



Unitarian  
Universalist  
Fellowship of  
Murfreesboro

# The Chalice

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## Happy New Year!

We've made it around the Sun once more.

Once again, we come to that arbitrary point in the earth's orbit when we say it's time to "take stock." If there is one thing (among an embarrassment of things!) that stands about the *annus horribilis* just ended, it's the rise of the term "fake news." This is the term used by certain cynical politicians who don't like reality as it exists. Don't like your current approval rating? It's "fake news." Climate change threatening your business? It's "fake news." Lost the popular vote by almost 3 million? Obviously, "fake news."

How is it possible to get so many people to believe this? Allow me to offer an insight. Way back when I was in second grade, a local TV station ran an afternoon kids' show. At one point they had a contest to win a new Schwinn bicycle. At school one day, I don't have the foggiest idea why, I decided to announce that I had won the bike (hint: I didn't). The teacher thought it was great, and I was pleased with myself for getting some attention. But I didn't expect what happened next: one of my classmates chimed in and said they had seen me riding the bike in my yard.

This made a deep and lasting impression on my young mind. Years later when I was a psych major in college I learned that people love to be associated with a winner. That I lied about the bike is indisputable. But I had no idea that another person would help me propagate that lie out of a psychological need to be associated with something good. And for the unscrupulous, this is leverage beyond one's wildest dreams.

As of November 17 at 3:00 am, our current president\* had told 1,628 lies since his inauguration, an average of nine per day (*Washington Post*). Of course we expect politicians to lie, but this is breaking new ground.

So let's start the new year off right, with increased vigilance and awareness of what is going on in the halls of power. Politicians and their minions are counting on us getting numb from all this, but that is a road we cannot afford to take. Speak truth to power, and to those we elect to represent us. Let them know the gig is up, that we're not going to take it anymore, and come November let's vote the liars out. Nothing, in my opinion, would make the new year more grand.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

On the New Year .....	3
Uli Underhill. ....	4
January Services .....	5
January Events .....	5
January Music.....	5
Poem .....	6



# On the New Year

By David Summar

We can thank the Catholic Church for at last caving to the weight of empirical evidence and adopting our current Gregorian calendar in the year 1582. By the time in human history that Pope Gregory XIII issued his papal bull *Inter gravissimas* and wrote our current calendar into papal doctrine, such intellectual luminaries as Duns Scotus and Roger Bacon had come and gone, but the church had long resisted mortal meddling in the affairs of how God arranged his day planner, letting the Julian calendar wobble us further and farther off track. Progress can be slow, especially when it comes to people's entrenched habits of religion; thus, Europe needed almost another 200 years to adopt the new calendar with Greece being the final European holdout for the Julian calendar.

As with so many ritualized calendar events, the idea of New Year's has been commodified and thinned out so that for many it serves as little more than an excuse for aimless carousing. I cannot claim any moral high ground as I've nursed my share of New Year's Day hangovers, swearing to never again undertake such a boozy endeavor. Televised New Year's extravaganza's, over-eager celebrities, and cheap novelty glasses trivialize the deeper import that we assign to a new year. Still, for a great many people this deeper import persists.

From an anthropological perspective, New Year's Eve is a liminal period: a moment when people inhabit an interstitial space, shucking off the trappings of a former state of being before assuming new metaphorical garments through some ritualized process. Carnival, too, is such a time when people shed societal inhibitions and flaunt their wilder selves. All Hallow's Eve blurs the line between the living and the dead, and we both celebrate the dead but fear their nearness.

