



The Utah Humanist

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Humanists of Utah is a Chapter of the *American Humanist Association*.

We are a nonprofit corporation organized to advocate and promote ethical, rational, and democratic humanism among our membership and the larger community.



Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. It affirms the dignity of each human being and supports individual liberty consonant with social and planetary responsibility. Humanism advocates participatory democracy, the open society, human rights and social justice. Free of supernaturalism, it recognizes human beings as part of nature and holds that values—be they religious, ethical, social, or political—have their source in human nature, experience, and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.

—*The Humanist*,
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Doing Life Your Own Way

Even when it seems like you have nowhere left to turn, there is a solution waiting for you. Always.

The journey that each human being makes through earthly existence can have hardship as often as it is touched by joy. When we encounter adversity, the stress we feel can erode our optimism, eventually convincing us that the issues we face cannot be overcome and are part of our identity. In truth, there is no situation so dire, no challenge so great, and no choice so bewildering that it cannot be overcome. Though we may believe that all avenues have been closed to us or that our most conscientious efforts will come to naught, we are never without feasible options. Remember, you are brave, strong, and capable. The best course of action may be veiled in doubt, but it is there. When we are honest with ourselves with regard to this simple fact, we can overcome anything because we will never stop looking for a solution to the challenges before us. Be brave. Be strong. Be curious and find the solution.

Self-trust paired with a sturdy plan is the ultimate antidote to adversity's tendency to inspire confusion in the human mind. As difficult as the obstacle seems, it is no match for the love of a supportive universe that has been a part of your life since the day of your birth and will be with you forevermore. Try not to be misguided by your fear as this gives rise to the notion that there are problems without solutions. If you believe in your capabilities and dedicate yourself to the creation of some form of resolution, you will be surprised to discover that paths that were once closed to you miraculously open. Even if all you can do is change your perspective to turn a struggle into an opportunity to grow, you will have found the hope that is an inherent element of all hardship.

Remember that your destiny is a product of your own creation. Even when it seems you have nowhere left to turn, there is a solution waiting for you. You are in control. The only insurmountable obstacles are the ones you create in your own mind—and these can only exert power over you if you let them by

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President's Report

Blessings humanists and all our fellow friends and neighbors. 2020 has been a doozy of a year that has changed our planet for sure. It has moved us, as a human race, to take a hard look at things and reflect. It has been life altering for most and definitely inconvenient for everyone. But, that said, it has given us so many opportunities for growth, change, compassion, reflection, rest, and other beautiful attributes during this storm. I hope you have found comfort in things that may have been forgotten, like relationships, home, cooking, cleaning or whatever you did not have time for before. A slower pace has been a blessing, even if it did not seem like it.

During this year, our beautiful group has undertaken some very big changes. The biggest one of all is the fact that we were no longer able to meet in person and we were not prepared to shift to a virtual, technological transition quickly. Thank you for hanging in with us.... it is coming and we are learning so that we can continue the good fight in this new dynamic we are building.

As with many people in the world, our president, Jeff Curtis, has had major health issues and has stepped down from his position as president to focus on getting better and will be in a more advisory role on the board of directors. I, being the Vice President, will be stepping into the President role for 2021 so we can maintain our vision that was set by the Board a few years ago and we can continue the momentum of our virtual changes and evolution. We, as a board, have stayed the election for one years' time, due to most of what we had

planned being rolled into 2021 due to the COVID -19 pandemic that stopped it all this year.

I am very proud of this group and for the resilience we have showed and that you, as humanists have proven, this year during elections and in helping those in need. We are going to take this group to the next step and will be heavily focusing on humanitarian aspects, ways to help our neighbors, our country and our own families and selves. We are optimistic that 2021 will be a year of growth, of compassion and that we will rise like a phoenix from the ashes of 2020. It served it's purpose. But now is the time to rise into who we really are as people. I admonish you, to reflect on your personal goals for 2021. What are they? Who will they help? How active do you want to be in your community when it is safe? What does your self-care look like? All of these things are important.

In the coming weeks, we will be sending out a survey so we can update and digitize our records. This is just for us to better serve you. It will be kept within the organization and only a few key people have access to it. You will not be spam blasted, upsold, or pandered to.

We would love your participation, your ideas, and for you to feel that you can lean into this group for support, friendship, and love.

I wish you the very best in 2021 and moving forward. Be brave, be safe and be well.

—Melanie White-Curtis
President, Humanists of Utah



How Does Complaining Affect You?

When we spend all our time complaining, we are in essence in constant destroy mode rather than building mode. This has been a test on most of us this past year.

