

December 2017

All Souls News

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 9449 Ellerbe Road, Shreveport, LA 71106 | (318) 868-3313 | www.allsoulsshreveport.org

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Term ends June 2019

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Term ends June 2018

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Term ends June 2018

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Member at Large:

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Term ends June 2019

Member at Large:

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Term ends June 2018

Member at Large:

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Term ends June 2019

December Services

Worship Service starts at 11 a.m.

*Children and Youth are dismissed during the service for Religious Education.
Nursery care is available during Adult RE (9:15 a.m.) and till the service ends.*

December 3 - Rev. Barbara Jarrell is in the pulpit this morning, continuing our exploration of our roots in the Christian tradition with "First Light and Theological Headstands."

Board Persons of the Day: Cindy Mandarino and Bennett Upton

December 10 – We are honored to welcome back our guest in the pulpit this morning, Rev. Judith Taylor of Unity Church of Shreveport.

Board Persons of the Day: John Allen and James Peck

December 17 – "The Light is Reborn," a multi-generational exploration of the common thread of light in the midst of darkness that runs through the Jewish, Christian, and Pagan holidays celebrated at this time of year.

A **Congregational Meeting** will take place immediately following the service.

Board Persons of the Day: Phil Boswell and Juan Villarreal

December 24 – It's Christmas Eve, and our morning service will feature Cookies and Carols for all ages.

Board Persons of the Day: John Allen and Juan Villarreal

December 24 6:30 p.m. Our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service, which includes a reading of the Christmas Story from the Book of Luke in the Christian Testament, singing of the carols with all the original words, and music from the All Souls Choir and special guest musicians. Families worship together in this service, although nursery care will be provided for the Young and the Restless.

December 31 – Rev. Barbara Jarrell is in the pulpit this morning as we bid farewell to 2017 and prepare for the New Year.

Board Persons of the Day: Nicki McLain and Alice Normand

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

is Tuesday, Dec 19

Early submissions are

early welcomed

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All Souls is a
Welcoming
Congregation.



FROM THE MINISTER

By Rev.

Barbara Jarrell



Recently in the Sunday service, as part of our studies focused on our Jewish and Christian Heritage, I shared a rewrite I did of what is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer or Our Father. Sharing my rewrite was intended to illustrate the ideas that go through my head when I

hear it spoken somewhere in its traditional English form or when I participate in its recitation in one group or another (usually recovery community environments). They make the prayer have value for me. The understanding I have formulated for myself allows me to join in without feeling disingenuous. Following the service someone requested that I publish it and I thought this might be a good place to do that. So, below you will find first the line as it is presented in most the King James Version of the Bible and as it is used in most American contexts. Each line will then be followed by my own interpretation of that line.

Our Father who art in Heaven

Source of all that is and that shall be, You who we feel and find so many places—most of which rest closer than our skin, parent of us all, who are the very wholeness and perfection we have not yet come to understand or experience

Hallowed by thy name

In humble reverence we acknowledge all that cannot be fully expressed or known. We honor and celebrate the endlessly unsearchable wonder of your mystery

Thy kingdom come

We long for true, lasting peace, justice and beloved community to come to be.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

May the beauty and balance inherent in both the micro and macro aspects of this unfolding universe be manifest in the world we humans affect just as it is in those things thus far beyond our influence.

Give us this day our daily bread

May this be the time in which the real needs for each day are met for all beings so that each body and spirit may be fed and filled.

And forgive us our debts (or trespasses) as we forgive our debtors (or those who trespass against us).

May we finally outgrow our smallness and learn the ways of deep forgiveness for ourselves and others. We know that one cannot and does not fully transpire without the other.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

May we also grow away from the domineering instincts of our lizard brains and toward the higher minded (or spirited) characteristics of compassion so that cruelty and fear may fall away from us.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

We are forever grateful that in you all the laws of nature--the power that lies within, behind, and beyond the expanding dynamic cosmos--all that is beautiful, worthy, meaningful, and glorious fit together into One Sacred Unified Wholeness.

[And I have no problem saying] **Amen** [to that].

May it be so.