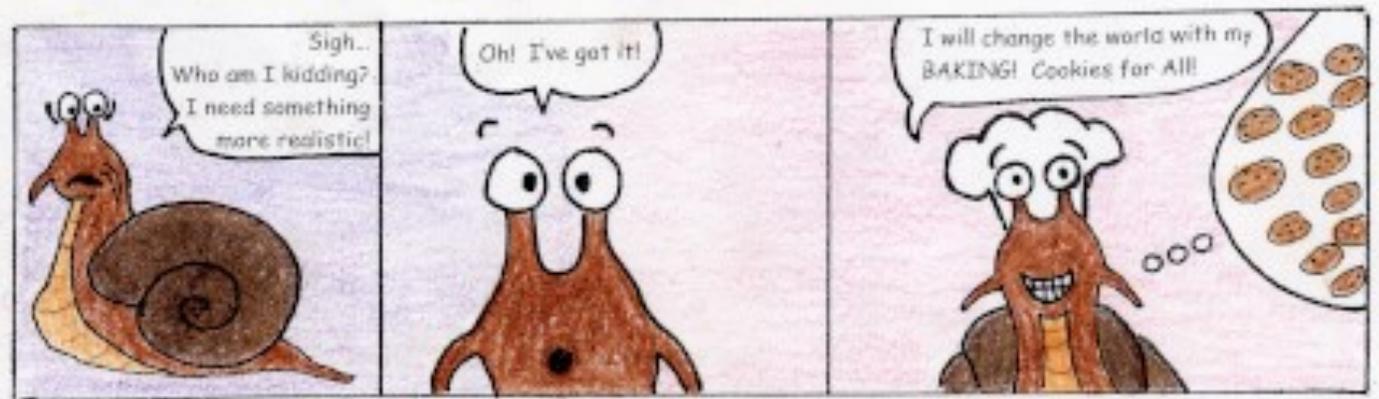
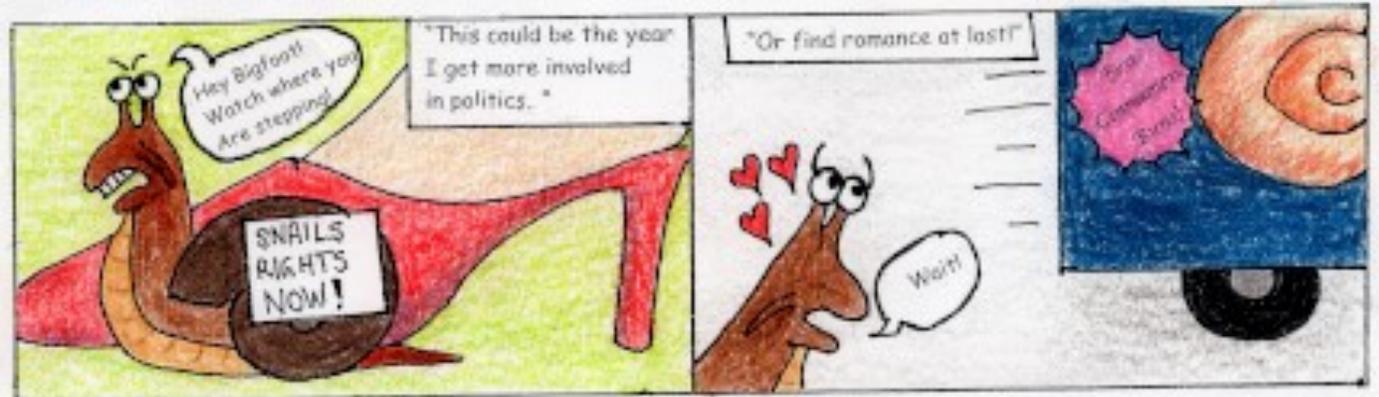
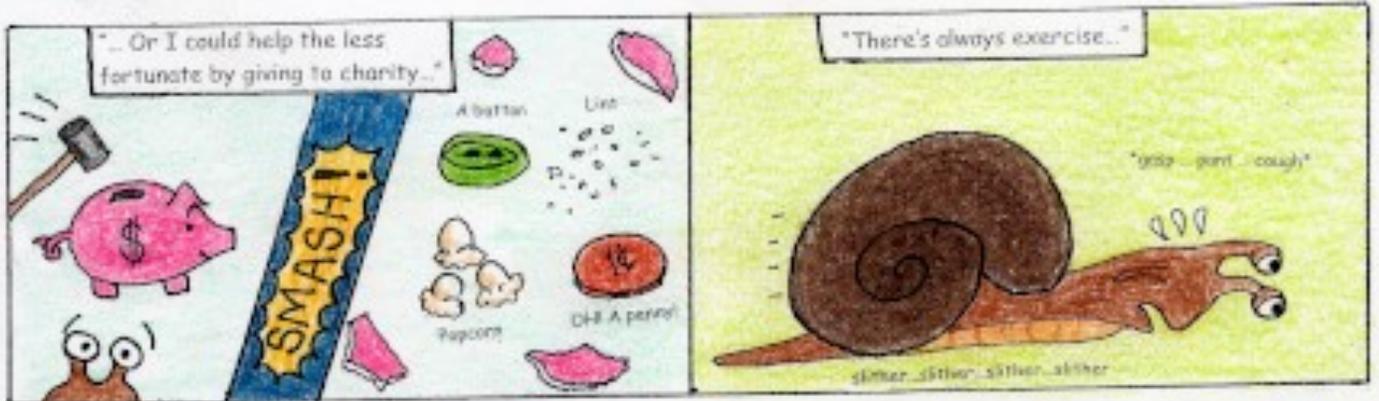
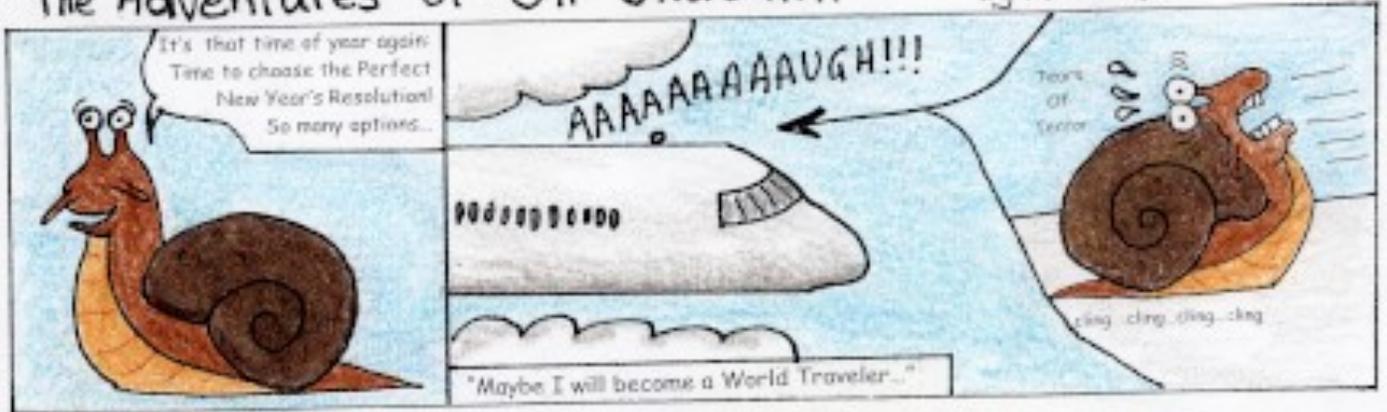
New Year's Eve as a liminal period lets people look to reset their lives in some way, check in with their hopes, reconsider motivations, and, as I see it, to give heed to the fact that we are all creatures making our way from cradle to grave and life be damned if we're not going to revel a bit in the fact that we made it a little further. In the past, I've let new years slip past with little thought other than the typical half-hearted resolutions. More than anything who I spent New Year's with has mattered to me and does still. But I now find myself looking to approach the new year with greater intent about nurturing what I value in life.

