

QUEST



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine Newsletter

St. Augustine Beach, Florida
Reverend Tom Schmidt, Minister

November 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 December issue are due by November 17.

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

Thanks to Charlie West and Rosi Angeli for proofreading.



From Your President

Namaste!

Greetings to our UUFSA spiritual family as we transition into fall, the days becoming shorter, and the mornings cooler. The holidays beckon to us.

I recall an Aesop fable about a farmer with a quarreling family. He called his family together and asked them to lay a bunch of branches in front of him. He bound them together and challenged each of them to try to break the bundle. Despite their best efforts, they could not. When he untied the bundle, they could break each stick easily. The farmer told them, "As long as you remain united, you can handle anything, but when you are divided, you are easily broken."

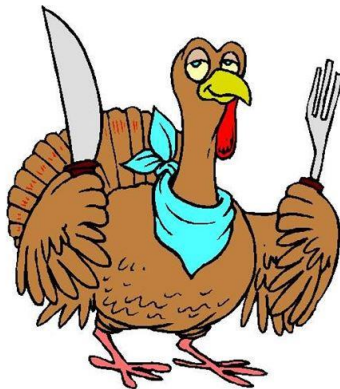


Such is the state of our country right now, divided and wounded. Many of us acutely feel the frustration, anger and hopelessness which seems to pervade many areas of our daily life.

We have chosen to become part of a community which binds us together in covenant to honor the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and to honor the interdependent web of life of which we are all a part. Remember, although we are part of a very diverse community, and despite our differences, we are all stronger together.

We come together to share ideas, thoughts and feelings, hopes and dreams, joys and sorrows, life transitions and tragedies. Having this spiritual family is like a pillow that cushions life's blows, and makes our lives that much richer. As I sit down to break bread with family this month, I will be grateful for the gift of this fellowship in my life.

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

Chances are, most of us have some sort of bottom line that we use to make choices. Often we do not articulate it as such, but it is there all the same if we make the effort to find it. It is the same for institutions. This Fellowship for example. Generally speaking, the bottom line is “do what best serves our mission statement.” It generally isn’t articulated as such in meetings, but it is there all the same. That is the purpose of a mission statement, to be that bottom line.



What started me thinking about the bottom line was something I read in a book called *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back our Country from the Religious Right*, by Rabbi Michael Lerner. Rabbi Lerner points out that the bottom line of ethical decision making in our public institutions no longer serves the public interest. The current bottom line, the bottom line that is rewarded most clearly and abundantly, is short-term self-interest. Our elected and appointed public officials too often are solely concerned with their own self interests. Employees of public institutions are more concerned with keeping their jobs than doing their jobs. In his “Spiritual Covenant with America,” Rabbi Lerner points out, “The fundamental goodness of the American people is now awakening to the need for a new bottom line based not only on economic success but also on our deepest spiritual values, values that are shared by religious as well as secular people, values that were and are central to the building of American society.”

And what are those values, “Love, generosity, kindness, responsibility, respect, gratitude, humility, honesty, awe, and wonder at the grandeur of the universe.” These values are universal and it would be difficult to find a significant number of people who would not share them in one form or another. What you would find, however, is a significant number of people who would argue that it is unrealistic to have a society based solely on those values. These so called realists argue that because we can never attain a society that fully and completely lives up to those ideals we shouldn’t even try. The realists say there will always be individuals who do not share these values and will actively seek to take advantage of those people who do. It’s true, we can never fully live up to our ideals, we will never be absent of people who would be willing to take advantage of others. This is fact. But should we live in fear of our human shortcomings? Should we allow the worst of human behaviors to determine the direction the vast majority of us would like to go?

I am enough of a realist to know we will not accomplish everything in our life time, but that is beside the point. The bottom line is we need to promote a new bottom line in this country, a bottom line that will in turn promote love, generosity, kindness, responsibility, respect, honesty, and humility. The status quo will prevail until enough people actively pursue a new way, and is that not the mission? The choice is ours to make and it begins with looking at our own priorities and having the courage to live them out in the world.

Rev. Thomas Schmidt

Phone: 432-559-2411

E-mail: uurev@icloud.com

Office Hours

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

By appointment anytime.

Rev. Tom Schmidt

Sunday, November 5, 10:30 a.m.

“Living Indigenously”

Rev. Tom Schmidt

Service Leader – John Porter

The human experiment has reached a fork in the road. One path will essentially continue the path of domination and control that has brought us to this point. The other is the path of belonging and connectivity. I choose to live indigenously. I choose to be linked so immeasurably to a place and a people as to lose awareness of the separateness I once imagined. We have tried the opposite, we have tried living as mere individuals striving to dominate each other and our environment, and it has led us to this precipice.