We all know someone who has elevated the process of complaining to a high art. Sometimes funny, sometimes exhausting, these people can find a problem just about anywhere. In its more evolved form, complaining is simply the ability to see what is not working, in one's own life or in the external world, and it can be quite useful if followed to its natural conclusion—finding a solution and applying it. However, many of us do not get that far, and we find that complaining has become an end in itself. In small doses, this is not a big problem, but if complaining has become a huge part of our identities, it may be time to take a good look at how we are spending our energy. Are you a glass half full or half empty kind of person?

Complaining is a person's way of acknowledging that they are not happy with the way things are. In a metaphorical way, when we complain or criticize, we are tearing down an undesirable structure to make room for something new. But if all we do is tear down, never bothering to summon the creative energy required to create something new, we are not fulfilling the process. In fact, we are at risk for becoming a stagnant and destructive force in our own lives and in the lives of the people we love. Another issue with complaining is that we sometimes tend to focus on other people, whom we cannot change, as a way of deflecting attention from the one person we can change—ourselves. So, transforming complaining into something useful is a twofold process that begins with turning our critical eye to look at things we can do something about, and then taking positive action. This takes a concerted effort to flip the perspective. Be prepared to work at it.

When we find ourselves complaining, the last thing we need to do is get down on ourselves. Instead, we can begin by noticing that we are in

the mode of wanting to make some changes. But rather than lashing out at somebody or an organization, we can look for an appropriate place to channel this energy—not our neighbor's house, but possibly parts of our own. Finally, we can ask ourselves the positive question of what we would like to create in the place of whatever it is we want to tear down. When we do this, we channel a negative habit into a creative process, thus using our energy to change the world around us in a positive way. I like to add, “but what if...” and then add a solution to the end of my complaint. No matter how absurd it may sound. Sometimes I will throw out the most ridiculous idea at the end to make it funny but moreover to switch the negative vibe to a positive one. Have fun catching yourself and see how to be brave and flip the dialogue. It can be life changing.

—Melanie White-Curtis
President, Humanists of Utah

New Year, New You!

When you look back on 2021 a year from now, what do you hope to see?

Will this be the year you make some changes to help our planet? The year you divest from fossil fuels and embrace sustainable spending? Will you be changing your diet to incorporate a healthier lifestyle? Will you volunteer time and energy in helping your community be a better place to live? Whatever that means to you?

Dear Friend, 2021 will be what you make it. You have the power to change things. Give yourself a list with a few things, make a simple plan on how to start and just do them. Be brave. Steps forward in your goals can be small or huge. There is no right or wrong answer. You got this! You can do it. I believe in you.

And whatever you choose to do this year, we wish you a great one.

—Melanie White-Curtis
President, Humanists of Utah



Pandemic Continues

Hello freethinkers, hope your holidays have been enjoyable. I don't have a lot to say this month without whining like I have been lately. But I wanted to wish everyone a Happy New Year. It is still going to be a tough year to come with the pandemic and all. But for me, the best thing about this year has been that we have voted out Donald Trump and the rolling out of the COVID-19 vaccine.

I am hoping the V.A. will be able to get me vaccinated as soon as possible, that will ease my anxiety a great deal. The V.A. is quite efficient and is set up to do vaccinations, unlike the dysfunctional distribution of the vaccine by the Trump administration. But here I go whining and complaining again. But I cannot help it. The count down until January 20th feels like it is going agonizingly slow. Poor old Donald is starting to look rather pathetic in his attempts to stay in office.

To change the subject, I want to say I hope we get some meaningful precipitation soon. It is distressingly dry out there. Enough so that the next time it is above freezing for a couple of days, I am tempted to do some watering. As, hopefully, this pandemic starts to ease up, we can get back to focusing on climate change. It was encouraging to see the new president state the need to address climate change immediately. It is a global problem, it's a national and local problem, and it effects all humans. Climate change is where I think I can be of some help by being an advocate for action and by contributing financially where it will do the best good. Our humanist chapter is one way to get the word out and find groups to support. I am going to renew my efforts in this area. Like they say time is running out.

Once again, Happy New Year, stay safe, wear a mask, stay home (for now) and we will see you sometime this coming year.

