



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

of the Carolina Foothills December, 2025

Meeting 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month at the Whimsical World Gallery, 116 Jones St in Landrum, SC
Mailing Address: UUFCF, P. O. Box 653, Tryon, NC 28782



Happening in December

Dec. 7 – UUFCF Service at 10:30
Dec. 7 – Pearl Harbor Day
Dec 14 – Hanukkah begins
Dec 21 – UUFCF Service at 10:30
Dec 21 – Winter Solstice
Dec 25 – Christmas
Dec 31 – New Year's Eve



Sunday, December 7, 2025 – Ernie Mills

A LIFE OF FAITH

If you are not certain of anything and if you have more questions than answers AND you can't seem to settle on any convictions about life and the world, YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH. Joseph Campbell said that one of the primary functions of myth (or religion) is to "inspire in the individual a sense of awe and gratitude in relation to the mystery dimension of the universe." This means to keep wonder alive, which keeps the mind and heart open. We will delve deeper into the journey of wonder and how to live comfortably without knowing all the answers. Truly, a life of faith.

Sunday, December 21, 2025 –Ernie Mills

Christmas or *Christmyth*?

The birth narratives of Jesus found in Matthew and Luke are a form of backward looking. They were created after the "facts" of the life of Jesus. There are two different ways that we humans have viewed the Christmas stories. We either dismiss them as a fairy tale (legend) or interpret them literally, as if it really happened. Belief in the literal interpretation became a litmus test for what it means to be a Christian; as in the confessions of faith known as the Apostles and Nicene creeds. I would like to offer a third Alternative -- a mythical, inner and spiritual interpretation. This way we can avoid throwing Christmas out or taking it literally.



Feel free to contact any of the Board of Trustees with your questions, comments, or concerns.

Chair: Alisa Mosley – 803-603-9300

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Vice Chair: Don Greeson – 828-290-3627

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When Unitarians Brought Christmas to Boston

An article by **Aline Kaplan**, published on December 20, 2022 in **The Next Phase Blog**

Centuries of Christmas Tradition

European countries, whether predominantly Catholic or Protestant, have centuries of Christmas traditions that include religious services, candle lighting, holiday foods, Christmas markets, processions, stories, and gift giving. Boston only goes back as far as 1630, but the dour and godly men who settled here banned the celebration of Christmas in Boston from 1659 to 1681. That's 22 years when Christmas was officially just another day. Shops and schools remained open while churches were closed—unless of course December 25 fell on the Sabbath.



A Puritan governor disrupting Christmas celebrations

It Started in England

This distaste for Christmas actually began in England after the Puritans there overthrew King Charles I in 1649 and cut off his head. Parliament then decreed that December 25 should be a day of “fasting and humiliation” for Englishmen to account for their sins. No wassailing for them. Or figgy pudding, either. In 1659, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony ruled it a criminal offense to publicly celebrate the holiday, declaring that “...whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like, either by forbearing of labor, feasting, or any other way,” was subject to a five-shilling fine. *(There were few merry gentlemen back then!)*



What Drove the Change

It wasn't until the nineteenth century that Bostonians embraced the public celebration of Christmas. That raises the question, “What changed?” Why did the stubbornly traditional people of Boston suddenly embrace Christmas as a public holiday? It's interesting to note that modern Christmas traditions came not to us from the Catholic Church via the city's multitude of Irish and Italian immigrants. Neither did Phillips Brooks, rector of Trinity Church and author of “O Little Town of Bethlehem” start a trend. Instead, we can thank the Unitarians for introducing the holiday's celebrations. They did it not to stir greater religiosity but because it promoted the fundamental Unitarian values of generosity, charity, and social good.

Unitarians as Cultural Leaders

In the 1800s, the city's Unitarians were cultural leaders and modernizers. They were typically well educated and often wealthy, holding a position of status. In addition, they had access to and control of many popular publications, which gave them a communications platform. These influential Unitarians included:

- Clement Clarke Moore who wrote “’Twas the Night Before Christmas”
- Charles Follen who brought the Christmas Tree to Boston
- Charles Dickens who: published the story “A Christmas Carol” and did his first North American public readings in **Boston's Tremont Temple**
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who wrote the poem “Christmas Bells,” which became the carol “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”
- Edward Hamilton Sear who wrote the carol “**It Came Upon a Midnight Clear**”
- James Pierpont who wrote “Jingle Bells”

Our Seven Principles

1. Inherent worthiness of every person
2. Compassion and fairness towards all people
3. Accepting others for who and what they are
4. Supporting a search for personal truth
5. The democratic process in our congregations and communities
6. A global community founded on peace, liberty, and justice
7. The interwoven nature of the universe

Dogma and Contradiction

You can see the contradiction here. Unitarians (and I am one) don't believe in the Holy Trinity. In fact, we require no faith and don't embrace any dogma. You can believe Jesus is God if you want to but, if you do, there are so many other congregations that would be a better fit. Remember those seven points [the 7 UU Principles] when you ponder how Unitarians, who don't worship Jesus, contributed substantially to bringing Christmas to a city founded by people who did worship Jesus but banned public celebration of his birth. Ah, the irony!