

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF SALT LAKE CITY

THE TORCH

First Unitarian Church *Holiday Services 2017*

December 10th (9 and 11 am)

Lessons and Carols Service

December 17th

**(9 am) "A Unitarian and Universalist
Perspective on Jesus"**

-Rev Tom Goldsmith and Rev. Monica Dobbins

(11 am) Christmas Pageant

(7:30 pm) Christmas Cool Jazz Vespers

December 21st

(Service 6 p.m. ~ Dinner 7 p.m.)

Winter Solstice Celebration

December 24th

(11 am) Intergenerational Christmas Service

(5:30 and 7 pm)

Christmas Candlelight Services

December 31st

Regular 9 & 11 am Services

No Religious Education



THE TORCH

Jazz Vespers 2017

Each Fall Reverend Tom Goldsmith kicks off a new season of Jazz Vespers, a concert series featuring top-notch, local jazz musicians. Jazz Vespers has been running for over 25 years and always plays to a full house. Concert time is 7:30. Please arrive early for our very popular Jazz Vespers series to make sure you get a seat.

Sunday, December 3, 2017

A Tribute to Al Jarreau

Sunday, December 10, 2017

In Memoriam: A Tribute to Those We Lost in 2016 & 2017

Sunday, December 17, 2017

Christmas Cool

Special Guest: Clotile Bonner, vocals



DID YOU KNOW--UU HAS A HIKING CLUB?



JOIN THE HIKING GROUP for the PLANNING POTLUCK to find out more about their group. CONTACT Catherine Groseclose at catcog@gmail.com or Sonia at mountainclub87@mail.com for more details.

Planning Potluck II Eliot Hall, Tuesday, Dec. 5 6:30 - 8:30

Bring your day-planner/calendar, a dish to share, and some ideas about hikes you'd like to lead!

An evening holiday lights walk around Temple Square

End in a hot toddy somewhere

Date/time/details to be determined at Planning Potluck
contact Sonia mountainclub87@gmail.com

A walk around sugar house park

Date and time to be determined at Planning Potluck
contact Sonia mountainclub87@gmail.com



THE TORCH

Announcements

Winter Solstice Celebration

Join us Thursday, December 21 at 6:00pm for a service exploring Shadow and Solstice. We will tell an Inuit story called Raven Steals the Light through music, drama, and shadow play! Then join us in Eliot Hall for our traditional Vegan Chili Dinner. A suggested donation of \$15 for adults and \$5 for children will help send our Jr. High class to Boston. This event sells out every year, so be sure to buy your tickets at the RE table starting this Sunday, December 3rd.

Mindfulness Group

Meditation is held Sundays, after the first service ends, around 10:00 am. We gather in the Parlor, up the stairs at the south side of Eliot Hall. Mindfulness practice is shared, then followed by 20 minutes of guided meditation, and closing with loving kindness. All are welcome for the first time, to investigate or to maintain mindfulness practice. For more information, contact meditation@slcuu.org

Artists Discussing Art

On the last Monday of every month Artists gather in the Haven at 7 pm to discuss each others art in progress or recently completed. This discussion is open to all visual artist, watercolor, acrylic, oil, mixed media, fused glass, and clay. Bring work to discuss or just come to listen. Bring a light refreshment to share. Please contact Bill Reed at artfair@slcuu.org with questions.

Upcoming Torch Publication Dates

- **January 15, 2018 issue ****

Submission deadline Monday, **January 8th** by 9 a.m.

**** Later deadline & publication date due to holidays**

- **February 5, 2018 issue**

Submission deadline Monday, **January 29th** by 9 a.m.

Mail submissions to torch@slcuu.org.

THE TORCH

First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City

Rev. Tom Goldsmith
Minister

Rev. Monica Dobbins
Assistant Minister

Julie Miller
Director of Religious Education

David Owens
Director of Music

Hal Gonzales
Church Administrator

Board of Trustees

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Jan Crane
Teresa Dieringer
Peter Esko
Rebecca Heal
Don Walton

The Torch is published approximately 12 times per year (once per month).

