

# **OPEN FOR TRANSFORMATION**

(Our program theme)

*Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge  
Many Beliefs . . . One Community . . . A Better World*

9:30 and 11:15 AM Sunday Worship

*Classes & nursery for our children provided at the 9:30 & 11:15am Services  
Classes for Middle and Senior Youth provided at the 11:15am Service*




## DECEMBER 2015



### **December 6, Sunday Morning Worship Services *All I Want for Christmas...is a Compassionate City***

As we delve into the Christmas season, we will explore what compassion looks like: especially as it manifests in where we live.

- **UCBR Blood Drive:** Sunday, December 6, 8am, church parking lot 
- **Whistleblowing**, with church member **Dan Collins:** Sunday, December 6, 10:35am & 12:30pm, church office (see page 6)
- **Christmas Tree Decorating Party:** Sunday, December 6, 3 – 5pm

### **December 13, Sunday Morning Worship Services *The C O L O R S of Christmas***

We look at *images* of this season as a way to think about hospitality, peace, justice, and co-existence. Hospitality is a religious principle, almost universally. Welcoming *the stranger* is a noble pursuit, but “how many strangers are too many” is now a question of public policy. The Christmas season welcomes the questions. A fine brass trio is ready for you along with our choir.

- **Sunday, December 13, 4pm: Conversation on Grief**, remembering our loved ones with **Steve Crump**, choir room.
- **Saturday, December 19, 7:30pm: New Orleans Gay Men’s Chorus** (see page 4)

### **December 20, Sunday Morning Worship Services *The Impromptu Pageants***

We re-enact the nativity story, but with an awesome twist: no rehearsal. That’s right. We cast everyone on the spot, sing the carols, providing roles for children and adults along the way. These two ALL Community services are seasonal hits. It takes a village to secure a family, to sing the carols, to spread joy, hope, and serenity in fellowship.

A child dedication is set in the early portion of each service. Contact **The Reverend Nathan Ryan** and see his column, page 3.



### **Tuesday Evening, December 22, 7pm *The Winter Solstice Celebration***

*Daniel Leonard*, the master of the singing bowls, returns for awesome beauty, mystery and original expressions of word and ritual. Attention drummers: bring your drums into the service.

We have a role for you to play in our celebration.



### **Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6:45pm Prelude**

We begin with String Trio, then we add Choir, **HeartVoice Trio**, Carols and candlelight glow. A once-a-year experience in the life of our church is not to be missed. Plan your family dinner and gifting around a beautiful evening in our church. Bring friends and family.



### **December 27, Sunday Morning Worship Services *Transformers: Requiem 2015***

We remember notable individuals who died in 2015 and reflect on the transformative power of people and events. Please join members of the Worship Guild as they present this annual service of remembrance.

#### **Upcoming Holiday Events:**

- Sunday, January 3, 2016: **Re-Boot, Restart, and Turning over a New Leaf**  
Another morning breaks into a new year with aspirations, serenity, and a reflective ritual of letting go.
- Sunday, January 17, **Celebrating W.E.B. Dubois on MLK Sunday**
- Sunday, January 31, 12:45pm: **Congregational Meeting** to approve 2016 Budget and Adopt Bylaw amendments

Office Hours are Monday - Friday 8 AM – 4:30 PM  
8470 Goodwood Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
[www.unitarianchurchbr.com](http://www.unitarianchurchbr.com)  
225-926-2291

**Ours is a no-smoking, no-firearms campus.**

CHURCH STAFF including Volunteers –

**Outreach Director: *Becky Cureau*** [rcureau@cox.net](mailto:rcureau@cox.net)

**Social Justice Director: *Bobby Thompson*** [numbernine@cox.net](mailto:numbernine@cox.net)

**Connections Director: *Dottie Kelly*** [uucbr\\_dottie@cox.net](mailto:uucbr_dottie@cox.net)

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[music.office@unitarianchurchbr.com](mailto:music.office@unitarianchurchbr.com)

**Choral Director: *Trey Davis*** [choral@unitarianchurchbr.com](mailto:choral@unitarianchurchbr.com)

**Director of Religious Education: *The Reverend Beth Williams*** [education@unitarianchurchbr.com](mailto:education@unitarianchurchbr.com)

**Pastoral Care Advisor: *The Reverend Earle Ramsdell***  
[eramsdel@bellsouth.net](mailto:eramsdel@bellsouth.net)

**Ministers:**

***The Reverend Nathan A. Ryan***  
(Off Fridays) [nryan@uuma.org](mailto:nryan@uuma.org)

***The Reverend Dr. Steve J. Crump***  
(Off Mondays) [minister@unitarianchurchbr.com](mailto:minister@unitarianchurchbr.com)