In the same Sunday service I went on to recommend that if there are passages that have come to be at odds with you—verses from ancient texts (religious or otherwise), poems or proverbs and sayings that you carry in your memory—things that pop into your head from time to time or haunt you or that perhaps once held meaning for you, you may do well to pull them out, dust them off, and walk around in them a bit like I have done with the “Our Father”. Take them apart word by word, phrase by phrase. Reframe them to see if you can’t make them fit better with the understanding you currently have. See if you can’t bring them back to a new point of usefulness for yourself—like building a new relationship with an old friend, especially an old friend that has become estranged. It is good practice—a robust exercise—for your Unitarian Universalist ‘universal translators’. I would love to hear from you how it goes.

Yours in ever-evolving faith,
Barbara

REsources for the REsistance

“The Unitarian Who Invented Christmas”



By Susan Caldwell,
Director of Lifespan Religious Education

With the holiday season upon us and the recent release of the new film, *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, it's a good time to revisit one of our more well-known and beloved Unitarian forebears, Charles Dickens. Born in Portsea (now Portsmouth), England in 1812, Dickens had little formal education and learned mostly from his mother, Elizabeth, and from his own reading and life experience. Although his father John's job as a naval clerk would have afforded them a modest but decent middle class existence, the elder Dickens had problems with money management that ultimately led to young Charles having to take a job in a shoe polish factory at the age of 12, while his father served several years in debtors' prison. Although he did go back to school after his father's release, this experience gave him a lifelong empathy for the poor and oppressed, as well as a distrust and disdain for authority in Victorian England's fields of banking, law, education, and of course, religion. The hypocritical preacher was a favorite target, particularly in the form of Mr. Stiggins in *The Pickwick Papers*, and in his outright religious satire of 1836, *Sunday Under Three Heads*. He wrote the latter in direct protest of an attempt by Sir Andrew Agnew to pass a bill prohibiting any and all work and recreation on Sundays. To Dickens, this bill embodied everything he despised about religion. While the rich could afford leisure time activities any day of the week, the poor had to work dawn to dusk six days a week, and had only Sunday for their own recreation, which rigid religious zealots now sought to take away!

Dickens discovered the Unitarians on a trip to America in 1842, and though he did gently satirize

the Transcendentalists, he also befriended and expressed his admiration for them. He felt that of all religious traditions, the Unitarians seemed more inclined to *do* something to uplift the downtrodden, as opposed to just talking about it, or worse, blaming and punishing them for their own misfortune. He was a great admirer of William Ellery Channing, and upon his return to England, attended services at Essex Street Chapel in London, and took a pew at Little Portland Chapel. He remained a believer in the humanity, life, and teachings of Jesus, and, like Jefferson, ultimately wrote his own version of the Gospels, *The Life of Our Lord*, as a gift to his children. It was not published until 1934.

In *A Christmas Carol*, the character of Scrooge represented everything Dickens hated about the powerful class in English society, and yet, he also represented the power of conversion...not so much a religious conversion as a conversion brought about by looking deeply into oneself and finding salvation in acts of kindness toward one's neighbor. To quote Christian author Stephen Rost, "The New Testament teaches that such acts are the result of spiritual conversion; for Dickens, they were the means."

Though many Protestants in both England and America looked askance at the Pagan roots of many Christmas traditions, there is no doubt that *A Christmas Carol* did much to enshrine those traditions thoroughly in both nations. Indeed, his influence on and association with the holiday were such that at the time of his death in 1870, one young girl in London was heard to ask, "Mr. Dickens dead? Then will Father Christmas die, too?"

(continued on page 6)



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

From: James Peck, Board Secretary

To: All Members, Inactive Members, and Friends



In accordance with the Bylaws of our church, and as Secretary of the Board, I hereby announce that All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church will hold a Congregational Meeting in the sanctuary.

DATE & TIME: Sunday, December 17, 2017 at 12:15 p.m.

ON THE AGENDA

Vote on 2018 Budget.

Elect three members to Nominating Committee.