Sunday, November 12, 10:30 a.m.

“The Next Mass Murderer Will be a Man: Why it’s Time for Men (and Women) to Talk about Gender”

Jeffrey Nall, Ph.D.

Service Leader – Megan Porter

This I believe – Christy Sanford

Dr. Jeffrey Nall will address recent mass shootings and the #MeToo campaign raising awareness about women’s pervasive experience of sexual assault. Nall will explain why it is vital to examine gun violence and sexual harassment and assault as social problems and not merely the actions of deviant individuals. Specifically he will explain why an understanding of the feminist perspective of gender is vital to fully address the problem of violence and improve the lives of not only women and girls but also men and boys.

Jeffrey Nall, Ph.D. teaches philosophy and humanities for Indian River State College and the University of Central Florida. He also teaches courses in women and gender studies at Florida Atlantic University. When he is not teaching, writing or giving public talks, Nall spends much of his time with his four children in Vero Beach, Florida. For more information on Nall's work go to www.JeffreyNall.com



Sunday, November 19, 10:30 a.m.

“This is My Body”

Rev. Tom Schmidt

Service Leader – Palmer Short

There will be a children and youth food collection.

Plate donation goes to the Food Pantry

This service will feature a “Harvest Communion” in celebration of the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. Since time immemorial, food and drink has played an important role in every religious tradition, and now we know that what we eat and drink literally becomes the body. Following the service, the celebration of food and drink will continue with a community potluck so bring your curiosity and appetite this Sunday.

Sunday, November 26, 10:30 a.m.

“Attitudes of Gratitude”

An exploration of the importance of expressing gratefulness in our lives

Uncle Eddie and Robin Mahonen

Service Leader – Robin Mahonen

Many cultures and different spiritual traditions acknowledge gratitude as an important spiritual practice. Some of the negative associations with our country's celebration of Thanksgiving will be examined, and we will try to deconstruct those aspects of this holiday from our desires to express our gratitude for the gifts we share in this life. In the spirit of goodwill, we encourage the sharing of congregational reflection on this topic.

Uncle Eddie & Robin are a musical duet formerly from Wheeling, West Virginia, where they performed an eclectic mix of classic rock, bluegrass and original music. Eddie was an icon on the Appalachian music scene, having performed there for over 40 years, and having the honor of being a member of the staff band of the legendary Wheeling Jamboree. They have two original CD's: "My Own Words" and "When We're Together." They are also social and environmental activists, having founded the Wheeling Water Warriors, organized the Great Ohio River Relay, and attended Occupy Wall Street, the People's Climate March in NYC, and the Standing Rock demonstration. Robin has a BA in psychology and sociology from Hunter College of CUNY, a Master's in Social Work from Adelphi University, and additional post-graduate training at the University of Pittsburgh in Social Work and Public Health. She is a lifelong UU and currently serves as president of UUFSA. Previously, Robin was on the Board of Trustees at the Ohio Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation as President, Vice-President, and Trustee. She is a mother of four. Uncle Eddie & Robin have conducted services and performed at numerous UU congregations.



Look them up on the web at www.uncleeddieandrobin.com

or on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/UncleEddieandRobin?fref=ts>

Drum Circle

Second Tuesday of Each Month

Starting November 14

There will be a drum circle starting on Tuesday, November 14 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the sanctuary and continuing on the second Tuesday of each month. If you've ever been curious about joining a drum circle, I can't think of a better opportunity.

One of the most profound things we can do in life is to make music with other people. Drumming offers us the chance to do just that at the simplest level.

Michael "Derm" Dermody has been facilitating drum circles and enjoys leading people through their first experiences with hand drumming. Studies show that drumming has a fantastic effect on our health. It can lower blood pressure, strengthen our immune system, and help us sleep better.

Beginners are warmly welcomed, and all equipment is provided. One of the most important things to remember when you come to a Derm drum circle is to have fun, laugh, smile, and enjoy a night of stress relief.

And yes!! You do have rhythm!

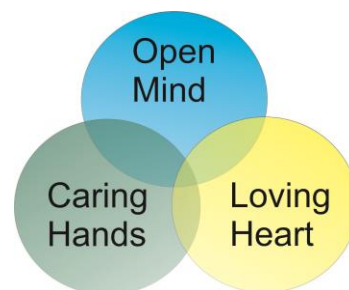
Alex Soltow
Music Director

Programs for Children and Youth



This month our children's program has been making its transition into fall! Maggie and Jennifer spent time sorting through old classroom supplies to give everyone a fresh start. In our nursery room, the focus on sight words is going full steam ahead. Maggie designed a competition where the children try to swat a sight word first, and it was really a hit! The kids wanted to play it again and again. Jennifer began teaching our older kids about fall, and we all got into the spirit by decorating the classroom with leaves and other seasonal drawings. The seven principles were discussed through

myths and legends about the changing seasons as well! Looking forward, we're excited to discuss the Teal Pumpkin Project and to paint pumpkins for Halloween.



