

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF LONGVIEW



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UUFL Weekly Newsletter

Sunday, August 30, 10:45 AM

Program: "Let's Teach Religion"

(A Recorded Program)



Daniel Clement Dennett III (born March 28, 1942) is an American philosopher, writer, and cognitive scientist whose research centers on the philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, and biology, particularly as those fields relate to evolutionary biology and cognitive science.



Sherry will lead this program, a policy proposal that religion should be taught in all schools, that all children's education should include facts, history, and creeds of *all* religions of the world. This, he says, would be in keeping with our belief in informed consent, informing all children about their choices in religious matters. He would include the history, creeds, music, symbols, and requirements of all religions. He bases this talk on his book, *Breaking the Spell*, and he reminds us that informed consent is the bedrock of democracy.

Zoom Sunday Service Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8780546386?pwd=dIFMVHnrSDcwS1N0TE5aazlUWnVadz09>

Carol's Words of Wisdom Collection:

I have confidence that the Unitarian Church will steadily grow and help sustain many of my fellow citizens in these important days that lie ahead of us. *Leverett Saltonstall*



I personally have always found the Unitarian faith a source of comfort and help in my daily life.

Leverett Saltonstall was a republican governor of Massachusetts and US Senator for twenty years.

UUFL Financial Support:

Those of you who wish to contribute financially can mail your contributions to:

UUFL P O Box 3451 Longview, TX 75606. If you would like to contribute electronically, contact Tammy.

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Our Favorite Story Teller (The Universalist Bell Rings Out)



Glory be! I just googled a quote my mother used to use, "And the Universalist bell rings out, 'There is no Hell.'" And I found Universalist Quotations! What a read! And what a marvelous way to start what seems to be the umpteenth day of the COVID 19 pandemic. I can't recommend these quotations strongly enough. The site is titled Unitarian Quotations. It's the richest trove of hope and happiness I can imagine, placed by the Unitarian Universalist Association, us.

Sometimes I forget what a wonderful tradition I'm a part of. I suppose most of the time, I just sort of float along in this beautiful tradition of love and hope, taking it for granted.

When I heard my mother quote the Universalist bell line, I was a little girl. Still, I was sixteen years old when I met the Unitarians, back before they officially joined the Universalists to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. My high school friend Laurie Kruger invited me to go with her and her family to a potluck supper at the Unitarian Fellowship. Mother and Daddy gave their permission, and I went with the Kruger family to meet the local Unitarians. They met in a house on the campus of Centenary College, a small group with, as I remember, no other young people than Laurie herself. It was a life-changing evening. In all my Methodist life, my sixteen years on the planet, I'd never been in such a group. There was a harmony about them, and kindness, that I couldn't then describe and can't now. Their conversation was easy and free, and on a different plane somehow than what I was accustomed to in our Methodist church. They talked about ideas as quickly and familiarly as other people talk about people. I loved being with them, and I would happily have stayed in their midst much longer than that one evening.

I don't remember the Krugers ever inviting me to go to church with them again. Perhaps the next courtesy would have been for my family to invite Laurie to come with us to a Methodist function. As Laurie and I were only casual friends, and as I was never the most socially graceful person, I let the opportunity dwindle away. I didn't go to a Unitarian-Universalist church again until I was in my late twenties. But I'll never forget the homecoming feeling of meeting the Unitarians for the first time that evening when I was sixteen years old. It was the same sort of feeling I had when I first met the people of the Unitarian Fellowship of Longview, a homecoming feeling.

Fortunately, by the time I met the Unitarian-Universalists of Longview, I had been a grown-up and a Unitarian Universalist for a long time, and I knew to keep going back. It warms my heart to be one of the people who know that "There is no Hell."

This is a very long intro to the thought I woke up with this morning. Last week, I heard and read that 41% of Americans in a poll by Pew Research Center declared themselves to be people who believe that we are now in the End Times. In my formative Methodist years, we simply ignored the Books of Ezekiel and Daniel and the Book of Revelation. I'm told this is where people get their information on such things as the End of the World. My mother's view of Revelation was that the people who met centuries ago to decide what writings

would comprise the Holy Bible had made a mistake in including that book. I believe many Unitarians and Universalists take a view similar to my mother's. Still, you'll probably enjoy the Unitarian Universalist Reverend Meg Barnhouse's sermon, "The Rapture in America," which you can find through Google.

Meanwhile, my recollections of chatting with the good folks who bring their religious messages door-to-door include many references to the End of Days. Sometimes these missionaries have even told me when the End will come. I particularly remember two earnest folks assuring me in 1975 that the End would come on January 1 of 1976, so I'd better hurry up and get right with the Lord. I thanked them for their concern, and as I always do, I told them that I'm a Unitarian Universalist. This ended our conversation. It's a sort of curse, apparently, to throw Unitarian Universalism into a discussion with those who believe themselves to be God's anointed messengers.

My concern is about learning that 41% of us living in the United States believe that the End is Near. Researchers now say that these True Believers also believe that our current President is an Instrument of the Lord, helping to bring about the longed-for End of Time. This makes him, in their minds, the guy to vote for. Heaven, help us! The research report that I found online gave a breakdown of what percent of people of different faith traditions take this end-of-the-world view, and it's scary.

My grandmother recalled when she was a girl of sixteen, 121 years ago, if my arithmetic is correct when some of the good folks out on the Great Plains where she lived believed that the End was at hand. They sold their belongings, wrapped themselves in sheets, and climbed up on their roofs to await the Rapture. They had been tipped off, you see, as to the particular day when this was to occur, and they were ready. Others of the townspeople gathered below to gaze on this spectacle. They watched at nightfall as the devout climbed back down to resume their ordinary humdrum lives. And, I suppose, to put their regular clothes back on and begin negotiating to buy back their worldly goods. My grandmother was sixteen years old a very long time ago, whether or not my arithmetic is correct. I would have thought that by now we'd all have realized that the world may very well end someday, or the humans may just fizzle ourselves out, but being Raptured up into Heaven is a highly unlikely event any time soon.

My Republican daughter keeps me reminded that our current President of the United States is revered by many Americans. Much of what I consider to be humor is forbidden in our weekly phone visits – imagine talking with one of the people you love most in the world and not being able to share a political joke that you've been savoring and sharing for days! So I suppose I shouldn't be surprised that 41% of Americans polled by the Pew Researchers believe that the world will end soon. Our President will lead the way into Heaven. But I am. Surprised. And dismayed. And more than a little bit afraid, not of the Rapture but of the General Election outcome in November.

Jay Noble, one of the dear people who welcomed Jerry and me to the UU Fellowship of Longview, made it a practice before elections to be a telephone volunteer for the Democratic Party. I think today is the day that I must volunteer to do that same work. It would be fun to watch the townspeople climb down from their roofs

again, but it won't be fun if they succeed in re-electing the United States' current President. "The Universalist bell rings out. There is no Hell." Still, it's our responsibility right here and now to do what we can to keep this life on this earth as safe as we can make it, and as happy as we can make it for all its inhabitants. We are the ones who must do the work toward a day when all people have safe homes and enough to eat, and we finally end our near-constant wars.

Blessings on us all, the inhabitants of whatever beliefs on this small and vulnerable planet.

Sherry K.

UU humor:

Now I'll tell you a real story that happened in our Sunday school. The Kindergarten class was discussing "prayer", and the children seemed aware that the way you end a prayer was with "amen." Does anyone know what "amen" means, the teacher asked? There was a long silence. Then one little boy piped up, with appropriate, computer-age gestures, and said, "Well, I think it means, like, "send"

(from the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque, New Mexico)