Please make every effort to attend. All active members should attend this meeting or give their proxies to those who can. Inactive members and friends of the church are invited and encouraged to participate, but bylaws stipulate that only those members who have been active 30 days or longer may vote. We must have a quorum. Childcare provided.

MONSTER COOKIE SWAP

Sunday, December 10 - After the service!

Everyone: Gather up an assortment of your favorite cookies and baked goods. Great gifts for neighbors and friends or bring them to holiday parties to share! Take as many as you like and just toss your worthy donation in the basket on the table.

Bakers: Bring a batch of your favorite cookies and drop them off at the Cookie Swap table in the hallway.

Direct questions to Food Folks & Fun Chair Amanda Lawrence.



Festivus Marketplace

Festivus for ALL of US!

All Souls is delighted to host its first Festivus Marketplace! We are excited to offer our members the opportunity to shop with several local craftspeople and artists.



Join us in the social hall on Sunday, December 10 before and after the service!

All vendors are encouraged to donate a portion of their sales to All Souls.

Direct questions to Fundraising Chair Melissa Gibson.

Membership Matters

Newcomers Welcomed to Information Session

The Membership Committee will be facilitating an Information Session following the church service on December 10. These sessions are held monthly to provide visitors and guests with a better understanding of our Unitarian Universalist faith. We will watch a short DVD from our Boston Headquarters providing some history of our movement with

a focus on our Principles and Purposes that we Covenant as a Denomination. Questions are encouraged and a sharing of spiritual growth journeys is welcomed as we get to know each other in a safe and supportive environment. Should you have any questions regarding Membership please see me in the church foyer or give me a call.

Thanks,

Ron Thurston
Membership Chairman
318-300-9509



DENOMINATIONAL EVENTS Oct 2017 & Beyond

12-14 January 2018 Gulf Coast YRUU Youth Rally (Emerson UU Church, Houston TX). For youth ages 14 to 18. For more information, contact the church office.

23-25 February 2018 SWUU Women's Conference (Austin TX). For this year's conference, the keynote speaker is Texas State Representative Donna Howard, the featured musician is Kiya Heartwood, and the featured minister is Rev. Meg Barnhouse. For more information, go online here: <http://swuuw.org/conferences/2018>

23-25 March 2018 North Texas YRUU Youth Rally (Location TBD). For youth ages 14 to 18. For more information, contact the church office.

25-27 May 2018 Louisiana YRUU Youth Rally (Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge LA). This date is tentative. For youth ages 14 to 18. For more information, contact the church office.

Submitted by Steve Caldwell, Denominational Affairs

The New U U

Tuesdays, 6:00—7:30 P.M. in the Social Hall from Nov. 7– Dec. 19

Join **Rev. Barbara Jarrell** and **Susan Caldwell** for this introductory overview of the history, heritage, and current practices of our faith tradition and our own congregation. Although you are likely to gain more from both the content and the community of the group if you attend every class, each class does stand well on its own, and you are invited to join us when you can. **This class is open to all, whether new members, interested newcomers who have not yet joined, or longtime members, whether you have taken the class before or not.**

December 5 – Social Justice Philosophy and Practice

December 12 – How Are Decisions Made? Governance and Polity

December 19 – Membership

We will not have class November 21, during Thanksgiving week.

How the Unitarians (and Universalists!) Saved Christmas

*A slightly edited "rerun" of a 2013 column
by Susan Caldwell*

It's that time of year again, when we begin to hear the strident voices of some who are ready to take up arms and do battle against "The War on Christmas." Shunning the more inclusive, "Happy Holidays," they are determined to hear and to say "Merry Christmas," even if they say it through the gritted teeth of a chiseled-on smile. Because, truly, what says "Peace on Earth," and "Good will toward all," better than a forced and hostile "Merry Christmas?"

But as they campaign for Nativity sets and Christmas trees and pipe up with "Merry Christmas" at every opportunity, I find it amusing that these ardent lobbyists for Christmas are the direct theological descendants of the early Reformation Protestants who were completely against any celebration of Christmas! After all, the earliest celebrations of Christmas were adapted by the Christian church from the ancient Roman festival of Saturnalia, a feast for the god Saturn featuring days of sacrifices, celebration and gift-giving, culminating in the Winter Solstice. The new Christian holiday was known as "Christ's Mass." As the Church moved northward, it adapted the customs of the Celtic and Germanic Yule celebrations already in place, including trees with lights and garlands of greenery.

