

QUEST



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine Newsletter

St. Augustine Beach, Florida

December 2015

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Fellowship sermons are held Sundays at 10:30 a.m., September through June.

A program for youth, birth through eighteen, is provided at 10:30 a.m.

Refreshments are served after the service so all may socialize.

Audio transcripts of most presentations are available online.

Board of Trustees 2014 - 2015

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Materials for the January issue are due by December 21.

Don Brandes, Editor e-mail: donaldbrandes@gmail.com

Thanks to Charlie West for proofreading.



From Your President

Dear Ones,



I love these long evenings as we approach the Winter Solstice, when the wheel of the year turns once again, signaling the return of the light. It puts me in mind of my years at Morristown (NJ) Unitarian Fellowship, which is housed in a magnificent mansion, a robber baron type building. Up on the third floor is a room with a round window overlooking the drive and the trees at the front of the building. That was the “women’s room” where we met every month on the full moon, and created rituals, spoke from our depths, celebrated the lunar calendar and the seasons of the year. Many Solstice celebrations were cooked up in that room. It

was the 70’s, and we were learning about non-traditional expressions of spirituality, expanding our notion of what was (and still is) possible. Good times. Here in St. Augustine, where I don’t celebrate the Solstice in the same ways, the approach of December 21 still gives me a thrill as I contemplate the longest night and the point of change.

Our Fellowship is looking festive, thanks to Annette Jones and her poinsettia project. It was wonderful having that beautiful red color splashed along the food table during coffee hour, and I got inspired and bought one. You can get one on Sunday December 6 or 27 at a cost of \$10, with all the profit going to our general fund. What a great idea! Thanks, Annette, for thinking this project up and for handling all the details.

Did you get a box for the “Guest AT Your Table” program? If you don’t have one, they can be found on the table just inside the great room, lower level. Please pick one up and fill it with cash. You still have time, and it’s a good thing to be mindful every day of people who are displaced and need help.

I hope you are thinking about what you’ll offer for the Service Auction on February 6, and that you have the date in your calendar. It’s not to be missed, always a fun evening and our major fund raiser. Rosita Angeli and her team are hard at work, so watch for more details soon.

May you all have a joyous holiday season. May you be with those you love, doing what has meaning for you, and may we all be renewed as we begin a new year.

*Blessings,
Lola Sorensen*



From Your Minister

As the winter holidays descend upon us, it is good to remember that this time of year is supposed to be fun. I hear from people over and over, “I *have* to make these ten dozen cookies,” or “I *must* buy gifts for 37 people.” The fact is, there is nothing other than breathing, drinking, and eating (and their obvious correlates) that we “must” do. Absolutely everything else is a choice. We choose to make cookies, buy presents, decorate the house, etc. We do these things for many different reasons, but always it is a choice. It is a well-known fact that people do not die from not eating Christmas cookies or receiving just the right present on or before the designated day.

Here is how I look at it. People enjoy the cookies we make (the presents we buy, etc.), and we enjoy giving those cookies to friends and family because their enjoyment is important to us. It is a conscious *choice* we make to spend those umpteen hours making those cookies and buying those presents. This change of mindset, the conscious awareness that everything we do is a choice, believe it or not, can make even the most mundane of tasks seem just a bit less tedious, and perhaps even enjoyable.

Being mindful of why we do the things we do is a marvelous way to maintain a sense of balance in our lives, most especially when we are surrounded by the busy-ness of the holiday season. And when we find that the reasons behind our actions are no longer meaningful, we are free to stop doing those things that do not nurture our souls. After all, if we don’t take responsibility for our own souls, who will?

We call Unitarian Universalism a living tradition for a reason. Like all living things, it changes and grows to meet changing conditions. Likewise, it is important to allow for changes in our own lives. It is like pruning the dead branches of a tree to make room for newer, more productive branches to grow and flourish.

Rev. Tom Schmidt



Sunday, December 6, 10:30 a.m.
“The Gift of Anticipation”
Rev. Tom Schmidt

As children it was the worst part of the holiday season, all the waiting. At times it seemed almost unbearable yet looking back I realize that it was the anticipation that helped make the holidays so special. Let us explore the gift of anticipation and how we can foster it in all aspects of our lives.

