

May 2019

# IN SPIRIT NEWSLETTER

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS CHURCH OF HOT SPRINGS

Welcoming Congregation for Religious  
Liberalism

### BOARD MEMBERS:

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### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our congregation! We as Unitarian Universalists welcome you, whomever you are, regardless of race, creed, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or physical or mental ability. We strive together as a community to celebrate diversity and to investigate together the spiritual questions that concern us all.

Who are Unitarian Universalists? They can be Christian, Jews, Buddhists, Agnostics, Atheists, Muslims, Pagan, or Other. The one thing we all have in common is that we respect each other for who we are, where we come from, and our reasons for seeking spiritual connectiveness with each other. We believe in making this world a better and just world for everyone.

**WELCOME!**

### SPEAKERS FOR MAY

May 5<sup>th</sup>- Robert VanHook- "Solving Problems"

May 12<sup>th</sup>- Pat Farnan

May 19<sup>th</sup>- Bob VanHook

May 26- Ann Hair

### RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

**Religious Exploration** will begin at 9:00 am to 10 am the first and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. Join us to discuss various Ted Talks. Feel free to bring Ted Topics that you would like to recommend for discussion.

**Wisdom Seekers** meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month from 9:00 to 10:00 each month. The book currently being studied is "Fantasy Land, How America went Haywire."

## CHURCH ACTIVITIES



### YOGA

Sorry folks! Yoga has been discontinued due to lack of consistent participation. We thank you, Bryan, for providing this service to our UU Members

## CHOIR PRACTICE



The "Birds" Choir Group meets most Thursday nights at 5:15 pm at the church. Singing is good for your soul! If you have a singing experience (or not) come join the group. We practice for Sunday Service.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CHURCH MEMBER

Our friend, Jason, has the spotlight on him as the celebrated church member. Jason has poured his heart into establishing activities for church members and has been supportive of other church members as they encounter life problems. He now serves on the Church Board of Directors as the New Membership Chair. He provides training about UU principals to new members and helps plan our potluck monthly activity. He provides many services to our members and we greatly appreciate everything he does for our little church community. His story follows.

*biography by Jason Nickerson-Tinna*



I was born in Tarrytown Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans. My parents are Tom and Nola Nickerson. I have one sister, Loren. We are a very close and loving

family.

I started playing music in fourth grade. I played clarinet in the school band and took organ lessons at home. In later grades, I played many instruments, but finally settled on oboe. I played oboe in the Crescent City Youth Orchestra, and a volunteer orchestra made up of mostly musicians from the then defunct New Orleans Philharmonic.

At the age of seventeen, my family moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas. I took my final year of school at Hot Springs High. After high school, I learned to play the highland bagpipe. Shortly after meeting two musicians performing at the Poet's Loft, we formed a band called "Celtic Knotwork". The band performed for seven years at various venues around Arkansas, Tennessee, and Texas.

My first job was in room service at the Arlington hotel. I also worked at the local Dairy Queen, and RadioShack.

At the age of twenty-five, and wanting a change of scenery, I moved west to California and later Oregon. When living in Oregon, I met Rob on the internet. We talked continuously for six months before we realized we wanted to be together. It was during a visit to his parents in Pennsylvania, that we decided to make the leap. Rob drove across the country to Oregon, rented a trailer for my belongings, and brought me home with him to Phoenix. We have been together for fifteen years.

In Arizona I worked for JoAnn fabrics and crafts. My last job was working for the local Hobby Lobby here in Hot Springs.

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Rob and I were married on May 28, 2014. Also, that year, we began attending UUCHS. Our life together has been an adventurous one, nonetheless a happy one. Especially having found a church family in all of you.

**WE LOVE YOU JASON!**



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## WORDS OF WISDOM

### **My Road to Unitarian Universalism**

*By Jesse Davis*

As a child, I attended the local Presbyterian Church every Sunday at the insistence of my parents. The church was ok, if a little dull. About the time I started college, I began to have questions about the church and its members, mainly because of the church's support for the war in Vietnam and backward approach to race relations.

I stopped going to the Presbyterian Church. In fact, I stopped going to church at all, save for the occasional wedding or funeral. As a young, hip college student/graduate, I noticed the Christian's world obvious (at least to me) hypocrisies. I was comfortable with asking questions like; If there was a loving God who actively intervened in earthly things, then why was there so much suffering in the world? Why would I go to hell if I did not believe all that they preached?

A friend recommended the *Tao The Ching* to me and I became a fan of this ancient Chinese philosophy. I became interested in

other Eastern religions and American Indian traditions. These seemed to me to approach life from a more honest perspective, at least from my limited understanding I could get from books. I really didn't know any Taoists, Buddhists, Sioux, or the like.

When I was working in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a fundamentalist Christian city, sometimes called the "buckle of the Bible Belt," many of my co-workers proudly kept a Bible on their desks. In an act of rebellion, I put my dog-eared copy of the *Te Ching* on my desk. I wondered if some of my pious co-workers worshipped the Bible and not Jesus or God.

In Tennessee, I used to hang out with a fellow who was a devout Catholic. He would sometimes bring up religion in conversation. He once asked me; "You don't believe in God, do you?" I replied; "Tell me where and what God is, and where and what not God is not, and I will answer your question."

I moved to Maryland, a much more secular place, and didn't feel as continually confronted by "Christendom". Shortly before I retired, a friend was talking about his Quaker wife and asked me if I went to church. I said something like; "No. I don't think I would be welcomed in churches, as they wouldn't want me to be asking questions about their beliefs". He said that I should check out the Unitarians as they don't mind questions.

After I retired to Hot Springs, I found our little church on the internet and started attending. I found that my spirits were lifted each Sunday. I enjoyed the people and the singing. No one asked me to pray, or said that I was going to hell, or told me what I

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should or should not believe. I agreed with the Seven Principles, none of which limit me. I thought about joining until one Sunday there was a big discussion by some members who were upset that the Unitarian Universalist Association was de-emphasizing Humanism. This sounded too much like an argument about doctrine to me, not what I was looking for. I came back after a while despite my misgivings, and thankfully never heard another doctrinal argument.

So, I finally joined, and I am glad that I did. I feel at home here. I feel a lift every Sunday as soon as I see the other members and we start to sing. No one has asked me to believe what they believe or think like they think. I am free to ponder my BIG questions amid a supportive and warm environment.



Thank you, Jesse, for Serving as our Board President!