—Bob Lane

Doing Life Your Own Way

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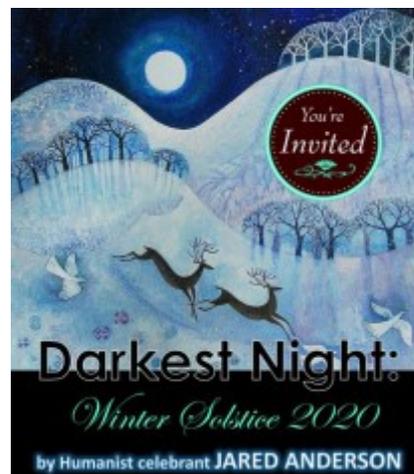
not trying to find the solution. Uncertainty will always be a part of your existence, but perseverance and mindfulness will never fail to see you through to the other side of hardship where joy can thrive. Try and remember that no matter what life places at your feet, there is absolutely no situation that cannot be resolved with time, love, and friendship. Even if that means involving your personal tribe to help. I send you love, hope and peace into the new year. You got this!

—Melanie White-Curtis,
President Humanists of Utah

Chaplain's Corner

Darkest Night: A Solstice Vigil

As 2020 ends, for most of us, the sense of relief is actually literal. This year has been HARD. It has been overwhelming, scary, lonely, and rough. Moving forward through this vigil can be repeated in helping you start



2021 with a positive mindset, full of promise, hope and starting fresh. We wish you all a very happy holiday season and the very best for the coming year! Cheers! The Winter Solstice, the longest night of

the year, is a fitting time to sit with the darkness and challenge, to face it, name it and honor it. What we face, what we name, what we have relationship with. We can

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Humanists of Utah meetings are open to the public and free of any admission charge. A discussion and light refreshments follow the speaker's presentation. Come join us and **bring a friend!**

Disclaimer: The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of Humanists of Utah nor the American Humanist Association. Reprinting of articles is permitted for humanist groups promoting the interests of humanism if attribution is properly stated.

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Chaplain's Corner

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master and integrate.

As 2020 ends, for most of us, the sense of relief is actually literal. This year has been HARD. It has been overwhelming, scary, lonely, and rough. We wish you all a very happy holiday season and the very best for the coming year! Cheers!

Jared Anderson, Humanist Celebrant created a vigil that you can participate in. You will find it on our website under Resources then Videos. It takes about 20 minutes; you can use the following props:

- A Candle for each person
- A lighter of some sort
- Small pieces of paper and pen
- A surface you can safely burn paper on

Moving forward through this vigil can be repeated in helping you start 2021 with a positive mindset, full of promise, hope and starting fresh.

—Jared Anderson

Membership/Renewal Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

- \$50 Regular Annual Membership and subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$90 Regular 2-year Membership and subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$35 Regular Annual Membership with email delivery of the Utah Humanist
 - \$65 Regular 2-year Membership with email delivery of the Utah Humanist
 - \$20 *Student* Annual Membership and subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$20 Annual subscription to the Utah Humanist (I do not want to be listed as a member of **Humanists of Utah**)
 - Please send a *FREE* trial Subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$_____ additional contribution to help promote public awareness of humanism
- ⇒ All contributions in excess of the \$20 subscription fee tax deductible.
- ⇒ *Members* have the right to vote in Chapter elections and participate in Chapter decisions.
- ⇒ Dues provide for information packets, honoraria to speakers, expenses of newsletter publication, trial subscriptions, copies to libraries, and newsletter exchange with other chapters.

Humanists of Utah
P.O. Box 1043
West Jordan, UT 84084

Now you can pay online with PayPal!

Notes:

- ◆ *General Meetings* are for all members and the general public. There are no admission charges.
- ◆ *Discussion Group* meetings are open to everyone. A different book or topic is covered every month.
- ◆ *Board Meetings* are planning and business sessions. They are open to all members.
- ◆ Eliot Hall is in the First Unitarian Church located at 569 South 1300 East in Salt Lake City.
- ◆ RE 201 is upstairs in the East Educational Building at the First Unitarian Church.

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- Log into amazon.com and open your personal account settings.
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- Search for “Humanists of Utah.”

This will find “American Humanist Association” in West Jordan because we use the AHA as our umbrella for sales tax exemption.

- Click the “Select” button.

If you have a bookmark for Amazon please modify it to go to smile.amazon.com—you always want to use the “smile” option.



Smith's Grocery Stores

Humanists of Utah is enrolled in Smith's Inspiring Donations program. If you have a Smith's Fresh Value card, you can register it to benefit Humanists of Utah. Simply visit www.smithsfoodanddrug.com/inspire, create an account, associate it with your Fresh Values card number, and then enter NPO Number: KQ330 within your “account summary.” All future purchases will now benefit HoU.



All Public Meetings are
CANCELLED until further notice
Due to the Pandemic



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A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

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