Sunday, December 13
Downstairs Dialogue
9:15 - 10:15am, downstairs

Islam 101: Facts and Falsehoods

Curious about Muslim beliefs, mosques, hijab/headscarf, women's rights in Islam, or Sharia law? Feel free to ask this American Muslim woman, from the Islamic Center of St Augustine.

Our speaker has a BA in Economics from The Johns Hopkins University and an MSc in International Political Economy from The London School of Economics. She is well-versed in Middle Eastern Women's Issues and American Muslim Culture and currently teaches a class on Muslim Culture & Traditions at Jacksonville University. She has worked in the US as well as a variety of European and Middle Eastern countries including England, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia as a writer, editor, and educator. She is the co-author of The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook (2nd edition 2009 Simon & Schuster) along with her two children. As the former Vice President of the Arizona Interfaith Movement, she has a keen interest in interfaith issues and her writings have appeared in the Huffington Post, Common Ground, and the Religion News Service.

Come join us at 9:15am downstairs for what promises to be a very interesting discussion.



Sunday, December 13, 10:30 a.m.
**“The Origins of Christmas and
Re-membering of the Great Golden Age”**
Sam Pacetti



A new interdisciplinary movement born from comparative mythology is offering new and startling insights into cosmology, astrophysics and reconstructing our ancient cataclysmic past. Following from the work of Immanuel Velikovsky, a reconstruction of ancient cosmic events is now offering radical new conclusions about where we have come from as a species. Drawing upon the work of David Talbott, Duwardu Cardona, Ev Cochrane, and the growing paradigm of Electric Universe cosmology, the talk will explore the origins of Christmas, the Saturn myth, the Primordial sun and lost Golden age of mankind.

Sam Pacetti is one who brings it all together: A fingerstyle guitar wizard, A deft songwriter, capable of haunting depth and wry humor in the space of one song. An impassioned and ecstatic vocalist, as well as a mesmerizing live performer seamlessly melding head-spinning guitar pyrotechnics and raw emotion into one breathtaking package.

Sunday, December 20, 10:30 a. m.
“The Gift of Receiving”
Rev. Tom Schmidt

It is a common belief that giving is better than receiving yet every act of giving assumes a receiving. What does it look like to graciously receive a compliment or a gift? What is the spiritual lesson we can learn by graciously receiving from others?

Sunday, December 27, 10:30 a.m.
"Homegrown Christmas"

Please bring your favorite holiday stories and anecdotes to share with the Fellowship on December 27th, along with food, (even holiday fruitcake), for the Pot Luck. Our program that day is holiday themed, informal and an antidote to holiday madness. We will have the usual first part of the program, and then the floor will be turned over to you, the Fellowship, to share your stories. Remember, old stories improve the more often they are told, as they are burnished and embellished and perfected. We look forward to hearing yours!

Megan Porter

Board of Trustees

One of the most important things that goes on behind the scenes in our fellowship is the work of the Board of Trustees. Part of the Long Term Strategic Plan, completed last fellowship year, calls for us to improve our governance, and one aspect of that is the writing of a set of Policies and Procedures for UUFSA. With policies in place, we are better able to respond appropriately to questions or problems which inevitably arise in any organization. Policy making is a proactive step in addressing concerns before they arise, and we have learned that making policy should be a major purpose of the Board of Trustees.

We are in process of organizing policies in a coherent way, and they'll eventually be accessible in a manual and, hopefully, on line. In the meantime, as they are written and approved by the Board, they will be posted downstairs on the UUFSA bulletin board for all to peruse.

Pat Moore
Nana Royer

She Not Only Wears Many Hats, She Makes Them!

Taffy Rook is not only a generous provider of food for Dining with Dignity, she is also a creator of gorgeous, warm crocheted caps for homeless persons. Made of many brilliant colors, each hat is unique, each a delight to behold. As we go to press, Taffy is beginning her 811th hat! ! She donates all her hats to comfort the homeless community of St. Johns County. Taffy donated 20 of her creations to be sold at our recent concert for refugees.



December Calendar

4 – Darts Night 7:00 p.m. – 9:00
6 – Finance Committee 12:00 p.m.
6 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
7 – Great Decisions – 7:00 p.m.
11 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
11 – MUUvie *In A Better World* – 6:30 p.m.
13 – Downstairs Dialogue – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
14 – Board of Trustees meeting 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
15 – Book Club *The Invention of Wings* 1:00 p.m.
16 – Program Team 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
17 – PFLAG meeting 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

18 – Movie *The Bishop's Wife* 6:30 p.m.
18 – Darts Night 7:00 p.m. – 9:00
21 – Deadline for January Quest
25 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
28 – Drumming Circle 7:00 p.m.



