

## Justice

***A child born to a black mother in a state like Mississippi...has the same rights as a white baby born to the wealthiest person in the United States. It's not true, but I challenge anyone to say it is not a goal worth working for.***

— Thurgood Marshall

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**T**he problem with justice is not that it's blind, but that it's human. You could perhaps argue that justice as a concept has cosmic import—that there is some sort of cosmic justice that supersedes human intervention—but not convincingly. You could also argue that justice grows from the roots of conscience, roots that grow from that within us that touch the divine, but you couldn't prove (at least to me) that justice, the human arms of morality, is unfettered by human foibles.

Justice is what we do with what we think is right and wrong. Justice is the measure we give to morality and immorality. Justice is meted out by our courts and held in balance (we hope) by our laws. *Justice* is the name we give to our nation's top judges.

Thurgood Marshall was an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court from October 1967 to October 1991. Marshall was the court's 96th justice and its first African American. During his tenure, Marshall shared: "A child born to a black mother in a state like Mississippi...has the same rights as a white baby born to the wealthiest person in the United States. It's not true, but I challenge anyone to say it is not a goal worth working for."

Marshall knew that justice is *human* justice, and for that reason is always imperfect—but that better justice is a goal worth working for. This dilemma is illustrated by the history of our very own Constitution, which begins: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a

more perfect Union, establish Justice..." This great human document—a call to do good—also admitted in 1787 the three fifths clause under Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph 3: "Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons." All those "other persons" were Black slaves.

When we hear voices rise today saying that justice was not done in the trial of Ex-officer Wilson or of Officer Pantaleo, we do well to recognize the human fallibility that infuses all our attempts to describe, establish, and mete out justice. If our Constitution preserved a clause that stripped human beings of their full humanity for nearly one hundred years, what lives still, in these days—in our laws, in our institutions, in the cultural systems that are so ingrained we don't even know they exist—that

quietly but insidiously subverts justice? The three fifths clause was a political compromise. How else has justice been compromised?

Part of the religious journey is a recognition of human imperfection. May that lead us not to accept all the ills done in our name, but to right the wrongs that we can, wherever we find them, however hard it is.

### MINISTER'S MESSAGE

#### *Human Justice*



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### *News for a New Year*



*Paul Roche,  
Board President*

#### NEW INTERN

I am pleased to announce that UUCS has entered into an agreement to once again become a teaching congregation. Beginning in September 2015, John Monroe will join us as a half-time intern for a period of two years. This is a great opportunity for us to help a soon-to-be new minister engage in all facets of the life of a congregation.

John has the added bonus of being under the tutelage of Rev. Anya, from whom he will learn a lot.

#### SABBATICAL

As you probably know by now, Rev. Anya is taking a much-needed break in the form of a sabbatical in January, April, May, and June. The ability to go off and recharge is a great gift we give our UU ministers, and I'm sure you will agree that Rev. Anya deserves it. For those of us who were here when Rev. Anya joined us, it seems like only yesterday, but it has been almost eight years! The Sabbatical Committee has done a splendid job in lining up excellent ministers from around the Beltway to preach to us while Rev. Anya is away. This is an exciting opportunity for us to hear from these different voices. You can read more about the sabbatical in last month's newsletter and on a bulletin board outside Rev. Anya's office.

### January Justice Allocation

#### Loudoun Volunteer Caregivers

*In January, half of our offerings will go to Loudoun Volunteer Caregivers. Working closely with local faith communities and government agencies, Loudoun Volunteer Caregivers is a nonprofit organization of volunteers who help frail, elderly, and disabled adults maintain independent living. Caregivers provides a wide range of support services, including transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, errands, household chores, special outings, and help with managing personal financial affairs. More information can be found at [www.lvcaregivers.org](http://www.lvcaregivers.org).*

#### TWO SERVICES

The transition to two worship services is coming! Beginning in September 2015, the church will move to two services. As I'm sure you've noticed, we have been experiencing a surge of growth and we must make room for even more searchers to discover that "There really is a religion for me!" More information about this exciting opportunity may be found on the website.

#### 2015 PLEDGE DRIVE

To support two services and continue to expand our presence in Loudoun County and beyond will take money—your money. I've found there is no use couching it in other terms; the church needs a lot of money to operate. We pay for salaries, rent, Religious Education expenses, administrative support, the music program, etc. We receive *no* money from outside sources: we survive on the generosity of all of us. Please support this year's pledge drive, which begins in earnest March. It is up to us.

#### NEW BUILDING?

Finally, in what could be the beginning of a very big adventure, we have contacted the UUA consultant who helps congregations get ready to buy or build a church building. We have an informal goal of moving into our own building in January 2018! You will hear and be involved a lot more than this, but I wanted to give a heads-up that the adventure is coming our way.