The Catholic Church has a long history of bending empirical knowledge to its own intent. True to color, Pope Gregory XIII's bull outlined the reform of the Julian calendar as necessary for ensuring that Easter dates were correct. Consider that heliocentricity had yet to be accepted by the Catholic Church, and you can understand why the pope went out of his way to assign Christian meaning to the reformed calendar. Even so, the deeper impulse of marking a boundary between the old and the new, who we were and who we aspire to be, and our cultural connections to solstices and equinoxes has persisted despite the gravity of a papal bull.

Myself, I approach this particular new year filled with hope and a renewed focus on family, friends, community, and a fulfilling professional life. New Year's, I think, can be deeply personal and deeply communal. Whatever this period means to you, may peace and happiness find you in the coming days and weeks .

# The Adventures of Uli Underhill

by Andrea D.



### JANUARY SERVICES

7	Rabbi Rami Shapiro: "Major Religion Stories for 2018"
14	Rev. Denise Gyauch: "Torda 450: Celebrating the Anniversary of Religious Tolerance"
21	Jill Austin: "The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."
28	Doug Traversa: "Responding to Nazis, the KKK, and White Supremacists"

January 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

### JANUARY MUSIC

7	1000 Morning Has Come Imagine
14	402 From You I Receive 318 We Would Be One
21	149 Lift Every Voice and Sing 169 We Shall Overcome
28	157 Step by Step the Longest March 95 There is More Love Somewhere

### JANUARY UUFM EVENTS

2	Humanists 6:30 pm Newk's Wendlewood Dr.
10	Men's Group 6:00 pm TBD
11	Board Meeting 6:30 pm Kimbro home
16	Women's Group 6:00 pm TBD



**UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
FELLOWSHIP OF  
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The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Murfreesboro, Tennessee (UUFM) is a liberal religious society associated with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). UUFM is a member of the Southern Region and the Mid-South District.

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**POEM**

*January*  
by John Updike

The days are short,  
The sun a spark,  
Hung thin between  
The dark and dark.

Fat snowy footsteps  
Track the floor.  
Milk bottles burst  
Outside the door.

The river is  
A frozen place  
Held still beneath  
The trees of lace.

The sky is low.  
The wind is gray.  
The radiator  
Purrs all day.

