

QUEST



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine Newsletter
St. Augustine Beach, Florida
Reverend Tom Schmidt, Minister

March 2017

2487 A1A South, St. Augustine, FL 32080
3/4 miles south of State Road 312

Additional parking is available at St. Augustine Beach City Hall,
two blocks north of the Fellowship

uufsamail@gmail.com <http://www.uufsa.org/>

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

A program for youth 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 at

<http://www.uufsa.org/2016-2017-sunday-services.html>

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The *Quest* is published monthly from September through July.

Materials for the April issue are due by March 24.

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

Thanks to Charlie West and Rosi Angeli for proofreading.

From Your President

Namaste!

I am delighted to be welcoming Spring this month!

Emily Dickinson said:

"A light exists in Spring
Not present in the year
at any other period
When March is scarcely here."



In line with the blossoming, growth and new life we see in the Spring, we also look forward to becoming a more open and welcoming fellowship as we move forward with our work in this direction.

This month, the Welcoming Congregation Team had a teleconference with a UUA representative to facilitate our progress on this path. This is in line with our stated covenant and values, and an important goal for us as a spiritual family which further affirms our commitment to our 1st, 2nd and 3rd Principles. Our current political climate reminds us how important these efforts are on behalf of the marginalized in our society, and those most at risk.

When I first came to St. Augustine just a few short years ago, one of the things about this fellowship that appealed most to me was the high level of activism evident among our membership. We are advocating for social justice, the protection of our environment, cleaning the highway, feeding people, providing clothes and medical services to the homeless, and donating significant amounts of money to local charitable organizations. We put our money, and our actions, where our mouth is. Service is indeed our prayer.

I am proud to take a role in leading this spiritual family in making a real difference in our community.

I was delighted to return from vacation to find our new sign. Thanks to the members of the team who volunteered their time to make this happen. As we hoped, we are clearly now more visible to our neighbors who may not know of us, and who need us. Our rainbow colored chalice is part of our outward commitment to providing a safe place for those in the LGBTQ community.

I would like to thank all of the fellowship members who turned out for our Mission Workshop. I was very pleased with the turnout, which demonstrated a high level of interest and commitment to participation in our spiritual community. Some of the sharing which occurred helped us come closer together as members of this spiritual family, to clarify who we are, and what we stand for in St. Augustine. The Board has assembled a Mission Team to draft a statement to be presented at the upcoming Annual Meeting for adoption by this fellowship to guide us in the work of this beloved community over the next few years. If you have an interest in this process, please let us know now by contacting Rev. Tom or a Board member. We always welcome input into the process as we work toward a goal.

March 4th is our Service Auction, which is our biggest fundraiser of the year. This event not only helps us to continue our work in the community, but also takes care of the nuts and bolts of keeping our doors open, and providing a sanctuary for liberal religious values in Northeastern Florida. I am pleased to be acting as your Emcee for the evening. I think this should be truly entertaining as well as profitable, so come join us for the fun! I look forward to seeing you.

May you never thirst!
Robin Mahonen, President, UUFSA

Robin welcomes direct communication from any congregation members for feedback and other concerns. If you can't speak with her in person at the fellowship, please feel free to call her at (304) 639-5538" or contact her with an email at RRafael2@aol.com.

From Your Minister

Are we ready for Spring? Are we ready for growth and rejuvenation? We can't say it has been a long, hard winter, because it surely hasn't. Quite the opposite, actually, even by Florida standards. All the same, Spring is here and many new things here at the Fellowship are taking root and starting to grow. We had a great turnout at the Mission and Vision workshop earlier this month and we are using the feedback received that day to craft a new Mission statement to help guide us in the coming years. Once it has been crafted and receives preliminary approval from the Board, it will be up to the congregation to give final approval.



On a similar note, you will be asked to join one of many meetings being held this month to discuss the future of professional ministry at the Fellowship. For those who are new, my contract here was for three years and was partially funded by a generous grant from an anonymous donor. Since I am the first minister here, this has been a bit of a trial run for the Fellowship. To move forward with professional ministry, the congregation must support it both in spirit and through your financial pledges. We are doing this at the end of my second year here because what the congregation decides will then result in other choices to be made by both me and the Board. I do want it to be clear that these meetings are not about me, but about you. Whether you feel the Fellowship and the wider community have benefited from professional ministry or not, please make your voice heard.