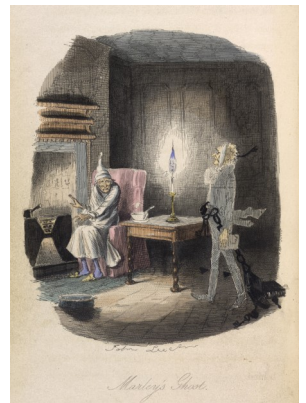
However, the Reformation Protestants were not nearly as taken with the holiday. Both Calvin in 16th Century Geneva and Cromwell in 17th Century England outlawed the celebration of Christmas because of its pagan roots. Reformation leaders who didn't forbid the celebrations outright still preached against the revelry and drunkenness associated with the holiday. The opposition to Christmas found its way to our shores as well, particularly in the New England colonies, where it was thought to have too strong a connection to Catholicism. In 1659, the General Court of Massachusetts ruled

the celebration of Christmas a punishable offense. The Southern colonies did celebrate the holiday, but it was considered more of a secular celebration and an excuse for a lot of partying than a religious observance.

Practically alone among their fellow New England Protestants, the Universalists did celebrate Christmas. Many of them lived in rural areas where a celebration of light and feasting was particularly welcome in the midst of a harsh winter, and they resonated with the story of a holy child born in simple surroundings. A Universalist congregation in Boston celebrated the first Christmas service in that city in 1789. The Unitarians joined them in the promotion and celebration of the Christmas holiday. They liked the idea of celebrating the birth of the great teacher of their tradition, but even more than that, they liked the idea of the holiday itself. There was a new emphasis on a warm and loving family home life, and supporters of the holiday framed it in a more family-friendly fashion, as an alternative to the choices of a decadent festival of excess or an outright ban on all things Christmas. Both the Unitarians and the Universalists endorsed the idea of shops, banks and other businesses closing to give workers time at home with their families. It was a German Unitarian professor at Harvard, Charles Follen, who introduced the custom of the Christmas tree to America at a party in his home in 1832. And finally, it was a Unitarian, Charles Dickens, who in 1843 wrote a book, *A Christmas Carol*, that would move the focus of Christmas even more toward family, compassion and good will. (Learn more about Dickens and *A Christmas Carol* on page 3.) So next time snarly people insist that you say, "Merry Christmas," remind them to thank a Unitarian Universalist!

REsources for REsistance (Continued from page 3)

Sources: *The Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*; "The Faith Behind the Famous" by Stephen Rost, from *Christianity Today*, Issue # 27; "What Were Dickens's Views Toward Religion?" from The Dickens Project, University of Santa Cruz; "Ebenezer Scrooge's Conversion," by Michael Timko; *UU World*, Winter 2005



Volunteer of the Month— Susan Bettinger

Our Volunteer of the Month for December is someone who has been active in so many aspects of church life that it would be easier to say what she *hasn't* done. To my knowledge, she hasn't done a trapeze act, but it's possible I just missed that Sunday. This past September, Susan Bettinger received her 25-year name tag, and in that quarter of a century, she has served a term as President of the Board, during whose term we became a Welcoming Congregation and also ordained Barbara. She has taught religious education, she works most Building and Grounds days, she has trained and served as a Worship Associate, and she serves as a Zip Code Captain, part of a group tasked with calling members once a quarter, not to ask for money, time, or anything, but simply to check in. She is chair of our Pastoral Care Committee, a regular at the Highland Blessing Dinner, and also serves on the Committee on Ministry. She is an active leader in Northern and Central Louisiana Interfaith and the League of Women Voters, and when she's not serving All Souls and those other organizations, she is caring for rescue cats in her home, or taking care of feral cats out and about around the city. She has hosted circle suppers and a Silent Auction Poetry and Pizza party. As if all of this weren't magnificent enough, she has brought into our lives all the way from Lebanon the delightful Maya Bishtawi, an exchange student living with Susan and contributing greatly to our high school group and to church life in general. Susan brings terrific energy, thoughtfulness, and a great sense of humor to everything she does, and we couldn't be happier to award her the Parking Spot of Honor. - Submitted by Susan Caldwell

Try Yoga at All Souls

All are invited to join Valarie Lorigans for yoga on Thursdays at 5:45 p.m. at All Souls. There will be no class on Thanksgiving Day.