Great Decisions

**The Great Decisions group meets the first Monday of every month
at 7:00 p.m.**

The Great Decisions group has been meeting downstairs at the UU each first Monday of the month. We discuss foreign policy issues – in particular U.S. policy vis-a vis foreign policy issues.



For more information about Great Decisions see <http://bit.ly/1EejYu6> and/or contact Jo McIntire at jomcintire@bellsouth.net.

We've had some really interesting discussions in 2015. In particular I appreciated the discussions concerning Humanitarian Aid, US relations with India, Turkey, and Syria. The discussions keep us not only stimulated but also challenged.

The December 7 meeting will close 2015 with a discussion on Brazil – its economic metamorphosis versus the scourge of historic income inequality and weak civic institutions . . . Please consider joining us. Guests are always welcome.

The discussion group is eager to expand its membership. If you have not attended due to time conflicts, please let us know: in 2016 we will consider changing the meeting time.

Ken Maas (235 Costado Street, 32086) is ordering new magazines for 2016. Price \$25.

For more information, contact Ken (maass5845@bellsouth.net) or Yosi (jomcintire@bellsouth.net).

Guest At Your Table – December 2015

As we enter the peak of the season of Holiday Shopping and Gifting, let us not forget the Guest At Your Table boxes distributed last month. (If you didn't get a box, not to worry! Just see Beverly Cree any Sunday, downstairs after the service.) The cash we collect in the boxes will go to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, which provides specific support to UU-principle-based causes around the world.

This year, the UUSC is focusing on aid and empowerment of refugees and displaced people, those most overlooked or discriminated against in the midst of humanitarian crises such as forced migration, large scale conflicts, genocide, and natural disasters. We get daily reminders of these disasters for our fellow humans just from watching the evening news on TV.

We are hoping that we who are more fortunate will be moved to be especially generous in this coming holiday time of thanksgiving and gift-giving, reminded of those who are less fortunate.

Sometime after the holidays, we will collect the boxes, consolidate the proceeds of our combined generosity, and forward them to the UUSC. The boxes will happily receive coins, bills, and/or checks made out to UUFSA, with "GAYT" on the memo line.

Thank you.

Charlie West, GAYT Coordinator

2016 Service Auction

“THE BIG ONE” Saturday, February 6, 2016

Free dinner and wine at 5:30 pm

Free live auction at 7:00 pm



Have you ever had a conversation that bemoans the fact that we all have too much stuff? We might not need more stuff, how about services?

Our Fellowship’s 2016 UU Service Auction offers a chance to bid on services provided by our own congregation’s members.

We’re calling this auction **THE BIG ONE**. So save the date and plan to attend a free dinner and live auction at the UU on Saturday, February 6, 2016.

This fun-filled fundraising event will be open to the public, so bring your friends and family!

At the Service Auction we will auction off experiences and services that you and your friends and family want or need. Think of sports, entertainment, outings, household help, events, instruction in a hobby, computer help, babysitting etc.

How does this work? We are counting on YOU to offer a service that can be auctioned off and to attend the auction and buy a service offered by somebody else!

Instead of paying an outside service provider for something that you need or want, consider bidding on it at **THE BIG ONE** and see the proceeds go to our Fellowship.

A team member will contact you soon to determine what service you might be able to offer for the auction. If you want to donate a service, but cannot attend the auction, that’s OK. We will auction off your donated service and take care of all the details.

THE BIG ONE promises to be a fun evening that begins with a free dinner complete with wine. So plan to come to **THE BIG ONE** ready to bid!

This is our main fundraising event, and all proceeds will go to the congregation’s general fund.

For more information, contact a member of the team organizing **THE BIG ONE**:

Rosie Angeli, Elle Barry, Chuck Chambers, Joyce Peterson, Lola Sorensen.