Next Paper Torch Publication Date

January 15, 2018

Submission Deadline

January 8, 2018 (Monday)
by 9:00 a.m.

Events to be listed should occur after January 15th to ensure timeliness. Events occurring earlier will be included in the online Torch Supplement.

Editor

Stefanie Park
torch@slcuu.org

To subscribe/unsubscribe, notify Stefanie at 801-582-8687 ext. 202



THE TORCH

Reverently Yours

Rev. Tom Goldsmith

The story of Christmas offers something for everyone. It may provide the lynchpin to Christian sacred theology. Baby Jesus was of the right lineage as prophesied centuries before his birth. The child born in a manger grew up to warn of apocalyptic endings.

But the pageantry of Christmas, as Kings and shepherds and angels and livestock head to the scene of Jesus' birth, evoke endless wonder in the hearts of all who hear the story. Children perform a re-enactment of this amazing scene every year, and all churches participate regardless of creed, non-creed, left-leaning or right leaning. It's a story nobody ever gets tired of hearing or performing. You never hear anyone say: "What, the Christmas Pageant again? We did it last year."

For some, Christmas is about gift giving, as people look for equivalents to gold, frankincense, and myrrh to deliver unto their loved ones. Others like the opportunity to gather with friends and family to share their joy; or to fill houses of worship to sing the ancient songs; or to stop long enough to listen to what our hearts really treasure.

Although the meaning of Christmas can be interpreted in infinite ways, what it does for everyone is bring the world more sharply into focus. The first Christmas on that long ago silent night juxtaposed humility with opulence, radical hospitality with selfish lives, and the oppression of the day with the dreams of liberation.

We feel these same tensions acutely today in our present world ruled by Herod. Although equity between rich and poor may not have been achieved over time, we suffer nonetheless with an overtly malicious decree to further enhance opulence and disregard the poor altogether. Our leaders today opt to eliminate housing, medicine, and education for those who have tasted poverty their whole lives. Through spiteful forms of taxation and new laws that intentionally harm the poor, our world today has regressed to a level of heartlessness not known since the times of the original Christmas story. When tax breaks are sought to deduct private jet expenses, while school teachers lose their tax credit for purchasing supplies for their classrooms, some nefarious spirit has worked its way

through the leadership of the land.

But Christmas brings a cruel world into focus. Christmas reminds us that norms imposed by our own incarnation of Herod need not be accepted. The hypocrisy of church people spouting Christian values while undermining all the compassion that Jesus taught

can fuel a revolution among us. We are not as powerless as we think. We know in our hearts what is fair and what is just. We know that suffering cannot continue in the shadow of embarrassing wealth. We know that all people must be welcomed equally regardless of the color of their skin, the nature of their gods, or whom they choose to love.

We have allowed the glitter of too many bygone Christmases to blind us to the reality of a topsy-turvy world. But doesn't this Christmas feel different? Isn't this Christmas teaching us to be more circumspect about the devastating changes in our culture's approach to the poor and marginalized? Aren't we feeling more empowered this Christmas to transform society to become more inclusive, diverse, and respectful.

This may be the most difficult Christmas I can remember in a long time. But at the same time, my spirit also captures a certain Christmas message like never before. The angels on high are singing to us. The prophets are speaking our language. The world as it should and must be is received with new clarity. Love is more powerful than evil...if love can ever get organized. And it will. We're all feeling it. We have been moved beyond our customary complacency. Our hearts have been thawed and we are fearful no longer.

Merry Christmas! TRG





THE TORCH

Assistant Minister's Corner

Rev. Monica Dobbins

Diwali – Advent – Yule – Hanukkah. In the hurried bustle of the holiday season, there's so much to do that it's easy to forget the common thread that links these celebrations together. Popular religious culture may argue about "the reason for the season", but our bodies tell a different story. We have an instinctive urge to increase the light around us, as the earth tilts away from the sun and the darkness gathers; and in doing so, we acknowledge that the most true reason for the season is the desire to confront our ancient fear of the dark.