**OUR CHURCH BOARD -**

**President: *Melanie Mayeux*** [melanieamayeux@gmail.com](mailto:melanieamayeux@gmail.com)

**Vice President: *Wade Adams*** [wwadeadams@gmail.com](mailto:wwadeadams@gmail.com)

**BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE –**

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***Maida Owens*** [maidaowens@gmail.com](mailto:maidaowens@gmail.com)

**TEAM CO-LEADERS -**

***Kathy Judy & Leah Hartman*** – Religious Services Team

***Laura Zuelke & The Reverend Beth Williams*** – Religious Education Team

***Art Scarbrough & Janina Fuller*** – Adult Growth & Learning Team

***Holley Haymaker & Bobby Thompson*** – Social Justice Team

***Charles Fryling & Becky Cureau*** – Outreach Team

***Dottie Kelly*** – Connections Team

***Donna Yelverton & Janene Wacker*** - Congregational Care

***Sandy Hubbard & Tara Hebert*** – Fun & Fellowship



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 2: **Adult Choir & Recordors** 6:30pm

December 5: **Roots** 10am

December 6: **Blood Drive** 8am, **OWL** 9:30am,  
**Whistleblowing w/Dan Collins** 10:35am & 12:30pm  
**Social Justice Forum** 12:45pm,  
**Christmas Tree Decorating Party** 3pm,  
**Open Circle Book Club** 7pm

December 7: **Tai Chi** 6pm

December 8: **AG&L Team** 6:30pm, **Socrates Café** 7pm

December 9: **Adult Choir & Recordors** 6:30pm

December 10: **Non Fiction Book Club** 7pm

December 12: **Roots** 10am

December 13: **OWL** 9:30am

December 14: **Tai Chi** 6pm, **Women's Book Club** 7pm

December 15: **Church Board** 6:30pm

December 16: **Adult Choir & Recordors** 6:30pm

December 17: **PFLAG** 7pm

December 19: **Red Stick Pagan Kids Yule Sabbat Celebration** 10am,  
**N.O. Gay Men's Chorus** 7:30pm

December 20: **OWL** 9:30am, **Bible Skeptics** 5pm

December 21: **Tai Chi** 6pm

December 22: **Winter Solstice** 7pm

December 23: **Adult Choir & Recordors** 6:30pm

December 24: **Church Office Closed,**  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** Prelude 6:45pm

December 25: **Church Office Closed**

December 27: **OWL** 9:30am

December 28: **Tai Chi** 6pm

December 30: **Adult Choir & Recordors** 6:30pm

**Find Us  
On**



## CRUMP EXPRESSWAY

-a column from **The Reverend Steve J. Crump**

**Caption from a *Family Circus* cartoon**, big sister speaking to little brother: "The two places we know we're always welcome are church and Grandma's house." That's right. December is a homecoming month, with familiar faces and new arrivals. Our church is growing, thanks to the welcoming spirit that our congregation engenders. Grandma, Meemaw, and Nana would all be proud. Come light a candle with us in this season. Be sure to arrive in time for the Prelude on Christmas Eve.

**The Jesus Fatwah**, a 5-session seminar on Islam, will be offered in the new year. (no date set yet) The materials are ready. Muslim guests will be part of the interchange. What is the Jesus Fatwah? "Love thy *Muslim* neighbor as thyself."

**Ouches:** Evidence abounds for the coarsening of culture. Prejudice couched in thinly veiled and often blatant racist remarks in American public life is offensive and alarming. Some would dismiss it as mere political posturing, but I would argue the rhetoric, especially when it goes unchallenged, adds to the coarsening of our culture. But what about *inadvertent* offenses, the micro-aggressions that we hear that may not have been intended to do harm? What are we to do, for example, in a family holiday setting, or at church, when we, ourselves, are the source of or the recipient of micro-aggressions? If we are the *originators* of remarks, the first step is to listen for understanding, mindful of what students on several American campuses have said this fall, "Don't fake-listen." If we are the *recipients* of inadvertent offenses, naturally we need to speak up. Matthew 18:15 is a good, first step because it ensures an often missed step for one-on-one conversation: "If your brother offends you, go to your brother. If your brother listens, you have gained your brother." Our congregation is invested in understanding, forgiveness, reconciliation, and transformation. P. M. Forni in his book, *The Civility Solution: What to Do When People Are Rude*, offers additional guidance:

- 1—Don't personalize rude behavior;
- 2—Rude behavior comes from several sources i.e. illness, sleep-deprivation;
- 3—respond with calmness;
- 4—avoid "an eye-for-an-eye" approach;
- 5—avoid demeaning the other person;
- 6—try to address what underlies the problem;
- 7—set limits tactfully;
- 8—if irrationality continues, know when to quit or get assistance from someone to accompany you;
- 9—don't assume rudeness is a permanent part of someone's personality;
- 10—let empathy be your guide. (pp. 159-160, adapt.)

**Our Stewardship drive** for building the '16 budget is not complete. On publication date of this newsletter, we have not made our budget. Several pledges are out. See page 6 and return your pledge, or fill out the form posted online.

**Bylaws Update:** Members, copies of the Bylaw edits and recommendations will be emailed to members in early December, and will also be available during discussion sessions after each worship service on December 6 and 13. Make sure the office has your correct email address to ensure you get your copy. The Board plans to have the congregation vote on these bylaw changes on January 31, at the Congregational Meeting, during which we will also be approving a budget.

## Assistant Minister's Column

by **The Reverend Nathan A. Ryan**

Why dedicate your children.

A child dedication is set for Sunday, December 20, for both services. Call or send me an email to dedicate your child. We don't often articulate why to dedicate your children to the Unitarian Universalist church. Instead of a long narrative explaining all the reasons why, here is a quick list of what I got from being raised a Unitarian Universalist. Dedicating your children to the faith means ritualistically recognizing that they might have similar experiences.

**Because I was raised UU** I have a sense of peace with my religious upbringing.

**Because I was raised UU** I know that I was not born evil or in sin.

**Because I was raised UU** I don't worry about what will happen to me when I die.

**Because I was raised UU** I have only known one faith.

**Because I was raised UU** my parents worried that they had picked a religion for me and not given me the option to explore all faiths like they had done in their adulthood.

**Because I was raised UU** I have a career, a calling, and a family.

**Because I was raised UU** I know that the world is on a perpetual path of healing and reconciliation.

**Because I was raised UU** I struggled when I was a kid to tell other people what my religion was.

**Because I was raised UU** I constantly have to tell other adults that I never picked this religion, it was the religion picked for me.

**Because I was raised UU** I don't have the baggage that comes from unlearning bigotry disguised as religion.

**Because I was raised UU** I have friends all over the country.

**Because I was raised UU** I was encouraged to discover who I really was.

## Social Justice

**Bobby Thompson**, Director of Social Justice

The **shared offering** for December 24 will go to – Greater **Baton Rouge Food Bank** - - The food bank is a nonprofit organization which solicits, procures, inventories, and warehouses donated food and other products. This food is then distributed to a variety of community agencies such as pantries, meal sites, homes, shelters, and soup kitchens serving the people in need. 5546 Choctaw Drive Baton Rouge, LA 70805

## Meetings

December 6, 12:45pm: **Social Justice forum**, church office

December 8, 5pm: **AG&L Team**, church office

December 15, 6:30pm: **Church Board**, church office

## Religious Education News

The Reverend Beth Williams,  
Director of Religious Education

**Christmas Tree Decorating Party:** Sunday, December 6, 3 - 5 PM. Participants of all ages are invited to join us as we have a merry old time creating ornaments, singing Christmas carols, and making the tree look beautiful. Please bring a festive snack to share.



**Red Stick Pagan Kids** celebrate Yule Sabbat, Saturday, December 19, 10 am, Fellowship Hall.

Everyone is an actor in the **Impromptu Christmas Pageant** on December 20 during both services. Neither experience nor rehearsals are required. There will be music, love and laughter as the young and old of the congregation bring the Nativity story to life in this All Community Worship Service. Nursery care will be provided.



**Roots and Wings Program** – Beginning the first Sunday of January 2016 we will be offering Roots and Wings, an optional rite of passage program. This program is designed to engage Unitarian Universalist 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at the developmental stage often called the “age of reason.” Many of our children’s peers participate in ceremonial religious programs like First Communion at about this age. Our Unitarian Universalist children will benefit from this parallel but UU-nique experience of ritual, ceremony, and affirmation. All children who are in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and are registered in our Religious Education program for this year, are eligible for Roots and Wings.

The children in the Roots and Wings program will meet for four Sundays after church (January 3, 10, 17 and 24 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM) to learn about how Unitarian Universalism can directly relate to their own life experiences. They work partially on their own, in the group meetings, with parents, and with congregants and church staff. The program encourages involvement of members of the congregation, deepening cross-generational connections and relationships. It also will include the creation of a rainbow meditation bead necklace to foster the development of a spiritual practice of introspection and responsibility.

Roots and Wings will culminate with a formal rite of passage celebration ceremony during both worship services on Sunday, January 31, weaving together child, parents and congregation. This is a special time for these children, a time when they will be encouraged to dress up and invite family to honor their connection to a religious community. Join us as we welcome these children into our religious community, recognizing their ability to understand and engage with the big questions of our faith. At this time, may we honor our own strong roots and stretch our wings to fly.

## Music Updates

Leah Hartman, Music Program Director  
Trey Davis, Choral Director

The music department always looks forward to the holiday season because there is such great music! In December, we'll welcome a lot of wonderful guest artists, as well as musicians from our own congregation, as we celebrate Advent and Solstice.

On December 6, our choir will sing the carol *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*, arranged by UCBR member by **David Lindenfeld**. On December 13, we'll enjoy hearing a brass trio playing carols for the church services, and the choir will be joined by some percussionists for a fun and upbeat Nigerian carol.

Our Winter Solstice service will be held on December 22, and Daniel Leonard will return with his singing bowls to help us celebrate the shortest day of the year. Bring your drums along to the Solstice service, and join in our drumming circle afterward.

Christmas Eve will be another special service, with a string trio joining us again. The choir will sing Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria*, and the **HeartVoice Trio** will sing a piece from Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. And of course, there will be lots of carol-singing for everyone.

The New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus will sing in our sanctuary again this year for their annual holiday concert on December 19 at 7:30pm. Tickets can be purchased online for \$18 at [www.nogmc.com](http://www.nogmc.com), or for \$20 at the door.

Our resident composer **David Lindenfeld** will also have a piece performed by the Baton Rouge Symphony and Chorus, at the annual Home for the Holidays concerts. The *First Noel*, which has been performed twice at UCBR, will be on the program on December 4 at 7:30pm, and December 6 at 3pm. Tickets available at [www.brso.org/tickets](http://www.brso.org/tickets).



Becky Cureau, Communications Chair

The last week of November found members of the Great Expectations Steering Team reviewing the final plans for the Parking Lot and other exterior projects. After the final review we expect to be ready for bid solicitations before the end of the year. Bid Solicitations will be done by our architects, Reich Associates. The Team's expectation is that the early months of the new year will see the completion of all the needed steps prior to announcement of a start date for the beginning of the projects. We feel safe in predicting that by mid-2016 or possibly earlier we will celebrate completion of our new Parking Lot, raised Peace Stones and landscaped Peace Garden, and Courtyard with a sparkling fountain. The GES Team appreciates your patience and understanding as we undertook the steps needed to ensure that this first phase of the renovation projects meets the goals of our Great Expectations Campaign. We are humbled by your confidence in entrusting us with the task of planning this monumental undertaking.

## OUTREACH

Becky Cureau, Director of Outreach

Each year Unitarian Universalists throughout the country are invited to read, reflect, discuss, and act in response to a compelling book in a Common Read. Members of our church will participate this year. The book chosen for this year by a committee of diverse perspectives is *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, by Bryan Stevenson. Founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, Stevenson explores the ethical, moral, and spiritual questions surrounding incarceration, and the horrors faced by people on the margins of mainstream society when they come in contact with the systems built to respond to criminal or antisocial behavior. *Just Mercy* is available at the Book Table. Dates for discussion sessions will be announced in the January newsletter and week-end announcements.

Many thanks to individuals who donated to the luggage drive for women at the IRIS Domestic Violence Center. Your donations will be put to good use for storing personal items, and for transporting belongings when safe housing is found for relocation.

Please help fill the Food Cart with staple food items for Christmas meals with canned items like green beans, corn, green peas, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and pie fillings; and boxed and packaged items like pasta, rice, corn bread mixes, cookie and cake mixes, and similar items. Thanks as always for your generosity.