### SERVING OUR NEIGHBORS

#### *By the UUCS High School Youth Group*

*The youth are sponsoring a collection for LINK, a local non-profit providing emergency food to people in need in the Herndon, Sterling, and Ashburn communities. The project idea came from us, the UUCS youth. Starting in January, we will set out two large "Look At Me" boxes. One box will be for food and each month a focus will be placed on particular items. The other box will be for personal hygiene items. We have worked very hard on this project and all contributions will be greatly appreciated.*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Acting on Our Commitment to Justice



Linda Weaver,  
Director of Religious  
Education

*We are building the world we dream about, where all souls thrive in a diverse and loving community, acting daily on our commitment to justice.*

—UUCS Vision Statement

Children and teens at UUCS have done amazing work on social justice projects in the last four months.

Several teens were servers at a Community Table of Loudoun dinner in the fall, and children packed lunch bags for people to take home after the dinner. One family went even further by helping make sandwiches to add to all of the bags.

At the end of November, our children made play dough and kitted crafts for more than 120 children who had family portraits taken during the Help Portrait Day that the congregation hosted for INMED Partnership for Children. At the Help Portrait Day event, two teens helped the children create reindeer and flower pins from kits and another teen documented the day in video.



Photo: David Hearne

In December, the children's religious education program hosted a snack food drive and children and teens packed food for 100 children served by LCPS Backpack Coalition. The congregation donated so much snack food that two snacks were included in every bag and approximately 100

additional children enrolled in the Backpack Coalition program received snacks.



Also during December, the high school youth hosted the mitten tree and a food drive for homeless and precariously housed teens served by Mobile Hope. The generosity of the youth group and the congregation led to the donation of many gloves, scarves, hats, and protein-rich foods.

Beginning this month, the high school youth group is hosting monthly food drives for LINK, Inc., which provides emergency food to people in need in Herndon, Sterling, and Ashburn. Watch for more information about how you can contribute. The children's RE program is supporting Loudoun Cares by collecting quarters to make it easier for a few families to do their laundry. You may bring quarters to add to the RE collection or bring pennies for children to "magically" turn into quarters on January 18.

*Children's Religious Education topics and a list of programs and events for children and families is on the calendar at the UUCS website, [www.uusterling.org](http://www.uusterling.org).*

### Parent Circle

Want to connect with other parents and caregivers at UUCS? Wonder how to apply your UU values to parenting? Experience challenges interacting positively with family, friends or neighbors because of religious differences? Wish you could balance time and money in a way that makes more space for the things that are important to you? You are not alone. Gather with other parents and guardians to explore these issues or others the group identifies. Sessions will be facilitated by Director of Religious Education Linda Weaver, Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael, and guests invited to address the topics. The Parent Circle will meet after worship service (11:45 am–1:00 pm) on January 25, February 15, March 22, and April 19. Childcare will be available.

## A MONTH OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

### Justice

Members of our congregation are invited to engage the practice of *lectio divina*. *Lectio divina* is Latin for divine reading, spiritual reading, or holy reading, and represents a traditional practice of scriptural reading intended to promote communion with that which is ultimately meaningful. It is a way of praying or meditating with sacred words that calls one to study, ponder, listen and, finally, rejoice within the soul. Unitarian Universalists embrace a wide-reaching definition of scripture, finding words of profound meaning in the works of the world religions, scientists, poets, and the experiences of our own lives.

Find the time in your day to read each piece every day. Read, pause, read again, pause, and then reflect. You may choose to write each quote in a journal and add notes from your reflections. You may choose to read each piece to your family at the dinner table. You may choose to read in the morning or before sleep. You may choose to use the piece to gather your spirit for prayer or meditation.

### Want to share something in the February newsletter?

- ✓ Reflections or articles related to the December liturgical theme, *Love*
- ✓ Announcements (including those related to events that will take place in February and the first two weeks of March)
- ✓ Group or committee updates (what you accomplished, what's planned for next month, etc.)
- ✓ Recent photos taken at UUCS or during UUCS events.

Please send anything you'd like to include to [newsletter@uusterling.org](mailto:newsletter@uusterling.org) by January 15.

#### January 1–7

*This is the duty of our generation as we enter the twenty-first century—solidarity with the weak, the persecuted, the lonely, the sick, and those in despair. It is expressed by the desire to give a noble and humanizing meaning to a community in which all members will define themselves not by their own identity but by that of others.*

—Elie Wiesel

#### January 8–14

*As my sufferings mounted I soon realized that there were two ways in which I could respond to my situation—either to react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course.*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

#### January 15–21

*Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.*

—Cornel West

#### January 22–28

##### “Chopsticks” by Patti Christensen

*18 three- and four-year olds  
practiced with chopsticks today.  
Poking, prodding, puzzling  
over the mysterious sticks  
used by a billion people  
yet new to these little ones.  
Can we build a bridge across the gulfs  
that divide us  
with picture books and chopsticks and  
snacks with strange names, but taste good?  
I cannot negotiate for peace among nations  
or put a stop to war  
but I can offer children  
the chance to know  
there are oh so many ways to live  
and speak and love  
and eat.  
Chopsticks for peace.*

#### January 29–30

*Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the right. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice. Things refuse to be mismanaged long.*

—Theodore Parker, Unitarian minister

## SACRED STORY FOR ALL AGES

### *“The Boat” From the teachings of Rabbi Schimon bar Yochai*



A group of people were traveling in a boat. One of them took a drill and began to drill a hole beneath himself. His companions said to him: “Why are you doing this?”

