
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF SALT LAKE CITY



THE TORCH

NOTICE OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 12:20 pm

The membership of First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City will convene for a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 4, 2018 at 12:20 pm in the sanctuary. The purpose of this short meeting is to secure a formal vote of our members on the following declaration:

First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City is declared by its members as a Sanctuary Church.

Definition:

As a Sanctuary Church, First Unitarian Church will offer a place of refuge for both short-term (symbolic) and indefinite-term (physical) sanctuary for individuals and families who face hardship, fear, and targeting by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agency. First Unitarian Church provides shelter, support, and advocacy in coordination with other faith communities which comprise the Salt Lake City Sanctuary Solidarity Network.

Background:

2008: First Unitarian Church became a pledging member of the New Sanctuary Movement, “a movement of prophetic hospitality and public witness to bring about real change in the immigration policy of the United States.”

2017: First Church became a member faith community of the Salt Lake City Sanctuary Solidarity Network. When Network churches were approached about serving as physical sanctuary, First Church responded in the affirmative.

A town hall meeting of First Church members and friends was held on Sunday, December 10 for the purpose of determining the congregation’s support for making an exception to the rule by transitioning from purely symbolic sanctuary to physical sanctuary. The congregation’s vote was overwhelmingly in favor of pursuing planning to provide physical sanctuary of an indefinite term. At this meeting, the Board of Trustees also voted to proceed with planning.

Following the December meeting, a Sanctuary Organizing Committee was formed by the Social Justice Council. The Committee has developed the infrastructure for soliciting, training, and assigning on-site hosts and other volunteers from First Church and other member congregations of the Sanctuary Solidarity Network. Also since that meeting, work on the necessary physical accommodations was begun by church staff and volunteers.

2018: The Congregational Meeting to be held on February 4 will formalize our decision to become a Sanctuary Church.

ALL INTERESTED CONGREGANTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THE MEETING. CHURCH MEMBERS ONLY MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE VOTING PROCESS.



THE TORCH

Reverently Yours

Rev. Tom Goldsmith

Sometimes the top of a New Year invites open-ended questions following some self-examination. In an institution such as ours, or more broadly the UUA, it is advised to occasionally ask what is working effectively and what is not. Given the assumption that there is always room for improvement, people as well as institutions might gain insight from an objective evaluation of where we are personally or institutionally.

I've been doing some reading of late which raises the question of modernizing the traditional church. It represents a philosophical view that in order for churches to survive in an increasingly secular society, it must open itself to science and rational thought. A fine example is Pope Francis who is trying to lead the Catholic Church away from antiquated superstitions and practices to find the light of day in contemporary times. Old church thinking will keep the institution from contemporary relevance. The pope's detractors insist that tradition has more value than current relevancy. An interesting argument...

I can't help from raising the question of what modernization means for Unitarian Universalism. Even if just an academic question, shouldn't we be thinking along those lines, just for good measure? Modernization begs the question of relevancy. Unitarian Universalism has been content for a very long time in its acceptance of science; there is no need for opening church windows to let in the new light of discovery. In fact, many regard Unitarian Universalism as a science-based faith, as paradoxical as that may sound. But do we stop there in considering what modernizing really means, even for a progressive church?

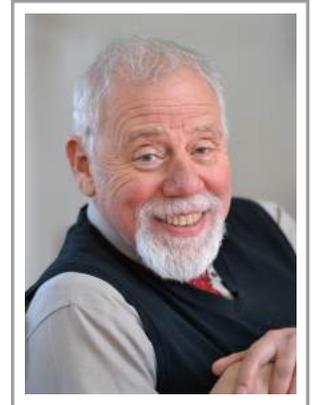
What might it mean for Unitarian Universalism to modernize, or do we believe there is no such need? After all, we have purged all superstitions from our

liberal doctrine for over a century. But do we dare ask the next question: Are we still relevant?

Modernizing is as basic as the laws of evolution. It needs to be a continuous and open-ended process. There's a need to examine the internal dynamics of an institution as well as its structure. A case in point

may be the recent Golden Globes awards. It may have been their 75th anniversary, but the internal dynamics were radically altered by a more "modern" assessment of where the entertainment industry finds itself today. The 2018 Globes were draped in black, with actresses and some (remaining) actors initiating a new era for entertainment given the oppression and harassment of women and the expected silence that followed. Still, not one woman was even nominated for Best Director, although there were many who should have been in the nominating pool.

