



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

Resolutions

Maybe you think it's too late to be writing about New Year's resolutions. It's already January 4 as I sit at my computer in my home office writing this column. So if my resolution were to write my column on time each month, I would already have shot the year in resolutions. But I learned a lesson in the year-and-a-half I lived in Japan that timeliness is for trains and appointments, not for self-improvement. It was customary there at the stroke of midnight as the new year began for people to go to a Shinto shrine to say their first prayers of the year, but the shrines were crowded not just that midnight but for the first five days of the new year. Hope for the new year was not on a strict schedule.

But here in America, there is something of a custom of making resolutions while having little doubt that the calendar is eventually going to beat us at the game. Often within a similar timeframe as the five days of first prayers in Japan. There's a *Calvin and Hobbes* comic in which the precocious Calvin declares to his stuffed tiger Hobbes that his New Year's resolution is "to just wing it and see what happens." He's sticking to his strengths, he explains, and so plans to beat the odds of failing the resolution game.

Most years I don't make any New Year's resolutions at all. It doesn't even occur to me to do so – it's a relic of an actively anti-superstition, anti-ritual, anti-tradition tradition

of my upbringing. My parents scoffed at resolutions. But this year, I had just failed to make my plum pudding in time for Christmas Day, and then, our beautiful Christmas Eve morning service and a long nap behind me, I made my pudding on Christmas Day to have ready to eat on Boxing Day. So I went against my norm and made a resolution for 2024: I resolved to make my plum pudding this year before December 25. That way, I figured, partly tongue in cheek, even if I failed to keep my resolution, at least I would make it most of the way through the year before I failed.

One of the advantages of being in a tradition that is not built on a doctrine of Original Sin is our Unitarian Universalist confidence that when we fail to do what we had honestly intended to, there is no guilt involved in simply resolving to try again, to try better. For Unitarian Universalists, failure is an opportunity to hit reset rather than occasion to be stuck in a negative and unhelpful pattern, worrying about judgment. This is not a pattern unique to our faith, of course, but it is central to our values that we need not be burdened by what we don't do well. We can always resolve to do better, regardless of where we are on the calendar.

And so, my real resolution is one I hope to hold to for more than the calendar year: I resolve to not wait to the end of the year to hit reset when I haven't done what I needed to do or have not done it as well as I had wished. We don't get better when we make mistakes

without setting about doing better. But we don't have to successfully avoid mistakes to be in the process of becoming the people we believe we ought to be.

Let this year be a year of mistakes that don't discourage but encourage us to do better.

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul

New Member Spotlight



Judi Lazenby moved to Waynesboro in October to be near her older brother and our member, Walter Lazenby, in his final days. She came from California, where she had

lived for many years. Judi has been a widow for 31 years. She and her husband went to law school together and practiced law as partners in their own small firm in Sunnyvale, CA. After his death, she continued to practice law until 2006.

In retirement, Judi concentrated on public service. She devoted two decades to California's unique Civil Grand Jury system as a juror and a trainer of newly selected grand jurors. For the last decade Judi has served her community and Santa Cruz County as a commissioner on the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission.

In addition to Walter, Judi has a twin sister in Upstate New York and a nephew, Eric, who lives in Durham, NC. He has visited the Fellowship with Judi several times.

Judi did not have a religious affiliation prior to moving to Waynesboro. She believed that organized religion was not required for a full life, but she has come to see the value of being part of a spiritual community. Judi enjoys reading and decorating her new home while she becomes more familiar with Waynesboro and its environs.

Annual New Year's Day Walk



Eighteen stouthearted UUs showed up on Monday for our annual New Year's Day walk through Mennonite farm country near Dayton. The three-mile walk was followed by toasts to the new year, plus chili, cornbread and a warm fire on Florence's patio in Bridgewater.

Another New Year

What to expect from the new year I cannot say.

Much will depend on what last year brought our way.

That we must use it wisely is not debatable – Time is precious because it's biodegradable.

Joe Good