Jennifer De La Rosa
Program Coordinator

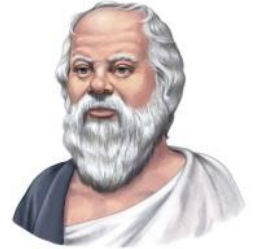
Downstairs Dialogue

“Socrates Café” – Open Discussion

Sunday, November 12, 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. Downstairs

This month, we will gather for Downstairs Dialogue on the second Sunday, November 12. 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.

Charlie West
Co chair, Adult Learning

Social Action/Green Sanctuary Teams

Saturday, November 4, 7:00 p.m.

Film

Scarred Lands Wounded Lives

This hour-long film will be shown., upstairs in the Sanctuary. Sponsored by Indivisible St Augustine and the Social Action and Green Sanctuary Teams, it is a compelling documentary exploring the under-reported environmental impacts of war and preparations for war. The film confronts the immensely broad ecological and human ramifications of everything from technological development and natural resource exhaustion to weapons testing and modern warfare itself.

“The documentary weaves together eyewitness accounts, interviews, archival footage, and news video from wars past and present. The images portray a story rarely considered in the heat of battle: how war pollutes the air, water and land, destroys biodiversity and drains natural resources.”

– Voice of America

Great Decisions

“Afghanistan and Pakistan”

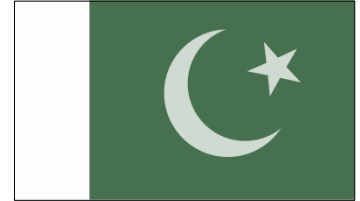
Monday, November 6, 7:00 p.m.



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 Surindar Paracer and Chuck Chambers.



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

2018 Topics:

- The Waning of Pax Americana
- Russia's Foreign Policy
- Media and Foreign Policy
- Turkey: A Partner in Crisis
- U.S. Global Engagement and the Military
- Global Health: Progress and Challenges

Please pick a topic you would like to present. The sooner you pick a topic, the more time you will have to do some study. Note: we can change the order of the presentations.

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

Darts Nights

November 3 and 17, 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 **November 3 and 17**. Contact Palmer Short, palshort@gmail.com, for details.

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

Food Pantry



If you are interested in volunteering one afternoon a month at the St. Johns Food Pantry, please contact Cherie Dolgin. Volunteers work at a computer and process clients' paperwork or fill grocery bags and stock shelves. It is a very rewarding experience to assist St. John County families in financial need. And it is a small commitment of time. New volunteers are thoroughly trained so they feel comfortable on the job. If this work sounds like something you would like to try, or you have questions, please give Cherie a call at 904 461-1604 or e-mail her at cdolgin@bellsouth.net.

Cherie Dolgin
UUFSA Food Pantry Coordinator

Dining With Dignity

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

Third Tuesday Book Group



The Book Group will meet on Tuesday, November 21 at 1:00 p.m. November's book is ***All Over But the Shoutin'*** by Rick Bragg. Contact **Barbara Brenner** at barbbren25@gmail.com for more information.

Tuesday Meditation Group November 7, 14, 21 and 28

Meditation group practice will continue through November 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.



Palmer's Pic (movie) Friday, November 24, 6:30 p.m.

A Dry White Season

The movie for November is ***A Dry White Season*** starring Donald Sutherland, Susan Sarandon and Marlon Brando (who took scale pay to be in the picture). South African school teacher Ben Du Toit (Donald Sutherland) comes to the conclusion his gardener was tortured and murdered by the apartheid corrupt police. He hires lawyer Ian McKenzie (Marlon Brando) to represent the gardener's family.



November Calendar



- 1 – Articulating Our UU Faith 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 3 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 5 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 6 – Great Decisions 7:00 p.m. (downstairs)
- 7 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 8 – Articulating Our UU Faith 7:00 – 8:30 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.
- 14 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 14 – Drum Circle 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 16 – PFLAG 7:00 p.m.
- 17 – Deadline for December Quest contributions
- 17 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 21 – Book Group 1:00 p.m.
- 21 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 24 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- 24 – Movie: *A Dry White Season* 6:30 p.m.
- 28 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.



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/>

Ships Ahoy! Youth 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>

Congregational Presidents Webinar

January 3, 2018, 7:00 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>



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!



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

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

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.