On top of all that going on, a group of us has started laying the groundwork for our becoming a Welcoming Congregation. While we can all agree that ours is a very welcoming congregation, this speaks to something a bit more specific. To be an official Welcoming Congregation means we have considered all aspects of congregational life from the perspective of the LGBTQIA community. It asks us to consider how welcoming we are to everyone regardless of sexual or gender identity. This isn't to say we are not already very open and inclusive, only that we wish to be as open and inclusive as possible.

Finally, a blossom has sprung up in the front of our Fellowship in the form of a new sign. Besides being considerably more visible it includes the rainbow version of the updated flaming chalice logo. The bottom part of the sign will be changed out periodically with quotes designed to pique the interest of drivers on A1A while sharing our values with the world.

Rev. Thomas Schmidt

Phone: 432-559-2411

E-mail: uurev@icloud.com

Office Hours

Tuesdays 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Wednesdays 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

By appointment anytime.

Sunday, March 5, 10:30 a.m.
Rev. Tom Schmidt
“Talking About Music, Dancing About Architecture”
Rev. Tom Schmidt
Service Leader – Palmer Short

The title says it all, doesn't it? If not, then I will say that we will be exploring the human inclination to produce art. What is art and where does it come from? What is its purpose? And what is its connection to spirituality and religion?

Sunday, March 12, 10:30 a.m.
“Inspiration and Creativity”
Pia Leinonen and Joni Tiala
Service Leader – Nana Royer
Kelly, Grace, and Stella Shuford will light the chalice
“This I Believe” by John Foster

Inspiration is the fuel for creativity and creativity is the very essence of our growth both as mankind and as individuals. To be creative in everyday life could be one of the key factors to live a happy life. To inspire others and to be inspired are the gifts we give and receive in communication with other human beings. But what to do if inspiration is nowhere to be found and creativity feels just like one more point in your never ending to-do list?

Songwriter and drama teacher Pia Leinonen talks about the parallels between everyday creativity and the creative process in songwriting using her own songs as examples. Come and be inspired by this musical sermon that is accompanied by Joni Tiala, the renowned guitarist who together with Leinonen form the Finnish folk duo Vellamo. In Finnish mythology, Vellamo is the goddess of the sea. Based in Kokkola, on the western coast of Finland, the folk duo Vellamo has been delighting European and American audiences since 2008.

Pia Leinonen, originally from the arctic region of Lapland, is Vellamo's lead singer. Her exquisite voice combines her love and vast knowledge of Finnish folk music with the western singer-songwriter tradition in a unique and beautiful way. Her moving and evocative stylings have been compared to those of other story-centric performers such as Joan Baez and Marlene Dietrich.

Joni Tiala, originally from the Finnish port of Kokkola, began playing guitar at the age of 11. He is now a master of several stringed instruments. His eclectic musical background includes writing and performing for theater, progressive and alternative rock and Finnish and western folk. In addition to his work in Vellamo, Joni is an accomplished theater and session musician, and is founding member of the renowned Finnish progressive rock band, Moonwagon. You may hear them at <https://vellamoband.wordpress.com/music/>



Sunday, March 19, 10:30 a.m.
“Building Your Own Theology”
Rev. Tom Schmidt

Service Leader – Ruth Weber
There will be a children and youth food collection.

Were we created in the image of God or did we create God in our image? People have been asking this question for thousands of years. Are we any closer to finding the answer? Theology technically means the study of God, but in more general terms theology can be understood to mean the paradigm through which we find meaning and purpose in life. What is your theology? Did you build it or did it build you?

Sunday, March 26, 10:30 a.m.
“The Hero's Journey”
AyoLane Halusky
Service Leader – Robin Mahonen

AyoLane is a naturalist, and walks in the native ways. He has spoken with us before, and this time, we will be exploring some of the concepts of the work of Joseph Campbell, "The Power of Myth." Mythology is "the song of the Universe, the music of the spheres." He believes that people need to keep a heartstring to the Earth, and when you look into Nature, Nature looks into you. Join us for this exploration into our Shadow selves.



