



## NEIGHBORHOOD UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

## Questions and Answers

Rev. Dr. Jim Nelson, Senior Minister

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Here are some of the questions turned in during the Questions and Answers services on Sunday, February 13, 2011. Rev. Nelson answered many of them. For those answers check out the Audio for February 13 on the web site.

What do you say when your child asks, "Where did the very first tomato come from?"

Do you wake at night and fret about your life? And if so, how do you calm yourself?

What are you thinking about when looking out into the audience, and they seem not to be paying attention?

What's the *best* part of your job? What's the *worst* part of your job?

We promote the inherent worth and dignity of each person – how do we reconcile that when confronted with evil people – Hitler, Ceausescu, Dahmer?

How do you think we can operate in greater alignment with our congregational values?

What do you think our church lacks the most? Or, how can we improve?

Do you believe that, "*Call me Ishmael*" is the modern day equivalent of "*In the beginning . . .*"?

What does the world need most?

If you had one suggestion to give for people to have more fun in their lives, what would it be?

Why pray if you're not sure who or what you're praying to?

Is there another word you can use for "God" for us atheists in the congregation?

Are political conservatism or Libertarianism and Unitarian Universalism inherently opposed?

What is your favorite hymn and why?

Why do we need religion?

What does Neighborhood do to minister to non-Christian (and non-Christianish) congregants?

How can we be Unitarian and Universalist at the same time? Why not just drop the Unitarian aspect?

Do Garrison Keillor's UU jokes bother you?

How should we, as UUs, express our liberal social views in the current political environment?

When someone asks me what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, how can I answer in one or two spiffy sentences?

Do we really mean it when we say "wherever you are on your spiritual journey"? Some things said from the pulpit seem less tolerant of the Christian, someone who believes in the divinity of Christ. It's possible to believe in His divinity without discounting the divinity of other incarnations of God.

What can we do to make the world a better place?

How does a skeptic come to believe in God?

What kind of balance do you think we should have between efforts for the church and efforts for outreach?

Do you remember a time – the first time – someone asked you if you really believe in God or are you not sure?

Is there a way to diversify the musical program? We would love some more gospel music, which we believe would make this church more appealing to people of color.

Do we have to be “members” of the church in order to have our children “welcomed” to the community (similar to baptism)?

I love the idea of being exposed to other theologies than Judeo/Christian based ones. Is there a way to incorporate more different beliefs/viewpoints into our sermons (or is that considered an extra-curricular activity)? You know, that whole “no one way to God” chestnut☺

Do you ever miss being a Lutheran? (The feeling of being a part of a community that feels certain they are right about God and the afterlife, and having the ability to be certain yourself.)

Can an evangelical Christian fit in at a Unitarian church?

When did you decide to become a Unitarian?

Do you have time to meet church members about loss issues? How can I make an appointment?

Do you think there is life or existence after death?

My 4 year old wants to know who/what is God? What’s an elevator answer?

How can our church do more to support public schools? Public education is the civil rights issue of our time  
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Do sinners still have a chance to get to heaven?

What message do you have for spiritual atheists?

When people exclaim “Oh God”, is this a nano-prayer? Or a curse phrase? Or just two words with no depth?

I’d like to hear your thoughts on the value of prayer for an atheist/humanist?

Do the Buddha and Buddhist teachings have personal meanings for you? What are they?

If there were a rock n’ roll song that embodies the UU faith, what would it be?

Is baseball necessary?

What is a good definition of forgiveness? What do you do afterwards?

Any renovation plans?

What are your hopes and aspirations for this congregation?

What do you plan to do in your retirement, if or when that happens? Or, what important accomplishments would you like to achieve within (or without) the church before your retirement?

How do we deal with anxiety during such hard times?

How do you talk about atheism with religious people without making them feel stupid about believing what they believe?

Why do you think the number of UUs is so (comparatively) low, when most everyone agrees with our 7 Principles?!

How much money should I pledge to the church?

How good is good enough?

How can we respond compassionately to some of the fundamentalist wing-nutting that is out there fomenting fear?

Is it possible to believe in God (as creator) but not in an afterlife?

How do we stay happy or hopeful in a world so troubled?

After "No Child Left Behind," are teachers still helping children? Or, just generating good numbers?

Certainly there are overlaps between religion and politics, but do you worry that people with different political views might feel alienated in this church? How would you respond to someone who did feel alienated?

What is the NUUC doing to reach out to the *local* Spanish speaking community?

Have you ever posted/published a book list? Suggested reading? "Jim's Book Club?"

What does light symbolize for UUs?

Why do *good* things happen to *bad* people?

Why don't we pay our fair share to the UUA? Don't we value the denomination? Isn't it our duty to help the UUA help other less strong churches?

How old are you?

Why did you choose to be a UU minister?

How does one dance with doubt (so it doesn't step on your feet)?

Is there a priest, rabbi, minister who you feel a kinship with, or admire?

Have you ever been heckled during a sermon?

I've been conditioned since childhood to fall asleep during sermons. I want to hear what you have to say, so how do I keep myself alert?

I'm taking golf lesions. Is there a spiritual component to golf?

Does the Creator/Deity/God act in the world, in our lives? If so, how do you explain the power of evil in the world?

What is your favorite record album and why?

How do Unitarians address the "problem of evil?"

Do you think UU is becoming more/less recognized in the U.S. as a religious community and presence? Globally?

Do you have advice for those who feel anxious going through the "receiving" line?

What is the most difficult aspect of your job?

How do you as a minister cope with so many losses? Do they teach you in seminary school how to deal with burnout?

What's the strangest thing you've ever had to do in your role as minister?

When people find out I'm a UU, they ask, "What do UUs believe?" Is there a two sentence or less answer?