Bring a mat, if you have one, otherwise Valarie has a few loaners. Class fee is "by donation."

Valarie began her yoga journey in 2007 and is eager to share its benefits with others. She has attended numer-

ous workshops on yoga and completed a 200-hour Yoga Alliance teacher training with Ally Ford. She considers yoga a remarkable tool for building a sense of sharing and support among friends and family, and loves to watch others grow, finding strength and balance through yoga.

Valarie also teaches at Aspire Yoga Studio.

Give Away the Plate

All Souls "gives away the plate" on the last Sunday of every month.

Give Away the Plate recipients are selected by the Board of Directions.

Do you have a suggestion? Contact your favorite board member with the name and mission of your selected charity.

Building & Grounds Work Day



Second Saturday of Every Month

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

All ages and abilities encouraged to participate!

Highland Blessing Dinner

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church co-hosts the Highland Blessing Dinner on the first Thursday of every month. On months with five Thursdays, all sponsoring churches are asked to send volunteers.






The intent of the meals is to serve individuals and families who may "fall through the cracks" of social services. Currently, more than 120 meals are being served each Thursday.

Volunteers are needed to host tables, serve, and help in several other capacities—but the cooking is already done.

Sign up with Susan Caldwell or just show up at the Highland Center, 520 Olive Street, at 5 p.m.



Upcoming Meal(s): Nov 2 and Dec 7

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 7PM Game Night 
3 9:15AM Adult RE 11AM Worship/RE 1:30PM LTA 12:30 PM Community Growth Meeting 2 PM Scaffolding Assembly 5PM Course in Miracles	4	5 6PM Together Louisiana Under the Texas St. Bridge 6PM The New UU 7PM TED Talks Discussion Group	6 5:30PM Choir	7 5PM Support Group 5PM Highland Blessing Dinner (Page 7) 5:45PM Yoga	8	9 9AM to 1PM Building & Grounds Work Day 10:30AM Meditation 3PM ADF 
10 9:15AM Adult RE 11AM Worship/RE 12PM Newcomer Info Session (Page 5) Cookie Swap before & after service 5PM Course in Miracles	11	12 Hanukkah 6PM The New UU 7PM TED Talks Discussion Group	13 5:30PM Choir	14 5PM Support Group 5:45PM Yoga	15 7PM Game Night 	16 10:30AM Meditation 3PM ADF
17 9:15AM Adult RE 11AM Worship / RE 12:45 PM Congregational Meeting 5PM Course in Miracles	18 6:00 PM—Board Meeting	19 6PM The New UU 7PM TED Talks Discussion Group	20 5:30PM Choir	21 5PM Support Group 5:45PM Yoga 7PM Interfaith Leaders' Meeting	22	23 10:30 AM Meditation 3PM ADF
24 9:15AM Adult RE 11AM Worship / RE 5PM Course in Miracles 6:30 Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa begins 7PM TED Talks Discussion Group	27 5:30 PM Choir	28 5PM Support Group 5:45PM Yoga	29	30 10:30AM Meditation 3PM ADF
31 9:15AM Adult RE 11AM Worship/RE 5PM Course in Miracles						



2018 Pledge Drive

Are You IN?

INcluded, INvested, INVolved

If you haven't already turned in your 2018 pledge form, watch your phone for a call from our 2018 Pledge Chair, Melissa Gibson. and check that pile of snailmail on the kitchen table at home for your 2018 Pledge Envelope.

If needed, you can speak to Melissa on Sundays after the service—she'll be in the middle school/high school room (the one with the couches). If you have already submitted your 2018 Pledge Form, thank you!