Downstairs Dialogue
“Socrates Café” – Open Discussion
Sunday, March 12, 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. Downstairs

With all the fast-breaking developments going on in the world, we have plenty of issues to discuss. What’s going on in religion, politics, economics, security, justice, etc. in the world, nation, state, local community, or even within our own congregation that concerns YOU? Maybe we can come up with some ideas that could make things better!

We will decide what topic(s) to discuss using the Socrates Café method. At the beginning of the session, each attendee will suggest a topic, and we will “vote” on which one(s) to discuss. Discussion led by Charlie West. So bring your favorite issue or question and come join us at 9:15am on Sunday, March 12, downstairs.

Charlie West



UUFSA Annual Service Auction Saturday, March 4, 2017, 5:00 and 6:30 p.m.

Our annual Service Auction is almost here! Come and join in the auction fun.

It all starts this coming Saturday, March 4th, at 5 p.m.

Start downstairs and enjoy free wine and snacks while you place bids on nice art, jewelry, and gift items in our Bidders Boutique.

Buy raffle tickets for the 50-50 raffle.

Socialize with your friends, and make new friends.

Then -- at 6:30 p.m. -- the excitement of a live auction begins upstairs!

Our own Cal Marshall and Chuck Chambers will auction off dinners, trips, household help and many more neat services.

Join in our major fundraiser of the year.

Child care will be available.

Consciousness Course Continues Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Rev. Tom's new course in raising consciousness kicked off last month with thirteen dedicated participants on a rainy night, seeking to "improve their happiness, helping themselves, and healing the world". Following is a schedule of sessions this month.

- March 1 – Need for a new paradigm of human consciousness
- March 8 – Some benefits of pursuing higher levels of consciousness
- March 15 – Tools for personal growth and development
- March 22 – Charting the map of consciousness
- March 29 – Using the map

New course participants are welcome!

HELP WANTED

Our Fellowship is looking for members who are interested in leadership positions including:

A Treasurer – to work with a paid bookkeeper. NO ACCOUNTING EXPERIENCE NECESSARY. Attend monthly Board meetings.

A Secretary – to document Board and Congregational meetings

All interested parties, please contact one of the Leadership-Development Team members. Do not delay as positions are limited!

Mary Kellough Lkellough@comcast.net 904 217-9837

Ruth Weber rweb423@gmail.com 904 347-5293

Cherie Dolgin cdolgin@bellsouth.net 904 461-1604

Great Decisions

First Monday of Each Month 7:00 p.m.

The Great Decisions discussion group meets the first Monday of every month at 7 p.m. at the UU to discuss US foreign policy issues. Please consider joining us. Great Decisions discussions are open to the public.

For more information, contact Yosi at yosi@acrossthestraits.com or (904) 461 3175.

Monday, March 6: “Trade and Politics”

The U.S. political mood toward trade has gone sour. One need look no further than the 2016 presidential contest for the popular narrative: trade means that China wins, at America’s expense. But do the numbers support that conclusion? The metrics used to gauge economic strength—Gross Domestic Product and balance of trade—have not kept up with the realities of modern manufacturing. Obtaining an accurate picture of U.S. economic stature requires a critique of those numbers. Only then can the U.S. develop appropriate policy solutions for the challenges at hand. The presentation and discussion will be led by Linda Tokarz and Charley West.

Monday April 3: "Conflict in the South China Sea"

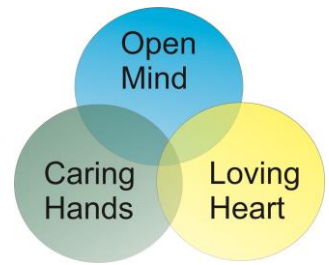
On Monday April 3 the topic will be "Conflict in the South China Sea" - led by Cynthia Thompson, Yosi McIntire, and hopefully Dave Webb of the UK Nuclear Disarmament Campaign. The South China Sea is a locus of competing territorial claims. In recent years, Beijing’s interests have intensified disputes and consolidated alliances with other countries in the region. Does the US have the diplomatic where-with-all to prevent a confrontation with China? Reading material: <http://bit.ly/2lZ24Zw>

Monday May 1: "Saudi Arabia in Transition"

