

QUEST



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine Newsletter

St. Augustine Beach, Florida
Reverend Tom Schmidt, Minister

October 2017

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

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

Fellowship services are held Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

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 November issue are due by October 20.

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

Thanks to Charlie West and Rosi Angeli for proofreading.

From Your President

Greetings UUFSA Family!

Many changes have literally rocked our fellowship lately, and we are glad to have this beloved community to help us through the hard times, to celebrate and encourage our accomplishments in life, and just to be there for each other. Sometimes adversity promotes more growth than when things run like a fine clock. We find out exactly what we are made of. If you think about it, it is not the things that happen to us, but the way we respond to the things that happen to us that really matter. We find that when we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.



We hope you may have noticed new paint in our sanctuary. A new dishwasher has improved our kitchen and hospitality efforts. Our Peace Pole has been re-located, the sidewalks have been pressure washed, and the grounds have been spruced up. Shortly you will note new stage curtains in our sanctuary space. We are actively pursuing the construction of solar panels on our roof. All of these physical improvements demonstrate our commitment to the sacred space that is our spiritual home. We are working at becoming more hospitable and welcoming. In many ways, this building is our face, and reflects to all our friends and guests who we are and what we might offer to them in community.

We have a Mission and Covenant which help guide us in pursuing together our highest aspirations as a spiritual family. At our Annual Meeting in May, we voted overwhelmingly that we want a part time paid professional minister for our fellowship. Our new music program has been a great source of pride, and we have also made an increased commitment to our children and youth program. Part of our covenant with each other is pledging your support so that your Board can appropriately plan for our future. It is time to confirm your commitment to this fellowship with your financial support. Please return your 2018-2019 Pledge Card as soon as possible, well before our October 9th Board meeting where your pledges will tell us how to plan for our future.

UUFSA is an important liberal religious voice that needs to be heard in our community. We want to continue and expand the legacy established by fine people who saw the value of this sacred spot in St. Augustine.

I thank all of you in advance for your pledge and your ongoing support.

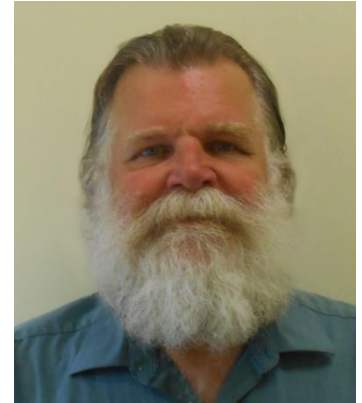
May you never thirst!
Robin Mahonen, President, UUFSA

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 email her at RRafael2@aol.com.

From Your Minister

The following was written for my Faith Column in the Record but was deemed too political to print. I'll let you decide:

When I was fifteen and studying for my driver's permit, I was given a very good piece of advice. It was pointed out that every driving rule has an exception, even if it is not explicitly named in the driver's manual. I was told to look for this particular exception on the test and always choose it even if another answer seems correct. Back then (I'm giving away my age here), the maximum speed on any road was fifty-five miles per hour. The exception to this rule would be safety. A blinding rain or thick fog can make driving fifty-five unsafe, so in this case safety overrides the maximum speed limit. In fact it is reckless to drive the speed limit if the conditions make it unsafe. Safety takes precedence over everything when it comes to driving.



Recently, at a public meeting to discuss the Confederate monuments located downtown, it was pointed out that slavery is never explicitly admonished in the Bible. While this information was not news to me, it may come as a surprise to many. In the years leading up to the Civil War, people used the Bible to justify the continuation of slavery, just as others used it to justify the abolition of slavery. This paradox is explained by the fact that, like the driver's manual, there is always an exception to the rules.

A traditional Jewish story recounts a time in the First Century BCE that a would-be convert confronted the Rabbi Hillel, challenging him to explain the whole of Jewish law in the amount of time he could stand on one foot. The wise Rabbi replied, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation of this--go and study it!" This reply, of course, mirrors the "Golden Rule" which can also be found in the book of Matthew, "Do to others what you want them to do to you. This is the meaning of the law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets."

The letter of the law may not condemn slavery, but the spirit of it surely does. Both Jesus and Hillel were trying to teach us with their versions of the Golden Rule that the spirit of the law always takes precedence over the letter of the law. We are told in many different ways throughout the Bible to love our neighbors and our enemies as we love ourselves because love is from God. Love is the foundation of the law and it is the spirit of the law.

Americans would not tolerate a statue celebrating King George III, Adolph Hitler, or Osama bin Laden in a public space, so it is not unreasonable to reconsider the celebration of the failed attempt to perpetuate the great sin of slavery. The Golden Rule and the call to love tell us that slavery is forever wrong and so asks us to reconsider our representation of the past in the pursuit of truth and reconciliation.

Rev. Tom Schmidt

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, October 1, 10:30 a.m.
“Why Welcoming?”
Rev. Tom Schmidt

Service Leader – Palmer Short

The UUA Welcoming Congregation website notes that the “Welcoming Congregation Program was launched in 1990 to address widespread homophobia and exclusion of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people within Unitarian Universalism, despite the fact that over the previous two decades many resolutions and statements in support of sexual minorities had been passed by the denomination.” As our Fellowship works to become an official Welcoming Congregation, let us explore the reasons for taking these steps.

Sunday, October 8, 10:30 a.m.
“Women in Islam”
Dilara Hafiz

Service Leader – Ruth Weber
This I believe

Dilara Hafiz has a BA in Economics from 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 as well as several classes on Islam at Flagler’s Adult Education & Lifelong Learning.

She is the co-author of The American Muslim Teenager’s Handbook (2nd edition 2009 Simon & Schuster) along with her two children, Yasmine and Imran Hafiz. 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. She serves on the Board of Compassionate St. Augustine.



Sunday, October 15, 10:30 a.m.
“The Eagle and the Condor”
Rev. Tom Schmidt

Service Leader – John Porter

There will be a children and youth food collection.

Plate donation goes to Home Again St. Johns

Rational observation makes it abundantly clear that reason alone is not sufficient to inspire the changes we need to save ourselves and our planet. If it was sufficient, we wouldn't have let things get so bad. Cultural and religious myths and stories have long served as a cohesive and a driving force for societies, and most likely what is needed to lead us towards a more promising future. For many people, the prophesy of the condor and the eagle is such a story. True or not, belief in it has created real, concrete results already and provides an example for what is possible.

Sunday, October 22, 10:30 a.m.
“Issues Related to Race, Gender and Power”
Martha Bireda

Service Leader – Megan Porter



Martha Russell Bireda, is a fifth generation Floridian, and a descendant of the first African Americans to settle in Punta Gorda. She grew up in Punta Gorda, attended Baker Academy, and graduated valedictorian of her class at Booker High School in Sarasota. She earned a B.A. and M.A. in Speech Pathology from Western Michigan University and the University of Michigan, respectively; and an Ed.S. in Student Personnel Services, and Ph.D. in Counselor Education from the University of Florida.

Dr. Bireda has more than 25 years experience as an educational consultant specializing in issues related to race, gender, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity. She is a frequent public speaker and radio guest to discuss issues related to diversity. She is a contributor to wsimag.com and writes a column in the Charlotte Sun, “Invisible Lives”, which addresses social issues. She is the author of eight books, including her latest, “The Womb Rebellion” a novel of historical fiction. Dr. Bireda is Executive Director of the Blanchard House Museum of African American History and Culture of Charlotte County. Her goal as director is to research and share the “untold and untaught.”

Dr. Bireda feels that her greatest achievements are her children, Jaha, a City Councilman for Punta Gorda, Florida, and a publisher; and Saba, a Harvard trained lawyer practicing in Washington, D.C. She is also grandmother to Nahom, whose name means “compassionate one.”

Sunday, October 29, 10:30 a.m.
“Getting Older”
Lee Weaver

Service Leader – Megan Porter



Referred to by many as "St. Augustine's own Playwright and Actor," Lee Weaver's list of acting credentials reads like a virtual "Who's Who" list in The Theater. He has portrayed "Curly" and "Billy Bigelow," "Tony" and "Harold Hill" and "Charlie Anderson" in "Shenandoah." His favorite role is "Don Quixote" of "Man of La Mancha" which he has performed in three different theaters, most recently at St. Augustine's Limelight Theatre.

In 1995, 1996 and 1997 he was the opening speaker for the Sunday Summer Services in the 7000- seat Great Auditorium in Ocean Grove, NJ. Also, in the Great Auditorium, he coordinated and directed the music for the Dixieland Jazz Worship Service, featuring The Wooster Street Trolley Jazz Band; Tony Campolo speaking.

For over a decade, NY metropolitan area TV viewers were familiar with Weaver's weekly broadcast, with his characteristic opening, "Well, I've had a good week!" Lee and his wife, Nanette, co-hosted a morning call in/talk radio show in Plainfield, NJ.

Weaver has 12 programs and plays which he performs around the country. He places the emphasis on "The Redemption Series," five two-hour presentations that deal with the social issues of the day.

Lee and his wife Nanette moved to St. Augustine (full time in 2001) from Summit, NJ. He is an auctioneer, vocal soloist, playwright, actor, poet, bicyclist and (once upon a time), a raquetball champion and instructor of same.

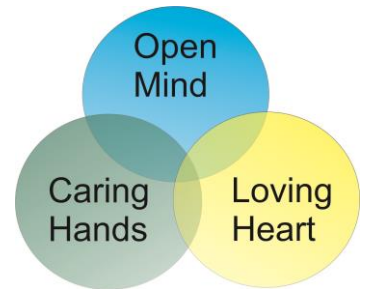


Programs for Children and Youth



August has been a busy month for our children and youth here at the UUFSA! As the kids were getting back to school, Jennifer De La Rosa arrived back from her summer vacation as well, as the new Program Director.

The older group of children began a new unit of The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism. The goal is to have the children familiar enough with them to recognize when they see them apply to their own lives. Each child is working on creating a play-doh creation for every principle that represents what it means to them.



Maggie McElhaney is continuing as our Nursery Teacher. Her lessons so far have included word games, nature, and even American Sign Language. Our little ones are having a great time learning and playing, especially in the special box fort, redecorated for summer. We love to see it change every season, and the kids love it too.

Jennifer De La Rosa
Program Coordinator



Fall Fest for the Future **September 30** **5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

The Stewardship Dinner, originally scheduled for September 16 has been rescheduled to September 30 because of Hurricane Irma.

The Fellowship begins a vitally important Pledge Drive for Fiscal Year 2019. That's right. Not for this year but for the following year. Why? We need to show ministerial candidates that we have pledges to support the ongoing part-time ministry. We still have angel funds and matching funds to pay for Rev. Tom for the last year of his term. The year after that we will need to increase our Pledges by up to 50% or so. We will begin the process September 30.

We voted to hire a new Minister. Now we must vote with our wallets.

Articulating Our UU Faith



An
Adult Religious Exploration Opportunity

Everyone is Welcome!

"Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, goes everywhere; its temple, all space; its shrine, the good heart; its creed, all truth; its ritual, works of love; its profession of faith, divine living." Theodore Parker

Wednesday Evenings

October 11 through November 8

7:00 - 8:30 p.m

This course guides participants through a series of easy and engaging exercises—personal reflection, role-play, and discussion—that equip us to communicate our liberal religious tradition and ideals.

Facilitated by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt
At the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine
2457 AIA South

For more information contact Rev. Schmidt
(432) 559-2411 or uurev@icloud.com

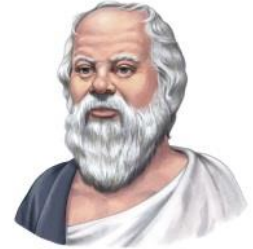
Downstairs Dialogue

“Socrates Café” – Open Discussion

Sunday, October 8, 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. Downstairs

This month, we will gather for Downstairs Dialogue on the second Sunday, October 8. We will again have an open dialogue on topics of the day that interest and concern us.

What’s going on in religion, politics, economics, security, justice, etc. in the world, nation, state, local community, or even within our own congregation? Would an open-minded sharing and discussion among thoughtful UUs in our traditional safe space be of interest? Maybe even come up with some ideas to make things better? We think so!



We will decide what topic(s) to discuss using the Socrates Cafe method used successfully at our local Council on Aging. At the beginning of the session, each attendee will suggest a topic, and we will “vote” on which one(s) to discuss. Topics should be of general interest. And since we are a religious institution, topics should typically have some connection to our UU Principles. Discussion led by Charlie West. So bring your favorite issue or question and come join us.

Finally, all Adult Learners should check out the new five-session course, “Articulating Our UU Faith”, offered by Rev. Tom on five Wednesdays starting October 11. See page 8.”

Charlie West
Co chair, Adult Learning

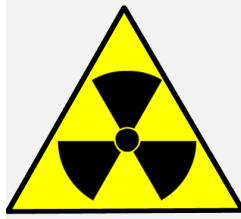


Sunday Announcements

Please send your announcements for Sundays directly to the UUFSA printer at this address: uufsaepsonprint@print.epsonconnect.com Please keep your announcements brief and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for brevity.

Great Decisions

First Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.



October 2

“Nuclear Security”

The discussion will be led by Richard Lahey. Richard is an expert in things nuclear. He is open to including the North Korean ICBM dilemma within this topic.



November 6

“Afghanistan and Pakistan”

Major internal conflict has plagued Afghanistan for four decades. The U.S., for its part, has conducted military operations in the country nearly continuously since 9/11. Today, war with the Taliban persists, and tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan have gradually deteriorated. Does the U.S. face a no win situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan? The discussion will be led by Chris McDermott and Surindar Paracer. Chris has lived in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Surinder is originally from India.

The background article for the Afghanistan/Pakistan GD discussion is available at <http://bit.ly/2w1j5ud>.

Great Decisions meets in the basement of the UUFSA on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome!! Bring a friend!

For more information, contact Yosi at 904- 461-3175.

Food Pantry



The Food Pantry was very lucky in that Hurricane Irma did not damage it at all or cause it to lose power! The parking lot was filled with scattered debris and tree limbs but pantry volunteers were able to clear it. The pantry opened three days after the storm and will continue on its regular schedule of being open Monday through Friday, from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. We expect the pantry to be especially busy in the next few weeks. If possible, please leave canned goods or nonperishable items in the basket placed in the front hallway of the Fellowship.

Thank you very much

Cherie Dolgin
UUFSA Food Pantry Coordinator

Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be Sunday, **October 1, 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.

Third Tuesday Book Group



The Book Group will meet on Tuesday, October 21 and November 21 at 1:00 p.m. Contact **Barbara Brenner** at barbbren25@gmail.com for more information.

Meditation Group October 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31

Meditation group practice will continue through October on Tuesday afternoons, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Led Buddhist meditations from Theravadin school. From one pointed concentration to sitting in open awareness, it is all good. No experience necessary. Contact **Peter Gibbon** at 240-338-3979 or pgg11744@gmail.com or just show up



October Calendar



- 1 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 2 – Great Decisions 7:00 p.m. (downstairs)
- 3 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 6 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 8 – Downstairs Dialogue 9:15 a.m.
- 9 – Board of Trustees meeting 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 10 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 11 – Articulating Out UU Faith 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 13 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- 17 – Book Group 1:00 p.m.
- 17 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 18 – Articulating Out UU Faith 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 19 – PFLAG 7:00 p.m.
- 20 – Deadline for November Quest contributions
- 20 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 24 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 25 – Articulating Out UU Faith 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 27 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- 27 – Movie: *Galaxy Quest* 6:30 p.m.
- 31 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.

Darts Nights

October 6 and 20, 7:00 p.m.



Darts nights are held at the Pub UU (Basement at UUFSA) 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 **October 6 and 20**. Contact Palmer Short, palshort@gmail.com, for details.

Palmer's Pic

Galaxy Quest



Friday, October 27, 6:30 p.m.

The movie for October 27 is ***Galaxy Quest***. Starring Tim Allen, Sigourney Weaver and the late Alan Rickman. It's hard to believe it's been almost 18 years since its release on Christmas 1999. The stars of a 1970s Sci Fi show, now scraping by on re runs and Sci Fi Conventions are beamed aboard an alien spacecraft with the belief that, not knowing the show was not real, they can save them from an oppressive regime. If you have seen it before it's time for a do over and if you have never seen it you're in for the ride and laughs of your life.