Modernizing does not mean an immediate fix, but at least an awareness of old habits with a commitment to becoming relevant again as the times demand. Given that the population of UUs across the country has plummeted drastically since the merger in 1961, it might seem appropriate and even advisable for our denomination and our local church to consider what it means for us to "modernize." Change for the sake of change is not helpful. But raising the question of whether or not we have adapted to modern needs could prove a fine soul-searching exercise. Science is not the only criteria for a modern-day religion. Perhaps we have remained content for too long. TRG





THE TORCH

Assistant Minister's Corner

Rev. Monica Dobbins

One of the great pleasures I take in professional ministry is the opportunity to make a difference in my community, in a deeper way than most folks get the chance to. There are great injustices in this world and close to home, but there are steps we can take to address injustice. Sometimes I just have to breathe a deep breath of gratitude, that someone is actually paying me to do that work! What a gift!

The first Sunday of 2018, I was doing just that – instead of presenting worship with Rev. Tom, I was at a legislative training presented by the People's Justice Forum, a citizen lobbying group spearheaded by Planned Parenthood and supported by other local social justice organizations. Together with several members of our congregation, I learned more about how the legislative process works in Utah (it's a little different than in Alabama, though there are many parallels). I also got to meet a lot of wonderful, friendly, politically active Utahns.

Here are three lessons I took from that gathering that are valuable reminders for anyone looking to make a difference this year:

1. Across party lines (and other dividing factors), there are reasonable people who want to do the right thing, who care about their community, and who are ready to work hard and play a long game. We may think of Planned Parenthood as a group that is heavily favored by Democrats and rebuffed by Republicans, but it is actually just a health care provider, not a partisan apparatus. And to my surprise, a Republican lawmaker came out to speak to us, and had lots of good advice for us as we prepared for the legislative session.

Women's rights, and women's health, are not partisan issues. All women deserve to live healthy lives, and raise healthy children (if they choose to have children), not just women on the political left. Clean air and economic growth are other issues that likely matter to all Utahns. We might have to get creative about how we reach these goals, but we can be sure they will not be won without cooperation.

2. Our efforts are much more successful when we build together with all the stakeholders from the beginning. We may say we want a better Utah and a better world, but have we considered what it will look like when we get there? What it will feel like?

For me, it won't be good enough unless all people can participate fully, and that means putting first those who often find themselves last now: the poor, people of color, queer folk. So it makes sense to partner with them from the start (note: not include them in our efforts, but make it a joint effort from the get-go).



And sometimes, that means finding unlikely partners. I remember once when I was an intern at Greater Birmingham Ministries, a social justice collaboration among liberal Birmingham faith communities, we were fighting an anti-Sharia bill in the Alabama House. As GBM looked for partners in opposing the bill, they found a very awkward one: the Christian Coalition. Turns out, the ultra-conservative group had determined that the house bill would prevent many overseas adoptions, and they needed help overturning the legislation. It was a very odd press conference these two groups gave together – but it got the job done!

3. We are stronger together than we are alone. And yet, even one person can make a difference. The two legislators who visited the training – one Republican, one Democrat – both said that the number one way to get things done in the legislature is to contact your elected representative. Many people think that government is so big, and elected officials so powerful, that one person can't hope to get their attention. The truth is that, whatever else they might be, they are busy. But if a constituent takes the time to talk to their representatives, they know the issue must be important, and they pay more attention to that issue.

So yes, even your single voice makes a difference! (But just think how much you can boost the signal if several one-voices come together!)

Since I moved to Utah, I've been delighted to discover what a fantastic place it is. And: I can also see that it needs a little work, wouldn't you agree? Our fifth principle, in which we place our faith in democratic processes, calls us to get involved. Together, we are more.



THE TORCH

Religious Education

Julie Miller, Director of Religious Education

True Confessions

I grew up Columbus, Ohio in an upper-crust neighborhood.

I had little exposure to what we now call “diversity”.

Activism was not a word I knew until college and adulthood.

So today, as we approach one of the most sober of American anniversaries—the life and death of Martin Luther King—I’m trying to come to terms with my reflections on MLK in relation to our everlasting Unitarian principles.

What we have here is an opportunity to embrace, and possibly even promote, the passion of one of the most provocative, impassioned and decent human beings ever to light up the land.

What we have here is a call, figuratively speaking, to stand up for racial justice in a time of backward sliding, a regrettable time, in fact, in which darker sentiments that prevailed fifty and a hundred years ago are percolating again into the highest levels of society.

You might think, oh no, it’s time to don your activist overcoat..get out there, gather forces, take a public stand. Some of us are cut out to do just that. Many are not. So...what to do after an inspiring sermon? What to do after your vote doesn’t seem to matter anymore?