And so we haul our decorations down from the attic or up from the basement; we drape strings of light over the banisters and mantelpieces; we light candles, the more the merrier. The lights we light are not floodlights; they twinkle, like stars, indicating that we do not mean to banish darkness – only hold it at bay. (Although, in one neighborhood of the Birmingham suburb in which I lived, a neighborhood populated with many Indian immigrants, sometimes there were so many decorations for Diwali that they rivaled floodlights for sheer volume of brightness!)

We are modern people, and we know what is causing the change of the season. We know that it is not the work of terrible and capricious gods, but simply the earth turning in its courses, as it always has, as it always will. We know that darkness and light are two parts of the whole, and that the sun will not go out.

Yet we face real darkness all the same. Sometimes we tremble at the dire state of the world in which we have to live every day, a world in which evil seems to reign unchecked and heartless greed rules our political sphere, in which Jesus' name is invoked with self-righteous pomp,

yet the principles for which he stood are trampled like pearls before swine. It is so easy to become angry, bitter, and jaded, and to despair that anything will change. Darkness may even creep into our own homes, workplaces, or worship spaces, if we allow despair to overtake us.

One of my favorite songs of the season (which can be found in our hymnal, #221) celebrates the spirit of Hanukkah with these words:

Light one candle for the strength that we need to never become our own foe... Light one candle for all we believe in, that anger won't tear us apart. Don't let the light go out!

Sometimes we light candles to gladden our own hearts... and then sometimes, we light them in the hopes that we may gladden the hearts of others, even if our own light seems very dim. And then someone else's light may brighten our own way. Gifts of goodwill and generosity, gifts that are not expected but increase the light all the same, may be what keeps another person going this year.

This year, as we light the candles of celebration – no matter what holidays you celebrate in your own family – let us remember to light at least one light for the hope of another person. All is not lost, no matter how deep the darkness. There is always more light, more hope, more love somewhere





THE TORCH

Religious Education

Julie Miller, Director of Religious Education

Thoughts for the New Year

Celebrating the Winter Holidays is a wonderful way for each of us to express our commitment to our Sixth Principle—promoting and affirming a goal of achieving peace, freedom and justice for all.

May we hold lovingly in our thoughts those who suffer tyranny, cruelty, injustice and poverty. May we as Unitarian Universalists recognize our solidarity with the stranger, the outcast, the homeless, abused, deprived so that that no human will ever be treated as “other.” Let our common humanity weave us into a cohesive fabric.

May we pursue a prophet’s vision of living in harmony, side by side, respecting differences, accepting diversity,

with no one exploiting the weak, and each of us living without fear of the other.

May we struggle against institutional injustice, free those whom we can from oppression and contempt, despise none, hate none, honor every child and every creature of the earth.

May we all know peace in the New Year and may we nurture kindness and love everywhere.



December RE Events

- December 9 - Multigenerational Winter Holiday Party, 2-4pm, Eliot Hall
- December 17 - Annual Christmas Pageant, 11am Service. This year, it’ll be a “Pop-Up” Pageant, meaning...everyone can participate.
- December 21 - Winter Solstice Celebration. Service 6-7pm, dinner follows. This is a fundraiser for our youth Service Trip in 2018.
- December 24 - Multigenerational Service. No RE programs or childcare today.

Please remember to support families in need from our sister congregation St. Esteban. You can do this by providing new socks, gloves or hats, or by purchasing a gift card from Walmart, Smith’s Marketplace or similar retailer. Gifts/donations may be wrapped and brought to First Church by December 10. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

The Caring Network

Thank you to all members and friends who have volunteered to participate in The Caring Network!

The Caring Network will offer its FIRST training on Monday, December 4, from 6:30 till 8:30 p.m. in Eliot Hall. The topic of the training will be: How to Help When You’re Not Sure How To Help.

