


Utopia
November 2023





Service begins at 10:30!

Minister's Musings

Dear Ones,

Our theme for the month of November is “Blessings”, and I find myself asking “What can I say about blessings that hasn’t already been said a million times?” I admit- I probably have nothing to say about blessings that you haven’t already said yourself or heard said far better than I ever could. But that’s not going to stop me from writing this! So here goes:

Each year on the Sunday after Thanksgiving our congregation has our annual “Count Your Blessings” potluck, and we’ll certainly have it again this year. It kicks off the “Holiday Season” and I look forward to it each year.

We’ve heard the word “blessings” so often, in so many contexts, perhaps we’ve become “immune” to the it. Are some more valid than others? After all, people use it in all sorts of contexts varying from the silly (saying “bless you”


when somebody sneezes) to the profound (“Choose to bless the world in the spirit of love”). Perhaps all of those ways are valid, so I shouldn’t disparage any of them. (I am reminded of Humpty Dumpty’s line from *Alice in Wonderland*: “When I use a word it means exactly what I want it to mean, neither more nor less.”)

In any case, what “blessings” will you include when you count your blessings?

Do you include your family? Many of us do, but for many of us, family is a “mixed blessing” at best, and for some, family doesn’t feel like any kind of blessing. Relationships of any kind can range from wonderful to toxic, from a blessing to... something else.

For some, good health is one they might consider, while that may not be true for all. For some, it’s a comfortable place to live, even as others are struggling.

The other night I was lying in bed, preparing for sleep (You know that quiet moment when your body has settled down, you’re relaxed, and your mind just sort of drifts along). And, as I was lying there, I began to think about the many “blessings” in my life. Some are certainly trivial- I’ve got



chocolate cake on hand (which shouldn't be underestimated, in my humble opinion!). But others are more important- I live in a community of relative safety, I have friends and family whom I love, and I don't have to worry too much about where my next meal is coming from.

And I thought about the people who have blessed my life. Some were nameless strangers who simply did something lovely that touched my heart. Others were people who had a profound impact on my life, and still others were simply dear friends whom I love just for being themselves.

There have been so many! Good, decent, kind, loving people who have blessed my life in ways large and small!

And I am so grateful. Grateful that I have had the opportunities I've been given, grateful to have met you, my beloved community here at UUFS, and grateful for the many beautiful souls that graced my life.

It seems to me that blessings and gratitude go together like peanut butter and jelly. When you realize the blessings in your life, you almost can't help but be grateful. And when you are grateful for what you have, you realize that

those things have, in fact, blessed your life. And that, my friends, is what "thanksgiving" is all about, don't you think?

Wishing you peace and blessings,

Rev John

UUFS Mission Statement

We are a liberal religious fellowship: building a beloved community, inspiring spiritual growth, working for peace and justice, honoring the Earth our home, and welcoming others to join us on this journey.

We are a welcoming congregation!

If you should have any questions, please contact Jeffrey Matthias, Board President or Rev John at uufsa@gmail.com



Sunday Services

November's Theme - Blessings

Services will be held in person. A zoom link is also available for those wishing to participate remotely.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88340384310?pwd=3xpI9Hv158IgYExJ5AtRSa2AdbX07V.1>

November 5th Service

Can Religion Give You PTSD?

Religious trauma can come in many forms. In this service Rev John will look at some of those forms, how they relate to other forms of trauma, and what can be done to help us not only survive, but to thrive after religious trauma.

November 12th Service

When Faced With Evil

"for there to be peace in the world.....there must be peace in the heart"

-Lao-Tse

To honor those in the Trans Community, and all LBGTQ+ people and to try and make sense of violence in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world Worship Associate Jeff Hampton will attempt to help us reconcile these things with our UU Belief Systems.

November 19th Service

The Society of St Andrew

Ms Jean Seirs will be visiting us this day to tell us about the Society of St Andrew. The Society of St. Andrew brings people together to harvest and share healthy food, reduce food waste, and build caring communities by offering nourishment to hungry neighbors. She'll be discussing gleaning as a spiritual practice and more.

November 26th Service

Count Your Blessings

Our annual after-Thanksgiving potluck gathering. Please join us!



Events at UUFS

Family and Friend Thanksgiving Potluck

November 23rd 1 PM

Once again this year Rev John and Kit will host their annual “Family and Friends” potluck dinner. If you don’t have friendly companions to share the afternoon with, don’t want to cook the ENTIRE meal, or just feel like getting together with some great folks, please join us for Thanksgiving dinner at the Fellowship. Kit and John will supply the Turkey (and probably some other stuff), you bring your favorite “go with” dish and we’ll have a good ol’ time! We’ll start setting up around 1 pm, eat at around 2, and be cleaned up by 4. So join us as we celebrate our last “UUFS Family and Friends Thanksgiving Potluck” (at least for a couple of years).