Start slow and easy. Can you write a letter? Good. Can you chat up a friend and write two letters? Better. If you don’t have the words, it’s highly likely they’ve already been written and written well by folks online.

Take a couple of your like-minded friends or colleagues to a City Council meeting. Observe who’s on first, so to speak, with cogent comments—and who is not. There are new members on that Council who just might like to know what you’re thinking.



We’ve seen Council members *and* City government people respond positively to respectful citizen input. Ask if law enforcement training touches on racial sensitivities.

My earliest teaching job was in Pontiac, Michigan in a mostly-black school. What an eye-opener...the locals likened my upbringing to “marinating in an elitist environment.”

Soak in that for a minute!

As I noted several years ago, it’s been proven that Catholic and Protestant kids in Northern Ireland could actually mingle peacefully if they were isolated from the maddening prejudices that disabled their parents.

So. In light of MLK’s incomparable efforts to overcome racial injustice, let us renew our commitment to compassionate Unitarian principles. Let us be just a bit more challenged, a bit more caring and a bit more engaged to make a difference.

Alabama voters did it. So can we.



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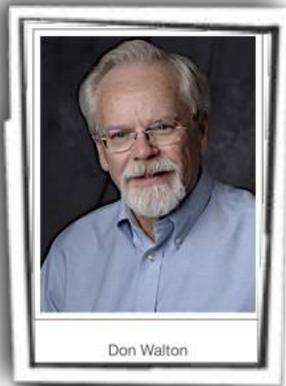
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THE TORCH

First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City

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Assistant Minister

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

Next Paper Torch Publication Date

February 5, 2018

Submission Deadline

January 29, 2018 (Monday)
by 9:00 a.m.

Events to be listed should occur after February 5th to ensure timeliness. Events occurring earlier will be included in the online Torch Supplement.

Editor

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



THE TORCH

Announcements

UU Orientation

If you are new to our congregation and would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, please join Rev. Tom and Rev. Monica for a UU Orientation class, Tuesday, January 23 at 7pm in Eliot Hall. We will share a light meal, get to know one another, and learn about the history and values of UUism and the membership journey.

Dinner and Dialogue

Wouldn't you like to get to know more people in our congregation? There are so many new faces and some old ones you may not know well, so here's one of the best ways I know: Sign up for Dinner and Dialogue! You can sign up to HOST (any day you choose) or ATTEND (any day that is available) a dinner of your choosing. Look for the white binder at the Congregational Life Table in Eliot Hall or contact Darlene Thayne at suppers@slcuu.org or 801-455-6553, and I will assist you in any way I can. We have several dinners in the works that are filling up fast and hope to have even more.

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.

UU Hiking Club

To find out more about the group contact Catherine Groseclose at catcog@gmail.com or sonia at mountainclub87@mail.com for more details.

Upcoming Services

Sunday, January 14th
Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
"Taking a Knee"
-Rev. Tom Goldsmith

Sunday, January 21st
Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
"Are Unitarians White
Supremacists?"
-Reverends Tom Goldsmith and
Monica Dobbins

Sunday, January 28th
Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
"Learning How to Fail"
-Rev. Tom Goldsmith

Sunday, February 4th
Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am
"Migration in a Hostile World"
-Rev. Tom Goldsmith



THE TORCH

In the Spotlight

Submitted by Jan Crane

Meet Skip Rynearson

My wife, Briana Pinales, and I have 5 (yes, FIVE) children. They are a composite of Brie's kids: Alayna (14), Hunter (11), and Bridger (10); my son Asher (9); and our daughter together, Evaline (evuh•leen), who is nearly 14 months old. So, we have a "yours, mine, and ours" situation going on. Brie and I have known each other six years, but only started pursuing a romance three years ago. We were married September 19, 2015 in the sanctuary of First Unitarian Church by Tom himself.

I grew up in Taylorsville, Utah; I am a trading representative for Wells Fargo Advisors; and I love to read and watch good films and television. My interests are philosophy, religion, comic books (a medium underrated by too many), technology, politics, the arts, and good food.

I have so many favorite quotes, but if I were to try to whittle it to one, it would be the following from Dr. Cornel West:

"... there is a need for audacious hope. And it's not optimism. I'm in no way an optimist. I've been black in America for 39 years. No ground for optimism here, given the progress and regress and three steps forward and four steps backward. Optimism is a notion that there's sufficient evidence that would allow us to infer that if we keep doing what we're doing, things will get better. I don't believe that. I'm a prisoner of hope, that's something else. Cutting against the grain, against the evidence.

