



# The Ebenezer Star

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

**Jan-March 2020**



## Whatever Tomorrow Brings

**Rev. Chris Rothbauer**

If I'm honest, the new year seems like such an arbitrary time to recognize. After all, it's essentially only significant because some folks decided hundreds of years ago that January 1 would be the start of the year rather than, say, February 1 or June 1 or December 21 for that matter. I'm certainly oversimplifying the matter, but my point is that life continues on through that arbitrary changing of the calendar year pretty much as it did the previous year.

But humans are a species who love ritual, and the new year provides a convenient and relevant opportunity to take stock of our lives and the previous year. Often, people make resolutions this time of year to eat healthier or exercise or get their financial lives under control, among other worthy goals. It was one year around New Years that I decided to go back to college, and I have heard other people expressing how setting their intentions and deciding what to leave behind in the previous year was a power opportunity for determining what their live would be like the coming year.

Of course, none of us knows exactly what the coming months would bring. If I had told you last December that 2020 would bring a pandemic that would virtually shut down the economy and make it difficult to even get the necessities of life without risk, you may have thought I was getting into conspiracy theories. Yet, here we are, and it's been a rough year indeed. I, for one, am probably not going to look back on 2020 as one of the favorite years of my life when it's all said and done.

It's a lesson that, no matter how much we set our intentions, we have to be flexible in life because we're not always in control. As a child, my minister used to tell us to, "Let go and let God," and as cringeworthy as that saying may be even to the theists among us, there's something that can be learned from the essence of it: that the universe is very often not under our control and we will be disappointed if we cling too hard to a vision of what we want to happen.

The amazing thing about the last year is it's shown how, when we're flexible in our decisions, something amazing can still be built in imperfect circumstances. I've watched our community show up for Black Lives Matter, create covenant groups to keep us all connected, come together for members and friends in need, attend second hour and Sunday services, and help us have a very successful auction, and all of this in a year that none of us expected to be as difficult as it was.

All of this is to say that I have no idea what 2021 will bring. In fact, it's probably going to start off seeming like much of 2020. But I have witnessed how our fellowship comes together when we need to so I have no doubt that, whatever is ahead for us, we will traverse it together because we have an abundance of connections that keep us going, and that is a strength that we can be proud of.

## **Pine Needles**

Early on a morning walk  
On a cool Fall day  
when the pines touch  
As they reach a clouded grey sky,  
Lie fallen pine needles, beneath,  
Having stabbed the earth's crust,  
Driving their points home,  
Stitching firm ground to tomorrow,  
Tightly binding everyday steps  
One onto another,  
Moving as we weave  
One thought to another,  
The enlightened mind,

Aware.

## The three large trees in the AUUF playground are finally down!

One of the trees was dead and multiple people shared their concerns for the broken limbs from storms and potential damages to the RE building as well as adjacent property. In September, AUUF hired a professional company to cut the trees under the supervision of Kirk Iversen. In November, Shawn Jacobsen held a tree splitting work party and many showed up to help. Several large stumps were transported to a playground at Children's House, a local Montessori school where many AUUF RE kids have attended, for their outside activities. Ms. Charlene Kam, director of the Children's House, wrote "Thank you for your thoughtfulness, time and donation of tree stumps to Auburn Montessori School. The tree stumps have been strategically placed to provide the children full opportunities to explore their physical and mental capacities in the world around them. We wish you all good health, friendships and a gracious community in the days and years to come" in the card with a donation. The grounds crew is planning to have the second splitting work party in January. Please contact Noriko or the Grounds crew if you want firewood for donation. Much appreciation goes to those who showed up at the work party and/or donated money for the woods!



Herb Garden planted!





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