The man replied: “What concern is it of yours? Am I not drilling under my own place?”

They said to him: “But you will flood the boat for us all!”

### *Questions for Discussion*

What does this story mean to you?

What responsibility do you feel you have to do no harm to other people?

When have you struggled with knowing how your actions affected others?

What responsibility do you feel you have to help other people?

When have you struggled with deciding between what you wanted and what would be more safe, fair, or kind to others?

What would you and your family like to do to make your family, neighborhood, school, church, country, or world a place that is safer, fairer, or kinder? Talk about this together and identify one simple goal or step that can be accomplished in a month. It might be as simple as challenging each person to say something nice to at least one person each day. Discuss how it is going at the end of each day or at a special meal each week and then share your experience with Linda Weaver, the Director of Religious Education.

## GENERAL NEWS

### *Building an All-Ages Community*



Attending a multigenerational event is a great way to get to know more people and build community for yourself or your family. UUCS held two hugely successful all-ages events so far this year. More than 50 people attended a Game Night in October. They enjoyed de-

licious food in addition to games and conversation. Nearly 60 people attended the Holiday Decorating and Ornament and Gift Making Party in December. Children and adults shared a potluck meal, made crafts, and left us with a beautifully festive sanctuary.



Watch for future events and

don't miss an opportunity to make new friends in a fun and relaxed environment. If you would like to suggest an additional multigenerational event or if you would like to help with future events, contact a member of the Lifespan Religious Education Council or Director of Religious Education Linda Weaver.

### **Upcoming Multigenerational Events:**

Friday, January 16, 6:00 pm – Potluck and Game Night

Friday, February 6, 6:00 pm – Potluck and Craft Night with the High School Youth. A family friendly movie will also be available that night.

Friday, April 3, 6–9:00 pm – Potluck and Folk Dance

Friday, May 1, 6–9:00 pm – May Day and Mystery Pals Celebration

## CALENDAR

### Stay Up to Date With UUCS Events

J A N U A R Y	////////////////////////////////////
<p><b>Sunday, 1/4</b></p>	<p><b>10:30 am — Worship Service: “Choose to Bless the World—Your Gifts: Mind, Hands, and Heart”</b>            Rev. Rebekah Montgomery will offer the first sermon in a four-part series about recognizing and harnessing our spiritual and relational gifts. The series will run the first Sundays of the months during Rev. Anya’s sabbatical. Jim and Ashley Cash of Woven Green will bring a beautiful blend of voice and guitar to add musical warmth to the service.</p> <p><b>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</b>            All newcomers are welcome.</p>
<p><b>Sunday, 1/11</b></p>	<p><b>10:30 am — Worship Service: “Do I Have to Forgive? (And How Do I Even Start)?”</b>            Rev. Megan Foley will examine the difference that forgiving another might make in your life. The UUCS Choir will sing.</p>
<p><b>Friday, 1/16</b></p>	<p><b>6:00 pm — Potluck and Game Night</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 1/18</b></p>	<p><b>10:30 am — Worship Service</b>            Dr. Wendi Manuel-Scott will lead a service reflecting on Martin Luther King, Jr., with participation from the UUCS Journey Towards Wholeness team. The UUCS Band jUUSStUUS will add musical energy to the service. A representative of Loudon Cares will speak during the Time for All Ages.</p>
<p><b>Wednesday, 1/21</b></p>	<p><b>6:45 pm — Evening Worship Service: “Hope”</b>            Our monthly evening worship service where we will seek rest and find beloved community.</p>
<p><b>Sunday, 1/25</b></p>	<p><b>10:30 am — Worship Service: “I’m a Believer”</b>            Rev. Amanda Poppei will ask the question, “Are UUs nonbelievers?” and argue that Humanists do have faith. The UUCS Choir will sing.</p> <p><b>11:45 am – 1:00 pm — Parent Circle</b>            See article on page 3.</p>
F E B R U A R Y	////////////////////////////////////
<p><b>Sunday, 2/1</b></p>	<p><b>10:30 am — Worship Service</b></p> <p><b>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</b>            All newcomers are welcome.</p>
<p><b>Friday, 2/6</b></p>	<p><b>6:00 pm — Potluck and Craft Night</b>            With the high school youth. A family-friendly movie will also be shown. All ages are welcome.</p>