[...] Hope against hope. And yet still trying to sustain the notion that we world-weary and tired peoples, all peoples in this society, can be energized and galvanized around causes and principles and ideals that are bigger than us, that can appeal to the better angels of our nature, so that we, in fact, can reach the conclusion that the world is incomplete - that history is unfinished, that the future is open-ended, that what we think and what we do does make a difference."

I don't exactly recall what brought me to First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City; I think it might have been an online test, honestly (ha, ha.) What I can tell you, though, is that the very first time I attended, four years ago this month... I saw the decor celebrating the plurality of the world's religious wisdom traditions. I heard David's classical music. I read the seven principles. I heard the doxology. I heard Tom's sermon. I looked around the sanctuary, and noticed the light as it fell through the windows. ...and I knew I was home. And I've made an effort to make it more my home, with my wife and children, with opportunities to volunteer, and with learning more and more about what it means to live as a Unitarian Universalist.



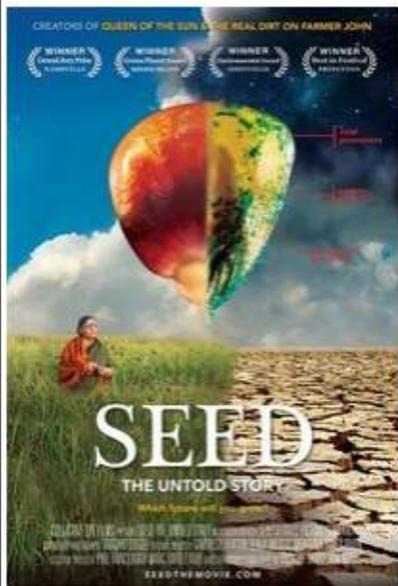
So far, I've had the good fortune of taking an adult RE class from Rev. Matthew Cockrum exploring our faith journeys, participated in Family Fun Night, played a small role in the children's Christmas pageant with my wife and newborn daughter, helped fundraise for the Coming of Age Boston trip (which I'll be doing again this year), and now I've even expressed an interest in being part of the Worship Arts Committee. I look forward to continuing to deepen my relationship with our congregation.

Oddly enough, I haven't signed the membership book yet! But I think I likely will soon. However, my wife and I do pledge, because we believe in this community and the transformative power it holds for the betterment of our society and of individuals.





THE TORCH



SEED: The Untold Story

Friday, January 19, 2018, 7PM

Eliot Hall, First Unitarian Church, 569 S 1300 E, SLC

Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/151839998797409/>

“Few things on Earth are as miraculous and vital as seeds. Worshipped and treasured since the dawn of humankind. SEED: The Untold Story follows passionate seed keepers protecting our 12,000 year-old food legacy. In the last century, 94% of our seed varieties have disappeared. As biotech chemical companies control the majority of our seeds, farmers, scientists, lawyers, and indigenous seed keepers fight a David and Goliath battle to defend the future of our food. In a harrowing and heartening story, these reluctant heroes rekindle a lost connection to our most treasured resource and revive a culture connected to seeds. SEED features Vandana Shiva, Dr. Jane Goodall, Andrew Kimbrell, Winona Laduke and Raj Patel.” Source: <https://www.seedthemovie.com/>

This FREE screening is sponsored by Environmental Ministry at First Unitarian Church of SLC. The film lasts approximately 94 minutes and will be followed by a discussion.

Important Dates

- January 15th: Church office closed
 - January 19th Environmental Ministry screening “SEED: The Untold Story” Eliot Hall, 7pm
 - January 23rd: UU Orientation 7pm, Eliot Hall
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- Every Sunday: Meditation Group meets in the Parlor 10:15 - 10:45 am
 - Every Wednesday: Choir Rehearsal
 - Every Thursday: Order of Service announcements due by 9 am
 - First Mondays (with some exceptions): Family Fun Night 6 pm
 - Second Mondays: Board of Trustees Meeting 5:30 pm Room 201
 - Second Tuesdays Women’s Sacred Circle (email for more info: sacredcircle@slcuu.org)
 - Second Wednesdays: Young Adult Group 7:30 pm
 - Third Mondays: Anti-Racism Committee Meeting 6:30 pm Room 207
 - Last Mondays: Art Discussions in the Haven 7 pm

Upcoming Torch Publication Dates

- **February 5, 2018 issue**
Submission deadline Monday, **January 29th** by 9 a.m.
 - **March 5, 2018 issue**
Submission deadline Monday, **February 26th** by 9 a.m.
- Mail submissions to torch@slcuu.org.