Food Pantry November 2015



November was another active month at the St Augustine Ecumenical Food Pantry. Your UUFSA volunteers continued to contribute their time and efforts to ensuring those who came for help received it with smiles and good wishes. The latest food distribution tally gave the number of bags distributed for October at 550, up from the previous month and setting a new historical high over 502 set in August. The figures spell out the continuing and growing need for this necessary service to assist the indigent households and homeless people who turn to us for these services. The 550 bags extrapolated include 12,200 meals, 377 families, 570 adults, and 335 children. Reviewing these YTD figures begs the gratitude of the many churches that give with such generosity, UUFSA standing tall among them. One glance at the figures also tell us that the need is still there.

Your generosity is twice a blessing – it helps others and what you give out returns to you many fold. Thank you for your shining part in the success of this outreach program. Thank you, too, for the Sunday plate donation because money is still a nice option to flesh out those areas where the Pantry is in short supply. Remember during the month of December the need for food with increase and the Pantry never turns anyone away. We are particularly low on canned/dried fruit, rice, dried beans, and canned meat. Any food donated is, of course, appreciated as we strive to round out the supply of available choices.

Your star volunteers at the Pantry for October were: Cherie Dolgin, Lou and Jill Cerulli, John Porter, Nana Royer, Lennie Gemski, Kathleen Paracer, and me. Everyone worked hard and made this a successful program.

My gratitude goes to each Pantry volunteer, and to all of the members/friends at UUFSA. May your celebrations be safe and happy.

Namaste.

Guy Reid

UUFSA Food Pantry Coordinator

Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be Sunday, December 6, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. For more information, contact a member of the Dining With Dignity Team:

NEEDED: DONATIONS OF WARM CLOTHING FOR THE DINERS AT OUR MONTHLY DINING WITH DIGNITY EVENTS DURING THE COLD WEATHER.



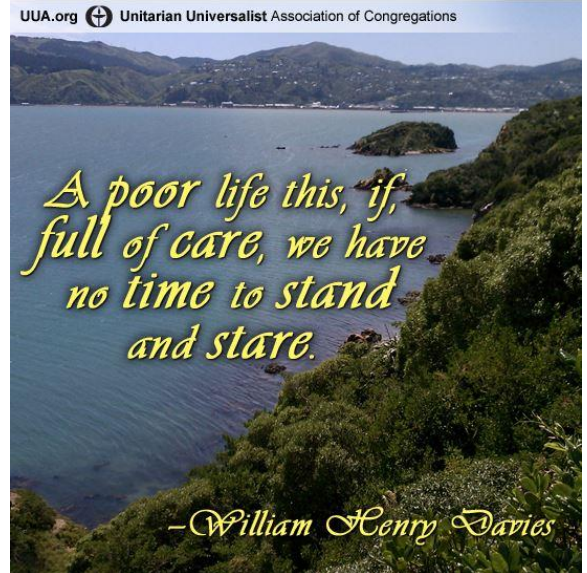
Mary Kellough, Nana Royer & Claudia Atkins

Care Connection



Our Care Connection group provides short term support and assistance for members of the fellowship during times of difficulty.

We thank everyone for their generous support with transportation to medical appointments, making meals, assistance with errands, visiting and sharing. The Care Connection includes everyone in our Fellowship willing to receive and give support at times of difficulty. Contact **Elle Barry** if you are in need of assistance or would like to be involved in the Care Connection Group



Afternoon Book Club

We meet the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m., lower level of U.U. If you cannot attend every meeting but are interested in a particular book, feel welcome to join us the month that it is discussed. For information contact Isobel Siegel 904-794-2293.

Reading List is for 2015-2016

- Dec. 15 *The Invention of Wings*, by Sue Monk Kidd, led Barbara Brenner
- Jan. 19 *The Burgess Boys*, by Elizabeth Strout, led by Joyce Peterson
- Feb. 16 *Crossing to Safety*, by Wallace Earle Stegner, led by Janet Jamal
- March 15 *Station 11*, by Emily St. John Mandel, led by Rita Golts
- April 19 *Sing You Home*, by Jodi Picoult, led by Isobel Siegel
- May 17 *On the Move: A Life*, by Oliver Stacks, led by Uldis Golts
- June? Lunch Date/Place/Time to be determined



Drumming Circle



The Drumming Circle meets once each month at approximately the time of the full moon. This month the circle will get together on December 28 at 7:00 p.m. to drum and chant. Contact Nana Royer for more information (nanaroyer@gmail.com).



Movies

mUUVie Committee Presentation

Friday, December 11, 6:30 p.m.

