



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

Happy Holidays!

When you are out shopping in December, the songs that fill the air will strike each one differently. Some you love while others are not for you. I don't like "The Little Drummer Boy." But I am fine with old carols such as "Silent Night" or "O Little Town of Bethlehem." I don't much care for the Santa, reindeer, or snowman songs, but I like the sentimental "White Christmas" or "I'll Be Home for Christmas." I like "Mele Kalikimaka," though you're less likely to hear it because Mariah Carey has to sing "All I Want for Christmas Is You" again. Not my thing. I'm sure you have your own favorites and ones you could live happily without hearing again. Indeed, your likes and dislikes might be the exact opposites of mine. Let's celebrate that.

That difference of pleasure and of opinion is normal in December, a time of year when one subset of our Christian siblings like to pretend they are persecuted and not able to practice their faith or their culture openly – even though 70.6% of the people in this country identify as Christian. Meanwhile, I wish we had more songs like Tim Minchin's delightfully sentimental "White Wine in the Sun," a song about a secular summertime Christmas in the Land Down Under. It depicts exactly the kind of warmth of togetherness that many Americans hope for, even if their personal preference is for a bit more baby Jesus.

We look around us and quickly notice that visible diversities are flourishing all around us – even in parts of the country which used to be culturally and sometimes racially rather monochrome. According to the Pew Research Center, 5.9% of the people of the United States

belong to a religion other than Christianity. And 22.8% are religiously unaffiliated. The "Nones." A broad category that includes people who, without organizational religious identity, would say they are atheists or agnostics. But, according to Pew, the largest portion of the Nones say their religion-related position is "nothing in particular."

This month, the short list of other-than-Christian holidays includes Bodhi Day, Chanukah, Yule, Kwanzaa, Zarathosht Diso, and New Year's Eve. Perhaps you or those you love celebrate holidays that, while Christian, are less familiar in this area because they originate in specific national or ethnic cultures. Or maybe, inspired by Seinfeld, you observe Festivus. "The reason for the season" is multiple. And so, with other religious and cultural liberals and progressives, I like the phrasing Happy Holidays as the general greeting but am happy to greet individuals with a greeting for their own holidays. This general greeting does not lessen our love of the diversity subsumed in it.

Beginning on the evening of December 7, I will light the Chanukah lights for eight nights and fry up some latkes and maybe some sufganiyot (a kind of jelly donut). But I am not alone in my family. Most of my family celebrate Christmas. And I will help them celebrate, as well. And yes, I plan on boiling a plum pudding in the style of my mother's people. Dad's people hate plum pudding as much as I dislike "The Little Drummer Boy." And that's okay too. But I love plum pudding. Let each one celebrate the days and traditions that are meaningful. And let us celebrate our great freedom to do so without interference. Let's spread love.

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul