

QUEST



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine Newsletter

St. Augustine Beach, Florida
Reverend Tom Schmidt, Minister

December 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>

Board of Trustees 2017 - 2018

President	Robin Mahonen
Vice President.....	Chuck Chambers
Secretary	Don Brandes
Treasurer	Barbara Battelle
Trustee.....	Rosita Angeli
Trustee.....	Pat Maguire
Trustee.....	Bill Maguire
Trustee.....	vacant

In This Issue

From Your President.....	2
From Your Minister	3
Sunday Programs	4-6
Children and Youth	7-8
Announcements, Teams & Repeating Events.....	9-13
Calendar	13
Beyond Our Congregation	14



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

Materials for the January issue are due by December 15.

Don Brandes, Editor: donaldbrandes@gmail.com

Thanks to Charlie West and Rosi Angeli for proofreading.



From Your President

Namaste and Holiday Greetings to you all!

The time seems to go faster every year, and again, here we are at December. The bright lights are up in town, and holiday music fills the stores. We will be having our Decorating Party on December 3rd, after the service. We Ho-Ho-Hope you will join with us for some fun in community in putting on a festive face for our fellowship.

It's that time of year again. Out with the old year, and in with the new? Well, not always. It's not always a good idea to throw out the baby with the proverbial bath, and we know that burning bridges is never advisable. It is a time when we find ourselves evaluating our progress and our place in the scheme of things. Where are we on this journey we call life? More specifically, where do we fit in with our spiritual community, and where does our fellowship fit in our lives?

How do we nurture, enrich and inspire, and in what ways are we nurtured, enriched and inspired ourselves?

Each week in our services, we agree and covenant together that service is our prayer. Our family needs your service!

With the changes we expect in the next year, we want to gather together everyone who wants to share in the work of this fellowship in a Town Hall meeting on December 10th, after the service. We hope to hear your ideas, and also encourage any members to volunteer their talents and time to the continued smooth operation of our spiritual family.

Many thanks to all of you who say "yes" and have continued to help make this a place of partnership and peace, and may you all have the courage to give and receive love in the coming year.

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

This holiday season, let us recall how a Unitarian saved Christmas. Perchance save may not be the best word, but one particular Unitarian did a great deal to expand the celebration and ideals of Christmas beyond its Pagan and Christian roots. Charles Dickens scholar Michael Timko makes the case that in “A Christmas Carol,” Dickens never mentions anything about Jesus, the nativity, or anything explicitly religious yet depicts a truly transformative experience. Timko points out, “With Scrooge’s transformative change of heart, Dickens illustrates that his readers, too, can be converted from a harsh, complacent, selfish world-view to one of love, hope and charity and, like Scrooge, can again become part of the human community. . . . And for Dickens, that was the true meaning of Christmas.”



Charles Dickens became a Unitarian in England after meeting William Ellery Channing and Ralph Waldo Emerson on a visit to America. Michael Timko points out that most of Dickens’ stories reflect the core beliefs of Nineteenth-century Unitarianism: “the belief that Jesus was a human being who exemplified a truly religious life; the rejection of materialism and the doctrine of necessity; the rejection of a God of stern judgement; the rejection of dogma; an inclusive rather than an exclusive religion; and an emphasis on doing good works.” The doctrine of necessity was the widely held belief that our fates are pre-determined and there was little or nothing we can do to change that. Through his stories, Dickens shows us that people can change of their own volition, that the future is in our own hands.

The metanarrative of Dickens’ era was that of a hierarchical universe, that was unchanging and unchangeable. Dickens portrayed a new story, however, one that more accurately depicted his own experience and matched what he found in the Unitarian church and later in the theories of Darwin. This new story allowed for free will, giving the individual the power to determine his or her own fate because the future was not predetermined. This new story also taught that the meaning and purpose of life was to foster love and good will and the transformative power of a generous spirit.

Of course, Dickens did not fully introduce these ideas, because it could be argued that it is present in the original story of Christmas, the story of a poor boy born in a manger, venerated by wise men and shepherds, despised by kings and priests, a boy who could grow to become one of the most influential figures of all human history. It is the story of a man who preached love in the face of hatred, a man who recognized the spark of the eternal in every person, a man who taught us that we are forgiven through our own desire to change.

Rev. Tom Schmidt

Rev. Thomas Schmidt

Phone: 432-559-2411

E-mail: uurev@icloud.com

Office Hours

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

By appointment anytime.

Sunday, December 3, 10:30 a.m.
“Strong Opinions, Loosely Held”
Rev. Tom Schmidt

There is nothing wrong with holding strong beliefs, it is not only natural but can be healthy and helpful. At the same time, it is important to remember that our beliefs, all of them, are but a matter of opinion, even our most near and dear beliefs, and because they are mere opinions they should not be grasped too tightly lest they become rigid and stifling.

Sunday, December 10, 10:30 a.m.
“Property Rights and the Origin of Human Rights”
Jerome Fosaaen

The Sostrom Family will be our chalice lighters.
This I believe – Heather Sostrom

Martin Luther King, Jr. famously said "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice". The quote, however, is originally that of Theodore Parker, a nineteenth century Unitarian minister, who was both a member of the Transcendentalist movement and an Abolitionist. That "bend towards justice" is what we call the development of human rights, a journey and a struggle we as a nation and the rest of the world continue, even today.

The late Andro Linklater, in his books *Measuring America* and *Owning the Earth*, argues that Human Rights are derived from the development of private property rights in western Europe. And further, that Thomas Jefferson's truly visionary belief that only a broad base of land owning yeomen farmers could make democracy possible, led directly to the prosperity of our young nation, and expansion of human rights.

Jerome will explore the good, the bad and the ugly of individual property rights, and how we may better understand our first and second UU Principles:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

Sunday, December 17, 10:30 a.m.

“The Power of Story”

Rev. Tom Schmidt

There will be a children and youth food collection.
Plate donation goes to a local charity.

The celebration of Chanukah, like most holidays and holy days, is about inserting ourselves into an old story. The rituals, traditions, and community gatherings all serve to insert us into the story and we are instantly connected to the past, present, and future.



Sunday, December 24, 10:30 a.m.

“Music and Reminiscences”

Palmer Short

The service will consist of holiday music and members of the fellowship sharing holiday memories with the fellowship.



Sunday, December 31, 10:30 a.m.

“Hope And Gratitude”

Tom Neilson

Tom Neilson will share experiences with hope and gratitude while working for social justice over the last 50 years.

Tom Neilson, Ed.D. left the states for Colombia in 1970 to avoid the Vietnam War and proceeded to spend a dozen years in South America, Africa, Europe, and Asia.

His doctoral dissertation about US political and economic hegemony is rooted in his work with the United Nations in Somalia. At UMass, Amherst, he taught in the Social Justice Program, instructing classes on Race, Gender, Class, Men and Masculinity, and Education for Social Change.

A farm boy with a guitar, his music has been used in documentaries, TV, radio, and theater productions.



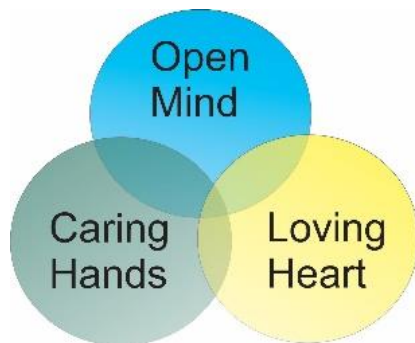
A multi-award winner, including two IMA Song Of The Year Awards, in 2015 he was nominated for the United Nations Nelson Mandela lifetime achievement award for peace and justice. He tells the stories of people's struggles against greed and violence, interjecting a good deal of levity along the way. <http://www.tomneilsonmusic.com/>



Attention UUFSA Wifi users

We have installed a new modem at the UUFSA. This should increase the speed of our Wifi connection. The first time you try to connect, you will need to log on manually. After that you should be able to connect automatically. If you have any difficulty, please see Barbara Battelle or Jerome Fosaaen.

Programs for Children and Youth



It has been a busy and fun month for the children in our Fellowship.

They created autumn decorations while talking about the changing season, and painted teal pumpkins for Halloween as part of the teal pumpkin project, a project that is meant to remind all of us to help make Halloween safe for all children, including those with food allergies.



Palmer Short joined them the Sunday before Halloween to read a Halloween story he wrote about a “haunted house.” It was a great hit. Thank-you, Palmer!!



They then learned about *Día de los Muertos*, Day of the Dead, a holiday celebrated throughout Mexico when families gather to remember and honor loved ones who have died, and they learned some Spanish greetings. *¡hola!* *¿Cómo estás mi amigo?*

In addition to Palmer, Barbara Battelle joined a class to show them how children live in the Amazon rain forest of Peru (All the children love soccer, just like they do!), and Jindy Gelow led a class focused on fossils. Next time you see Grace, Stella, Rio or Arbor ask them why we never find dinosaur fossils in Florida!! Thank-you, Jindy!!



Our children love to learn from the members of our Fellowship, so if you have something you would like to share with them, please let Jennifer De La Rosa, Barbara Battelle or Jindy Gelow know, and we will arrange for you to join a class. The children are great fun!

(More on next page.)

Just as our children love learning from our members, we love it when our children take part in our service. They do a wonderful job collecting food for the food pantry (watch the basket fill), and Grace and Stella, along with their mom Kelly Shuford, did a great job lighting our chalice.



We look forward to having even more fun with our children as the holidays approach.



FELLOWSHIP TOWN HALL MEETING

December 10 After Service and Coffee

Chuck Chambers - Stewardship Chair

This Meeting is open to all Members, Friends and Guests. We will be discussing the failed 2018-19 Pledge Drive and what happens now. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ATTEND! We will be outlining steps being taken now and to be taken soon to begin operating our Fellowship without a minister seven months from now. We will be looking for volunteers to step up and take on new tasks in the future. They say the world is run by those who show up and we need everyone on board so that our Fellowship is even stronger on the other side of this transition. We will not be voting on anything at the Meeting. It is an informational meeting with open discussion. Please plan to attend.