## Continuing Activities

*Everyone is welcome to attend & newcomers are encouraged.*

**Bible Skeptics:** Sunday, December 20, 5pm, church office. Reading: *Matthew 1-3, Mark 1, Luke 1-3 and John 1* (New Testament)

**Open Circle Book Club:** Sunday, December 6, 7pm. The book is *Glory* by Vladimir Nabokov

**Tai Chi:** Mondays, 6pm, Fellowship Hall

**Women's Book Club:** Monday, December 14, 7pm, R6. The book is *The Most They Ever Had* by Rick Bragg

**Humanist Film:** there will be no December film.

**Socrates Café:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday each month, 7pm, R6

**Church Board:** 3rd Tuesday each month, 6:30pm, church office.

**Gentle Movement Class:** No longer meets.

**Adult Choir:** Wednesdays, 6:30pm, choir room

**Recorders:** Wednesdays, 6:30pm, R3 (Advanced Group, 1st Wed.)

**Everyone's Non-Fiction Book Club:** Thursday, December 10th, 7pm, Room 6. The book is *A Vanished World* by Chris Lowney

**Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG):** 3rd Thursday, 7pm



## Roots

**Roots** is an introduction to Unitarian Universalism and our church led by one of our ministers. Our current class concludes on December 12. New 2016 Roots class dates to be announced at a later time.



## Branches

**Invitation to Branches:** Branches groups provide a way for participants to form deeper relationships and to explore life topics (e.g. love, loss, Christmas) - Intimacy and Ultimacy in a safe small group, with carefully chosen and trained leaders. Groups meet monthly for two hours, mostly in members' homes, and consist of 8 - 12 members. If you're a church member or Roots graduate, we have a place for you now.



Are you a young adult (aged 18-35ish) member or friend of UCBR? Whether you're brand new to the church or a familiar friend we hope you'll join our young adult group, **GenUU**, for an activity. Contact group leader **Christy Howard** at [christyhoward@gmail.com](mailto:christyhoward@gmail.com).



## LUNCH BUNCH

All times are 1pm, on Sundays after church services.  
Everyone is always welcome.

December 6: **Albasha**, 5454 Bluebonnet Blvd.  
[albashabr.com](http://albashabr.com)

December 13: **Kona Grill**, Perkins Rowe  
[konagrill.com](http://konagrill.com)

December 20: **Mestizo's**, 2323 S. Acadian  
[mestizorestaurant.com](http://mestizorestaurant.com)

December 27: **Smashburger**, 7474 Corporate Blvd.  
[smashburger.com](http://smashburger.com)

Our December circle Supper will be hosted by **Gloria Bockrath** and **Foye Lowe** on Saturday, December 12, at 6:30pm. Sign up at the Fun & Fellowship table or contact Sandy at [sandrahu401@gmail.com](mailto:sandrahu401@gmail.com) or Tara at [bayandtara@gmail.com](mailto:bayandtara@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending.

**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday evening, March 5, 6pm:** look around the house, the attic, the storage locker, for really nifty items that would bring a handsome price at our annual church auction.

***Whistleblowing Information Session, Sunday, December 6, after each service***

At the beginning of the Jindal administration one of our members, **Dan Collins**, blew the whistle on what he believed to be environmental violations within the Atchafalaya Basin. The Basin is the largest freshwater swamp in N. America covering over 1 million acres. After two delays, the trial originally filed in 2010 against the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, is finally set to be heard in Judge Wilson Field's courtroom in the 19th JDC in Baton Rouge during the week of December 7, 2015. If you're interested in hearing the facts, a brief 15-minute presentation will be given after each service on December 6, along with a personal invitation for those interested in attending the trial. Brought to you at the suggestion of the Social Justice Committee.

***JUJustice Express, Stewardship Drive***

Please clip your ticket (pledge card) and mail in, bring to church, or go online to complete your pledge for 2016.

Thank you for your generosity.

 <b>JUJustice Express</b>	People... <b>GET READY!</b>
THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF BATON ROUGE	
Name: <input type="text"/> Address: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<b>2015 Pledge:</b> <input type="text"/> In support of our church, I (we) commit to pledge: <input type="checkbox"/> 2015 Pledge <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 5% add on <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 10% tithe <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>
Origination: Where You Are Right Now    Destination: A Better World	
"Take pride in knowing that your gift to the church helps our congregation prosper and makes this a kinder, gentler world."	
All proceeds go to the Unitarian Church • Unlimited baggage • Unlimited coffee • Children's passage covered in price of ticket • Train departs promptly at 9:30 and 11:15 every Sunday morning.	

I/we will pay: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> monthly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> annually <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other	I/we will pay by: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bank withdrawal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Donation of stocks, mutual funds or other assets	<input type="text"/> Signature <input type="text"/> Signature
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