On Monday May 1 the topic will be "Saudi Arabia in Transition" - led by Rosita Angeli and Annette Jones. The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia struggles with a drastic decline in oil revenue coupled with western criticism for promoting Wahhabism while failing to deliver democracy, women’s rights, or basic human rights. Is the US at a crossroads in bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia? Reading material: <http://bit.ly/2kAdFRL>

Programs for Children and Youth

February was a great start to our increased participation of the children and youth in our Sunday morning service. The children and youth are now participating three times a month, with the Story for All Ages the first Sunday, Lighting of the Chalice the second Sunday, and the Food collection the third Sunday! It went really well for everyone and such a joy to see all the children and youth in the Sanctuary having such fun!! March should be just as fun!!



Our goal for each Sunday is to provide our children fun activities through which they can develop a positive sense of self and practice the values expressed in our UU Principles. The small team currently organizing the Program for Children and Youth has a couple of requests. First, we are asking for the donation of a functional, simple, point-and-shoot digital camera to use in our classes. If you have such a camera to donate please see Vanessa Friedman or Barbara Battelle.

Our second request is more important. We need some of you! If you feel that children and young families are vital to our beloved community, we invite you to become part of the team that coordinates our children's programs. We are not looking for people to teach on a regular basis, although we very much need and welcome guest teachers. Rather we are looking for people interested in sharing some of the simple and joyful weekly tasks of running our program and for people interested in thinking about and planning the future of our Programs for Children and Youth. If you feel it is important for our Fellowship to provide activities that nurture and foster the positive development of children while their parents find a place of rest and renewal in our sanctuary, please contact Vanessa Friedman (Vfriedman32084@yahoo.com) or Barbara Battelle (babattelle32137@yahoo.com).

Palmer's Pic (movie)

The Americanization of Emily

March 24, 6:30 p.m.

The movie for the 24th of March is Ta Da Drum Roll: *The Americanization of Emily*. Starring James Garner and Julie Andrews. Reportedly this was their favorite movie. This has been described as a romantic comedy with lurking anti-war undertones. It is WW II in London. James Garner has the reputation of being the best belly rubber in existence, making sure his Admiral has the best of everything. Then he meets Emily (Julie Andrews) and, as they say, the rest is history. Even if you have seen it before, it's a nice refresher course in love and war.



Third Tuesday Book Group

March 21, 1:00 p.m.



Increase your E.Q. (Empathy Quotient) this year. Read more good books!

The book club selection for March is, *She's Come Undone*, by Wally Lamb. Gale Burnick will lead the discussion. Preview the book and other upcoming fiction and non-fiction reads at www.uufsa.org/book-club-reading-list.html

The club meets on the third Tuesday of each month downstairs at 1:00 p.m. Contact Barbara Brenner at barbbren25@gmail.com for more information.

Food Pantry



The Board of Directors of the St. Johns Ecumenical Ministries Food Pantry recently voted to add the Center for Spiritual Living as a new member church this Spring. The 12 participating churches which currently staff and run the Food Pantry are: Anastasia Baptist, Ancient City Baptist, First Coast Metropolitan Community, First United Methodist, Memorial Lutheran, Memorial Presbyterian, Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Trinity Episcopal Parish, Shores United Methodist, St. Anastasia Roman Catholic, St. Cyprian's Episcopal and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. This resource is definitely a spiritual community endeavor!

Cherie Dolgin

UUFSA Food Pantry Coordinator

Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be Sunday, **March 5, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** For more information, contact a member of the Dining with Dignity Team:

Mary Kellough, Nana Royer & Toni Wallace



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* (ellepaper@hotmail.com or 392-5722) if you are in need of assistance or would like to be involved in the Care Connection Team.

Meditation Group

March 7, 14, 21, & 28



The UU meditation group will be meeting every Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. until further notice. All are welcome. Experience is not necessary but "presence" helps. :-)

Peter Gibbon

March Calendar



- 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 Consciousness Paradigm 7:00 p.m.
- 2 – Ministry Conversation 3:00 and 6:00 p.m.
- 3 – Indivisible Team 9:00 a.m.
- 3 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 4 – Service Auction 5:00 and 6:30 p.m.
- 5 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 6 – Great Decisions 7:00 p.m.
- 7, 14, 21, & 28 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 10 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- 12 – Downstairs Dialogue 9:15 a.m.
- 13 – Board of Trustees meeting 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 16 – Green Sanctuary Team meeting 2:00 p.m.
- 16 – Ministry Conversation 3:00 and 6:00 p.m.
- 17 – Roadside Pickup 8:00 a.m.
- 17 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 21 – Book Club 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
- 24 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- 24 – Movie: *The Americanization of Emily* 6:30 p.m.
- 24 – Deadline for April Quest materials
- 26 – Ministry Conversation 1:15 p.m.
- 31 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Darts Nights

March 3, 17, and 31, 7:00 p.m.



