



UUFL Weekly Newsletter

Sunday, October 18, 10:45 AM

Program: " *Theology for a Pandemic* "



Ruth Semrau will be our speaker and worship leader; she will share how we can approach life as it must be lived now in light of our religious ethics.

Come and join us via Zoom, and, if you desire to do so, share your insights on this topic.

Zoom Sunday Service Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8780546386?pwd=dIFMVHNrSDcwS1N0TE5aazlUWnVadz09>

Carol's Words of Wisdom Collection:



"If life were predictable, it would cease to be life and be without flavor." - Eleanor Roosevelt

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." - Abraham Lincoln.

"Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood." - Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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.

1021der@gmail.com

Information Request:

Barbara McDaniel is requesting that anyone who has information concerning the Fellowship's Instagram Account to please contact her at barbaramcd@hotmail.com

Our Favorite Story Teller: (Do You Hear The People Sing?)



Wow! We've just completed our Sunday service, our miraculous Zoom-enabled gathering, and we finished a really good service with the wonderful song from *Les Miserables*, "Do You Hear the People Sing?" Because I had insider information, I knew what Carol had chosen, and I brought my *Les Mis* book to the computer so that I could sing along. The mute button can make brave singers of us all. "The blood of the martyrs will water the meadows of France!" What a glorious anthem to fairness – "Join in the fight that will give you the right to be free!"

And there's so much we need to be free from, so much that needs fixing. Growing up in my pale Northern European skin let me live a long time before I had to realize that the privileges I take for granted are not shared with all people in my community, in my beloved state, or in my country. When I was young, I taught school, and I thought that was an adequate education on poverty and its randomness across our country, but there's always more to learn. Nursing at VA was educational too. And then, when I was in my sixties and taking classes to become a counselor, I said one evening in a group of students that even though I had rarely been what we call well-to-do, I had never been poor enough to go to bed hungry. My teacher drew back, and his dark eyes widened, and he said, "When I was a child, I almost always went to bed hungry. It was just part of our lives." My African American teacher had much to teach me, and I think that was the most profound of his lessons for this aging white woman.

Much more recently, I read an interview with Shreveport's Mayor Adrian Perkins, who is now running for the United States Senate. I send him blessings and my wishes for much success! He talked about growing up with his hard-working single mother and eating "Wish sandwiches" for supper. "You know, when you wish there was some meat on that piece of bread," he explained. Once again, I was being told that being a Black child here in Louisiana can be a very hard thing, much harder than being the white child I had been.

My thinking is that no one should be hungry in the wealthiest nation on the planet. No child should have to count on breakfast and lunch only when school is in session and their school cafeteria takes part in the Federal School Lunch Program.

"Will you give all you can give so that our banner may advance? Some will fall, and some will live. Will you stand up and take your chance?" That's the call answered by those who have marched under the Black Lives Matter banners. And right here, in the United States of America in the year 2020, some have fallen, many have been tear-gassed, too many have been shot with rubber bullets, too many have lost eyes to those 'non-lethal' bullets. We've all watched the nine-minute tape of a man dying because a policeman has his knee on that man's neck while he says, "I can't breathe." We know that if I hand a store clerk a twenty-dollar bill that looks suspicious, this won't happen to me. I'll be asked about the bill, and I'll be allowed to replace it with the ten and two fives in my wallet or to give back the merchandise, and that twenty may be held for investigation. No handcuffs, no knees on necks. No disrespect, and certainly no death on the pavement. Or elsewhere. We watched as a man in his seventies was knocked to the sidewalk by a pseudo-military bully. What courage the demonstrators have shown, and what suffering many of them have endured, all to say something that should be self-evident, that Black Lives Matter. They're saying that no one should have their door breached by policemen with a battering ram, and no one should be shot dead because her partner fired a single shot at the people who had used that battering ram to burst into their home. How preposterous to have to argue over whether Black Lives Matter! Every life matters and our debt to our Black brothers and sisters will probably never be fully paid, but we can certainly begin by valuing their lives! "Do you hear the people sing, singing the song of angry men? It is the music of a people who will not be slaves again! When the beating of your heart echoes the beating of the drums, there is a life about to start when tomorrow comes."

The tragedy is that tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow come, and still there are hungry people, still, there is injustice, and still, there is complacency on the part of those of us who go to bed with full bellies. I have

no answers. All of the ancestors I'm aware of came to America because home for them had become dangerous. Some came from Scotland when Bonnie Prince Charlie had been defeated, and life was made awful for his followers. The most recent came from Denmark when Chancellor Bismarck had conquered their homeland and was conscripting Danish young men for his army, with no end to their time of service in the German army but death. They came to this country with white skin, some of them already speaking English, and others able to learn it quickly, as English and Danish have some of the same roots. None of them came in chains, and none of them were enslaved. None of them got sold upon arrival. Some of them even arrived with money in their pockets.

We owe a debt that can never be paid to those whose arrival was of the chained, starved, beaten, and sold-into-slavery variety. We can't go back in time and fix things for the slaves, but we can honor their descendants, we can cherish them, we can make sure no one is hungry, no one is beaten or shot, no one imprisoned when a pale-skinned person would not be. We can do this, but it will take the will to do it. Perhaps the current Black Lives Matter movement is a beginning. Perhaps taking a knee when the National Anthem is played is a beginning. Perhaps running for the school board is a beginning.

"Do we hear the people sing, singing the song of angry men? It is the music of a people who must not be slaves again." Let it be part of the music for people who must be honored, a status beyond just acceptance. A people who must be respected, employed, elected, cherished, and cared for. And while we're making this prayer, let us pray to be the people who begin to make it so.

Song lyrics herein are credited as

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From the Musical *Les Miserables*

Sherry K.

UU humor:

A Parody of Rudyard Kipling's poem "IF."

If

If you can keep your cool and coexist,
When others want to argue, fight, and shout;
If you can handle humanist and theist,
Balancing your own belief and doubt;
If you can listen both to blame and praise,
And treat those two impostors both the same;
And read church bylaws with steady gaze;
And work for the common good and not just fame;
If you don't break, but like the Tao, you bend,
You'll be a UU [minister] [lay leader], my friend!

By Dan Harper

2020 Election:

Gregg and surrounding counties are looking for election poll workers for the November general election. This could be a way for you to contribute some time and energy.