In a Better World

(2010) - drama - (Denmark) - The lives of two Danish families cross each other, and an extraordinary but risky friendship comes into bud. But loneliness, frailty and sorrow lie in wait. **Won an Oscar** (Best Foreign Language Film). Another 11 wins & 21 nominations.



Palmer's Pick

Friday, December 18, 6:30 p.m.

The Bishops Wife

The Bishop's Wife (1947) will be shown the 18th because, guess what, Christmas falls on Friday the 25th. This holiday classic stars Cary Grant, as the angel Dudley sent to earth to save the marriage of Loretta Young and David Niven. Niven, the bishop, becomes too involved in building the new cathedral whose benefactor wants to make it a memorial to her husband, much to the chagrin of the bishop. In a moment of despair he whispers, God help me. His prayer is answered, an angel is sent, in the guise of Cary Grant to help him. The supporting cast is most delightful with Elsa Lanchester, Monte Woolley, James Gleason, and Gladys Cooper. Pay close attention to the climax when Dudley awkwardly confesses his love to the bishop's wife. A no no. The movie is rife with humor but also a message, what do you expect. But also a little romance. Rotten tomatoes gives it an 82.



Palmer Short

Darts Nights

Darts nights are held at the Pub UU (Basement at the UU) at 7:00 p.m. on the first and third Friday of each month. This month they will be December 4 and 18. (Yes, Palmer will start the movie upstairs and then run back and forth between the movie and the darts game!) If you are interested get in touch with Palmer Short (palshort@gmail.com) or Dave Perkins (daveagain@gmail.com) or just show up.



Palmer Short



Buckman Bridge Events

8447 Manresa Avenue, Jacksonville, Florida 32244

BBUUC Book Club

The inaugural meeting of BBUUC's book club will be Thursday, December 3 at 7 pm. We will be discussing the recently published novel [Go Set a Watchman](#) by Harper Lee. The book club is self-organized. Each session, an individual will sign up to host a conversation on a particular book and will lead the discussion. Meetings are currently on the calendar to be held on the first Thursday of even-numbered months at 7:00 p.m.

For more information on the December session, please contact Scott Cromar.

The New Jim Crow and Black Lives Matter

You are invited to join in a six-week study/action workshop at Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church, based on two books and current events. The books are: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the age of Colorblindness*, and Daniel Hunter, *Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow: An Organizing Guide*. Both books are available from Amazon.com in paperback and Kindle editions and from other sources. Numerous video segments will also be brought into the discussions. The workshop sessions will meet 7:00-9:00 p.m. Wednesdays, January 13 – February 17, 2016, at BBUUC.

One third to one half of each two hour session will be devoted to building a relational understanding of diversity issues, discussion of excerpts from current TV and other media and, if the class signup warrants it, outside guests. •The Recurring Cycle (January 13, 2016) •How The System Works. (January 20, 2016) •Racial Indifference and the Undercaste (January 27, 2016) •Building a Movement (February 3, 2016) •Building Strong Groups (February 10, 2016) •Building Effective Campaigns (February 17, 2016)

Sign up at: <http://bit.ly/1LXieMI>

OWL for Young Adults age 18-35 and Adults 35+

Our Whole Lives for Young Adults age 18-35 and Adults 35+ is a series of workshops providing an overview of many aspects of human sexuality. It can provide a time to learn about an extraordinarily rich and complex area of human behavior, an opportunity to better understand sexuality and self, and a space for growth beyond present limits and concerns. Workshop topics will include: • Values • Communication • Spirituality • Self • Diversity • Family • Aging • Health, and • Early, Developing and Committed relationships

12:30-4:30 p.m. on Sundays, Feb. 21, 28 and March 6, 13, 20 at BBUUC. Sessions facilitated by Michael and Tara Crisp and Colleen Goodwin. Please sign up with Stacy Asimos at admin@bbuuc.org. Child care will be available.

Other Events

January 28-30, 2016 The Florida Interfaith Climate Action Network will hold it's 2016 Conference on January 28-30 at Northland Church, Longwood FL.

February 8-9, 2016 UU Justice Florida Legislative Day in Tallahassee.

For more information about other events beyond our Fellowship, check the UUA Southern Region event calendar at:

<http://www.uuasouthernregion.org/home.html>

and the UUA web site <http://www.uua.org/>

