already have reflected on the past year and know the areas in which we want to improve. Let's be strong in making the necessary changes for new beginnings, and reaching the goals we have set for ourselves!



Try the UUV Website:
www.uuvc.org

Interest Groups (IGs)

Ronnie Zuege, IG Coordinator



Enjoy the company of people with a similar interest by participating in one of the Interest Groups (IG). Stop by the IG table on Sunday mornings to check out the folders that provide information about each group. It's great to participate in more than one.

Also, if you have a special interest that is not currently represented, contact me (501-781-8489 or email: vzuege@gmail.com) to inquire about starting a new group.

Game Night



Come to play board/card games on the 2nd Saturday of each month (August 13.) Game night will be held @ **5:00 PM**. We will eat first and play games afterwards. Bring a dish to share. It's always a surprise! (Marjorie Lakey)

Fourth Friday Film Fest

Please watch the bulletin for information on the film selection but please mark Feb.24, at 7pm on your calendars for the next film night. (Cloe Bayer)



Grief Support Group



The Grief Support Group has been meeting since November 2009, providing comfort and support to those who wish to attend. Grief Support meets the second Monday of each month, at 10:00am. (Cynthia Saalfeld, 915-8577)

Dinners for Eight (or 7, or 6)

Our next "dinners" series will start soon (for months March, April, May and June). Sunday, March 5 is the cut-off date to sign up. Everyone is encouraged to join us in this social UU activity. It is a great way to meet people in the church. Ask those who currently participate and they will tell you how much fun it is.



Food and friendship is the goal of this activity so sign up now at the IG table at church or by calling me. (Liz Miller 922-5457.)

Social Justice Book Group



Please contact me if you would like to join the group for the discussion. Meg Koziar -- Kozimeg@sbcglobal.net.

Table Tennis



The group meets Tuesdays 4:30-6:00pm. (Jay Williams, 922-1849, jayw66@gmail.com)

Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and private school, supported entirely by private contributions.

Keep the church and the State forever separate.

--Ulysses S. Grant

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UUVC**