This training will be a potluck dinner as well, so please bring a dish to share. All Caring Network participants are invited to attend!



THE TORCH

2017 Auction Report

Submitted by Michele Page

The church's auction is the largest fundraiser of the year. All proceeds from the auction will go towards supporting the First Unitarian Church's Mission and Vision and, more specifically to sustain our Assistant Minister, Monica Dobbins, and expanded Social Justice Programs.

First of all, a huge thank you to all those who attended the 2017 Auction; Women: The Ultimate Superheroes, honoring Kate Kelly, esquire. For those who were unable to attend, you truly missed an amazing evening. I have received multiple kudos from several attendees. I'd like to share a few of them with you:

"Let me say that this year's auction was AWESOME, everything was great- the location, the food, the cocktails, Kate Kelly, Jim Dubakis, all the Super Women, and much more. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening, and could see your touch throughout. Many kudos to you and all the committee and volunteers for throwing quite the party. Thanks for all you did--"

"Congratulations for the amazing success of the Auction. The participation was astounding, and we know that DID NOT HAPPEN without an amazing amount of effort. We especially loved the theme, the costumes, and the attention to detail. We collected the "Women's" cards left behind for family trivia games. We know that some men may have played a role, but this was clearly "Powered by Women" and it showed. Way to go."

Reverend Monica Dobbins introduced Kate Kelly, our Fairly Free Thinker Award recipient. We missed Reverend Tom Goldsmith and were sorry he was unable to attend. The food for the evening was provided by Chef Evan Francois and it was wonderful. Alcohol was donated by Ogden's Own Distillery (Five Wives Vodka, Madam Pattirini Gin, and Porter's Fire Whiskey). Signature cocktails were served up by Copa Crew, owned by bartender Mark Miller. The silent auction was filled with dinners and events and, even though it was a bit crowded, it was very well-received. The evening concluded with Senator Jim Dabakis auctioning off our 14 live auction items. He definitely made his mark once again by exceeding our expectations.

I am pleased to report that the 2017 Auction raised over \$60,000. We still have a few dinners and events that have not sold out, so please check your inbox for the email blast letting you know what is still available for you to partake.

This could not have been such a success without the huge effort of a dedicated committee. Thank you so much to the auction committee: Teresa Dieringer, Marion Johnson, Di Johnson, Alice Brown, Colleen Bliss, Pete Esko, Sue Geary, Lissa Lander, Julie Miller, Cheryl Johnson, Adrienne Sprinter, Heather Dorrell and Suzanne Tronier.



If you enjoyed the evening, please take a moment to thank each of these individuals. If you missed it, plan to attend in 2018!





THE TORCH

In the Spotlight

Submitted by Jan Crane

Meet Robert B Johnson (Bob)

I was born in Nampa, Idaho Nov 2nd 1937 and grew up in the small towns of the beautiful Snake River Valley of Idaho and Oregon. Both of my parents were in education and I have one older sister, Donna Lee. I did most of my schooling in Ontario, Oregon and graduated from high school there in 1955.

My father, an elementary school principal, chose to leave that profession and become a fieldman for Amalgamated Sugar. He wanted to teach his son the law of Karma "We reap what we sow" and purchased a small farm outside of Ontario. Together, my father and I built the fences, built a barn, and developed a herd of milk cows. My father was very supportive of my involvement in music and sports during high school, but it was my responsibility every morning and evening to milk the cows. He gave me one of the cows and I bought a second cow and that milk check was the money I lived my life on. I bought my first car for \$50 and saved the money for my first year of college through milking cows and working in the fields every summer. I will always be grateful for the lesson I learned with that responsibility. My parents were good people and gave me a great amount of freedom to make my own choices.

I attended Oregon State in Corvallis for two years and then accepted a mission call to go to New Zealand, where I had an amazing growing experience. I then returned to school and graduated with a pharmacy degree in 1963. I also met my wife, Sharen (a "townie" from Corvallis) there and we married in 1962. We had six children, three who were developmentally disabled with a genetic condition "Fragile X"- which gave us a learning journey as we raised our family. Sharen worked as an addiction counselor after our children were raised.