UUFS CUUPS

**November 19th Meeting
12 PM**

Salisbury PFLAG

**November 13th Meeting
6:30 PM**

Meetings include educational sessions, socializing, and are open to all who need support. Membership is not required.

Salisbury LGBT+ Connections Board Gaymes

November 12 2 PM

Monthly gaymes on the second Sunday of the month (11/12; 12/10 will be a holiday themed event) from 2:00 to 4:00. If you'd like, bring your favorite board game, snacks to share and your own drinks. Allies are always welcome. For more information contact Cheryl at cheryl.lang80525@gmail.com.

Tai Chi/Qigong Class

Wednesdays, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM starting November 8th

This 16-week class will focus upon holistic health and well being with some attention to issues of common concerns among the group such as pain management and emotional health.

Please note, class will not be held on the following days (due to holidays and a UUFS conflicting scheduled activity): 11/22/23, 12/27/23, and 1/31/24. This will make our last class 3/6 if we remain on a weekly schedule. The group discussed the possibility of moving to every other week for a latter portion of the class and is to be determined at a later time.

We currently have eight people in the class. The current cost is \$50 or less for the entire class and will decrease if more participants join the class. Participants do not need to be a UUFS member to join.

For anyone needing assistance with transportation (such as nighttime driving) we will help with carpooling so don't let that stop you from joining the class. Feel free to contact Cheryl Lang,

at cheryl.lang80525@gmail.com for more information or to sign up for class.

UUFS Community News and Events

Breakfast with UUs

The Breakfast Bunch is meeting on Tuesday mornings, 8:30 am. at Dayton's Restaurant on Snow Hill Rd. in Salisbury in the back room. For more information contact Naomi Reed, (410) 677-3805 or naomireed21801@gmail.com

Food Bank Donations

UUFS has resumed collecting non-perishable food items (no glass containers). Canned soup, fruit and vegetables along with peanut butter and pasta are among welcome items. Donations can be put into the blue container at the back of the Fellowship.



Building our Community Needs Third Friday Volunteers

Its warming up and that means so will our Downtown! Sign up to help table at Salisbury's Third Friday and help grow our beloved community. We need 3 people, minimum, from 4pm to 6pm (or longer) for Third Friday from April to October. Follow these steps to sign up online

Its super simple and you will get an email reminder 2 days before your "shift".

1) Click this link:

<https://signup.com/go/xtjfVLE>

2) Review the options listed and choose the spot(s) you like.

3) Sign up! It's Easy - you will NOT need to register an account or keep a password on SignUp.

Note: SignUp does not share your email address with anyone.

In the Larger Community

Are You A Chalice Lighter?

A chalice lighter is an individual who contributes three times a year to calls to support congregations engaged with growth or expansion projects. Anyone can be a chalice lighter and help grow Unitarian Universalism! Learn more about the program and sign up at <https://www.uua.org/central-east/programs/chalicelighter>

Task Group Meetings

Nov 12th Meeting 10 AM

Board of Trustees

Members at UUFS are invited to attend any meeting. According to the UUFS By-laws “All meetings of the Fellowship, the Board of Trustees, and all committees, shall be open to all members.” Friends may also attend, although it would be up to the leader of the meeting to determine access of non-UUFS members.

The Board of Trustees encourages all members and friends to attend open meetings and express your thoughts and concerns. The current Board welcomes input and has established an input time at the beginning of the meeting to hear from members and friends. The Board may then act upon a proposal or refer it to a committee for further exploration and discernment.

So, become a member and get engaged in the administration of our Fellowship. Board meetings are scheduled for the second Sunday of each month at 11:30 through June 2024.

Information and Resources

Newsletter Deadline

20th of each month at Noon

Updated Fellowship Directories

For a copy of the directory, please contact the Administrative Assistant at uufsa@gmail.com

Mid-Week Announcements.

Email uufsa@gmail.com to subscribe to the midweek announcement email list.

UUFS Website

Our new website is up and running! The new webpage is www.uufsalisbury.net

Web Resources

Unitarian Universalist Association www.UUA.org

UU World Magazine Online
www.UUAWorld.org

UUA Bookstore Online
www.UUABookstore.org

Got Questions? www.uufaq.com

UUFS Leadership

Minister Rev. John Wright

President Jeffrey Matthias

Vice-President VACANT

Secretary VACANT

Treasurer Lou Rimbach

Trustees

- Michele Corron
- Jeff Hampton
- Chad Parker

Committee Chairpersons

- **Building Our Community**
Chad Parker, Trustee
- **Care** Michele Corron, Trustee
- **Our Home** Jeff Hampton.
Trustee boojch1@gmail.com
- **Spiritual Growth** John
Wright, Minister
revjohn3449@gmail.com

**Administrative Assistant/
Newsletter Editor** Michael
Russell uufsaa@gmail.com

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic processes within our congregations and in the society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