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 and the fifth Friday if there is one. This month they will be **March 3, 17 and 31.** Contact Palmer Short, palshort@gmail.com, for details.

Beyond Our Congregation

Regional and National Events



For more information about 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/>

Black Lives of UU - Convening 2017

March 9-12, New Orleans, LA

As a community we will help design what we want for ourselves and our faith now and for the future. Black Lives of UU rose out of the Movement for Black Lives and we need YOU to join us in justice making and liberation through our faith.

Showing Up: A Racial Justice Conference for Youth and Adults – March 10-12

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church UU, Charlottesville VA

Hosted by Virginia Blue Ridge and Tidewater clusters

Facilitated in part by the Deep Abiding Love Project team

For Adults, this conference will take you to the next level in your racial justice work via hands-on and role play learning skills. For Youth, this conference will include: Peer Chaplaincy Support Training (condensed) and more.

UBarU Camp and Retreat Center, Kerrville, TX:

For all events, visit <http://www.ubaru.org> for more information and to register

March 31 – April 2, Men’s Retreat

April 28 – 30, Women’s Retreat

Retreats provide an opportunity for rest, relaxation, community building, and communion with nature in a beautiful hill country setting. Each retreat is led by a Unitarian Universalist minister who provides spiritual direction for the weekend.

Alabama Civil Rights Pilgrimage – April 1-5

UU Living Legacy Project is offering a shorter, more concentrated, version of their traditional Living Legacy Pilgrimage. This opportunity comes at a time of great urgency in our country as the very essence of civil and human rights are being challenged with every passing day and with every tweet! And yet, the spirit of freedom has not been silenced, as evidenced by the millions who took to the streets around the country, and around the world, to the sound of singing voices, pink hats and marching feet. This was and is today's civil rights movement at its best! So, in that spirit, we invite you to join this journey that will have crucial elements of our weeklong Pilgrimage that has changed lives and hearts, but in a more compact form. You will meet people, hear stories, and visit sites that made the civil rights Movement an event that rocked the world. Spaces are limited; registration closes on March 13th.

Reversing Inequality Conference – April 3-5, Washington, DC

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) and the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) are hosting a three-day conference for UUs to learn and share best practices for economic justice and advocacy, get involved with the latest campaigns against inequality, and visit lawmakers to influence positive change. Hear from dynamic speakers on the latest issues, including Chuck Collins and Sister Simone Campbell. UUJEC and UUSJ are organizations focused on mobilizing UUs for social justice and a more fair and compassionate society. We seek to inspire UUs to study our society's economic and social systems and to become advocates for justice.

Spring Gatherings – April 7-9, 2017,

These events will be held concurrently in each Southern Region area:

Florida, UU Fellowship of Marion County, Summerfield, FL

Mid-South, First UU Church of Nashville, TN

Southeast, Unitarian Church in Charleston, SC

Southwest, Bay Area UU Church, Houston, TX

The Southern Region **UUA Presidential Candidates Forum** will take place at the Southeast Gathering in Charleston and will be video streamed to the other sites.

Florida UU Women's Retreat – April 7-9, 2017, Ellenton, FL. For more information, go to:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/lcng1kppd2sf9b5/FL%20Women%27s%20Retreat%202017%20UPDATE%20D.pdf?dl=0>



June 21-25, General Assembly 2017, New Orleans, LA

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, 900 Convention Center Blvd, New Orleans, LA

<http://www.uua.org/ga>

July 23-28, 2017, The Point, a Southern Region All-Ages Retreat, Hulbert, OK

August 6-11, 2017, Southern Unitarian Universalist Leadership Experience (SUULE), Wirtz, VA