Later, we made the decision to attend BYU where I obtained my masters and doctorate in Counseling Psychology and worked in the counseling center, as well as teaching. I supported my family by working at a local pharmacy while attending school. We eventually settled in the oil industry and had wonderful experiences living and working in northern California and Houston as well as overseas- So America, Asia, Europe, UK and Africa. I continue to consult with American Express on site one day a week where I have an office in their Wellness Center.



I was an active Mormon for many years and was the teacher of the "Priests" quorum, a group of teenage boys, when I met John Dehlin, who was one of the members of the quorum. I'm grateful for the teaching and leadership skills I learned in the church. Over the years, however, my exploration eventually took me away from Mormonism. About 12 years ago, after moving back to Utah, we visited the Unitarian Church, which my son and his family attended. I loved the quality of the music and came away from a service challenged, uplifted, and thinking/exploring rather than with Shame and Guilt. I joined the choir which has been one of the quality experiences of my life. I love music and have written songs, poems, and prose, often about life events. I participate with the Anti-

Racism committee and help with the Refugee Resettlement program. I make an annual donation as well as each Sunday as we pass the plate.

Sharen was diagnosed with Alzheimer's a number of years ago and passed away in June of this year. I, along with two of my children who live close by, were able to give Sharen the love and care she needed in her last years. I was sitting next to her bed when a smile came on her lips and she took her last breath.





THE TORCH

Colorado River System

Songs, Photos and Stories by Art Lee

Friday, December 15, 2017, 7PM, Eliot Hall, First Unitarian Church of SLC

Our next Environmental Ministry program, Colorado River System – Songs, Photos and Stories by Art Lee, will be held on Friday, Dec 15, 2017, 7PM, in Eliot Hall.

Art's show is in two parts: 1) Whitewater Rafting, and 2) Water Management. In the first part, you'll experience the beauty and power of the Colorado, Green and San Juan Rivers. In the second part, migratory birds and pueblo ruins hint of our vulnerability to drought. Art Lee is a nature photographer and singer-songwriter, NatureSings.COM,



ArtsAndNature.ORG. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us.

Special Opportunity: If you are joining us for Art Lee's Colorado River System program on the evening of Dec 15th and would like to save a trip by dropping off your items for the Dec 16th SWAP with us at the same time, please feel free to do so!

Holiday Swap: Saturday, December 16th

Our swap will be at San Esteban Episcopal Church, 4615 So. 3200 West; Noon – 4p.m.

Drop off ONLY at First Unitarian Church, 8 – 10a.m. or drop off at San Esteban when you visit the swap.

If you are joining us for Art Lee's Colorado River System program on the evening of the 15th, you may bring your items with you.

Purpose: Share what we have with each other, our neighboring community, families being resettled in Salt Lake City by the International Rescue Committee & with others in need. Reduce waste, recycle what you don't need, reuse what others don't need, share your abundance.

How this works:

- ☉ Bring what you don't need (items like clothing, jewelry, books, music, videos, school supplies, kitchen & household items, linens, *working* electronics, toys & games – **NO large furniture please**) to the sixth south side of the church on Saturday morning.
- ☉ Visit San Esteban, noon to 4 pm, to take what you need from what others have brought.

- ☉ No money is exchanged.
- ☉ Bring only what you **don't** need, take only what you **do** need.
- ☉ What is not taken will be donated to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) & others in need.
- ☉ The church does not have space to store donations before the swap, if you are not able to bring items on the day of the swap, consider asking a member, friend, or neighbor to drop items off during the swap hours. If you are attending the Environmental Ministry's monthly
- ☉ ALL are welcome.
- ☉ Do your Christmas shopping here!



Hint: Come early if you plan to drop off items at the swap. Then they will be there when the person who needs them comes to the swap – and you will have a better selection of items to choose from, as well.