Beyond Our Congregation



For 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/>

Congregational Presidents Webinar

January 3, 2018, 7 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

UUA Southern Region Presidents Convocation 2017-2018. Current presidents, and currently serving presidents-elect and past presidents, your Southern Region wants you to feel supported, connected, and prepared while you lead your congregation! Learn more and register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-2018-uua-sr-congregational-presidents-webinar-subscription-registration-34869231811>

Ships Ahoy! Youth LE Webinar Session

December 12, 2017, 9:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Ships Ahoy! Webinar Session 1 Sail to great adventure in Unitarian Universalism! For Youth ages 15-18. Youth are invited to cruise on this amazing journey into Unitarian Universalism which will prepare them for membership and leadership in congregations and the Association at large. Ships Ahoy! There are ships on the horizon: Leadership, Scholarship, Discipleship, and Partnership! Join us for the adventure of a lifetime! Flyer: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/mrc7>





HOW TO DISMANTLE THE RACIAL HIERARCHY A Workshop for White People

Saturday, October 7th, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Buckman Bridge UU Church - 8447 Manresa Avenue

This workshop is for white people who want to challenge the racism around them -- and in their own heads and hearts -- and who are searching for a way to strengthen their work for racial justice. It's for white folks who want a better understanding of how white privilege and racism operate in society and inside of them. And, it's for white folks who already do anti-racism work and want to develop their skills and deepen their approach.

The workshop is facilitated by white people for white people. Our two facilitators bring years of experience, knowledge of structural racism, and a passion for creating change:

Michael Burkart has been consulting with a focus on diversity training since 1990. He has worked for a wide variety of corporate, public, and non-profit clients and held a teaching position at Antioch New England Graduate School. He has a doctorate in Behavioral Studies from Boston University.

Hope McMath, a Jacksonville native, is a cultural leader, educator, artist, and activist with a strong commitment to social justice and generating positive change in organizations and the community.

Cost is \$75. If cost presents an obstacle please be in touch.

Email bobbie@whiteandwoke.org or call 904.923.6468 to register. Space is limited.

A packet of resources, continental breakfast, and light lunch are included.

*This is the fourth in a series of trainings produced by **White and Woke**, a community of white people committed to dismantling structural racism. We are white, we are woke and we speak out because the half of our whole collective is filled with black lives that really do matter. To learn more please visit our website at whiteandwoke.org.*

#WHITEANDWOKE

Happenings at The Mountain

Come to The Mountain for a great program at an amazing place in the Blue Ridge Mountains – join us and let your spirit soar!



A place. An experience.
A way forward for all ages.

Outdoor activities, entertainment and fellowship, in addition to the individual program are part of the Mountain experience.

Southern UU Fall Institute (SUUFI)

The Best of Us: October 1 - 6

Come for a colorful autumn week as we learn from one another – sharing our thoughts and skills. Typical of SUUFI, the schedule balances mind and body, thought provoking, and heartfelt pursuits.

October 11-15 Womenspirit:

Embodying the Goddess: Rise Up, Reclaim, and Embrace Your Power!

Women coming together to learn, worship and commune. A journey through time and place to remember our sacred heritage and revive the rich mysteries of our inner being.

Thanksgiving -- November 22 - 26

Program provides indoor and outdoor activities for this intergenerational event. This is a great way to enjoy a special feast prepared by The Mountain chef and staff while you enjoy the program.



The view from Meditation Rock is spectacular!

Thinking Ahead to 2018

April 1-6 2018 Music Week

A remarkable week of workshops about music, private lessons, choral group, instrumental group, song-writing, jamming on the deck while enjoying the views, and evening concerts.

May 20-25, 2018 From Sustainability to Climate Justice

Featured presenters include Rev. Fred Small, a UU minister for climate justice and former environmental lawyer; the musical team, Friction Farm, with Christine Stay and Aidan Quinn; and Rick Crume, who helped write the Clean Power Plan at the EPA. A wide variety of workshops and activities provide opportunities to learn about Climate Justice.

For more information: <http://themountainrlc.org/> or 828.526.5838 or contact Beverly Cree at UUFSA.