October Treasurer's Report

The October Treasurer's Report and a summary of that report is posted on the UUFSA News bulletin board downstairs.

Guest at Your Table



Guest at Your Table is the Unitarian-Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) annual program to support its work to promote human rights. UUSC works with people and communities not served by other organizations and helps women, people of color, religious minorities, LBGTQI, and others. UUSC takes action to advance economic and environmental justice and civil liberties. It provides aid for natural disasters and forgotten conflicts. UUSC works in 25+ countries with 75+ organizations benefiting thousands of individuals.

Guest at Your Table's theme this year is Small Change is Big Change and it is your opportunity to support people in need. The Children and Youth Program is handling this year's fund raising program. Boxes for contributions will be handed out Sunday November 26th and also will be available in the back of the sanctuary or downstairs. Please read the instructions and fill in the blanks on the side of the box. The Guest at Your Table boxes may be placed on your dining table in lieu of an actual guest, and money or checks inserted. The boxes will be collected Sundays January 7-28. Thank you for your support.

Great Decisions

“World Health and Poverty”

Monday, December 4, 7:00 p.m.

The next Great Decisions discussion topic will be “World Health and Poverty” - led by Surinder Paracer. All are welcome to attend.

Next year Great Decisions will be meeting on the first Wednesdays of each month beginning in February. The first topic will be led by Richard Lahey and will be on U.S. “Global Engagement and the Military.” In March Louis Post will make a presentation on “The Waning of Pax Americana.”

Please join us (and bring a friend): 2487 A1A S, St Augustine, FL 32080 - see map at uufsa.org

For more information, please contact Yosi at jomcintire@bellsouth.net and/or (904) 461 3175.

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

Downstairs Dialogue

“Socrates Café” – Open Discussion

Sunday, December 10, 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. Downstairs

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

Food Pantry



At this giving time of year, I would like to acknowledge the UUFSA team of volunteers, who work at the Food Pantry all year long. They are Jill and Lou Cerulli, Dave and Lee Ann Forrest, Chris Fosaaen, Mary Kellough, Pat Maguire, Cal Marshall, Kathleen Paracer, John Porter, Nana Royer, Ruth Weber and Marsha Williams. Also welcome to our newest volunteer, Rosemary Wheeler!

Their duties include processing client's paperwork on the computer, packing grocery bags, and stocking shelves. Pat and Cal also purchase food for the pantry and I attend the monthly Board meetings. It's a necessary endeavor and also a wonderful feeling to assist others in St. Johns County who are in need. Many thanks to our UU team for their dedication and hard work.

And much appreciation to the congregation for your generous contributions when the Food Pantry is the recipient of the Third Sunday donation. As well as for the canned goods and staples you leave in the Food Pantry basket or give to the children to collect during some of the services. If you could see the relief on the faces of those receiving food at the Pantry, you would be very heartened that you had made the effort to share.

***Blessings to all this holiday season,
Cherie Dolgin
UUFSA Food Pantry Coordinator***

Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be **Sunday, December 3, 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

Tuesday, December 19 at 1:00 p.m.



December's book is *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. Contact **Barbara Brenner** at barbbren25@gmail.com for more information.

January 16 - *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth,
February 20 - *Our Souls at Night* by Kent Haruf,
March 20 - *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez,
April 17 - *The Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towle,
May 15 - *Killers of the Flower Moon* by David Grann,
June 19 (date subject to change) - Member lunch at a local restaurant

Tuesday Meditation Group

December 5, 12, 19 and 26

Meditation group practice will continue through December 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.



Darts Nights

December 1, 15 and 29, 7:00 p.m.



Darts nights are held at the Pub UU (Basement at UUFSa) or occasionally at a real local pub, at **7:00 p.m.** on the first and third Friday of each month and the fifth Friday if there is one. Contact Palmer Short, palshort@gmail.com, for details.

Palmer's Pic (movie)

Pinocchio

Friday, December 22, 6:00 p.m.

The movie for December is will be that all time Disney favorite *Pinocchio*. The carpenter Geppetto sees a falling star and wishes the wooden boy he is carving could become a real boy. The Blue Fairy grants his wish on some conditions and appoints Jiminy Cricket as the boy's conscience. Well you know the rest. Become a child again and experience this wonderful story. The movie time will be moved up to 6:00 p.m. to accommodate children. .



December Calendar



- 1 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 3 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 4 – Great Decisions 7:00 p.m. (downstairs)
- 5 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 8 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- 10 – Downstairs Dialogue 9:15 a.m.
- 10 – UUFSA Town Hall meeting after coffee time
- 11 – Board of Trustees meeting 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 12 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 12 – Drum Circle 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 15 – Deadline for December Quest contributions
- 15 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- 19 – Book Group 1:00 p.m.
- 19 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 21 – PFLAG 7:00 p.m.
- 22 – Food Pantry 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- 22 – Movie: *Pinocchio* 6:30 p.m.
- 26 – Meditation 3:00 p.m.
- 29 – Darts 7:00 – 9:00 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/>

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.

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.