

QUEST



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine Newsletter
St. Augustine Beach, Florida

December 2020
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uufsacontact@gmail.com <http://www.uufsa.org/>

All in - person activities are on hold until further notice to avoid spreading COVID-19.
Sunday services and the Sunday children's program are being presented online through Zoom video conferencing.
Audio transcripts of most past presentations are available on our website.

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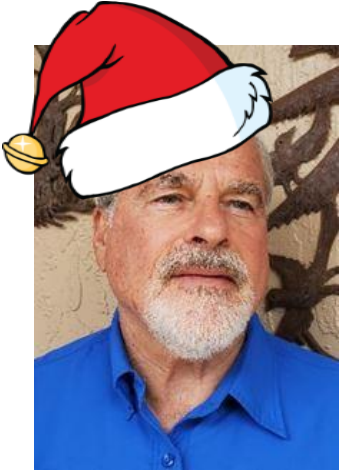


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Materials for the January issue are due by December 18.

Don Brandes, Editor: donaldbrandes@gmail.com
Thanks to Adele DelSavio for proofreading.



From Your President



Some might say it is a frightening time to live in America. We know too well the 2020 election results didn't repudiate hate or deter the conspirators and anti-government extremists. *Au contraire*. And beyond the election, it's very frightening to see how limited access to health care, surging COVID-19 cases and reduced employment, hitting particularly hard African-Americans, Latinos and women, are ravaging most areas of the country. And if you're one of the 30 million people without any health insurance, that's really scary. But, after a tumultuous election, maybe we should pause for a rest, and take some satisfaction in the high voter turnout and the victory of a unity messenger. We can be grateful for that. While we indeed give thanks, there's no room for giving up or retreat. Speaking of gratitude, on behalf of the UUFSA Board of Trustees, I'd like to extend our heartiest wishes to you and yours for a happy and safe holiday season. Give thanks, eat and celebrate, but keep your distance. As we

know, the COVID-19 threat is worse than ever, and the CDC advises families to socially distance and limit family gatherings in both number of guests and duration. Outdoor events, involving few people, are much preferred over indoor ones.

If COVID-19 wasn't enough to rein in our enthusiasm for the holidays, we have the embellished history to deal with. Looking back to my public elementary schooling in New Hampshire, Thanksgiving was marked by poems, songs, images and cutouts of peppy Pilgrims in their black Puritan garb eating turkey and squash with the Wampanoag natives. Let's not forget the story of those friendly natives sharing their secrets for growing corn – and “welcoming the Pilgrims.” Even though the Puritan – Wampanoag event is considered real, the circumstances surrounding it appear to be mostly made up. A Boston Globe story notes “the story of this First Thanksgiving is a stretch, and the real story absent from the pages of history.” The real story would have to include shame, greed, disrespect, and dishonor, all in the name of forging a democracy where all (except slaves) could be free, except for the indigenous occupants who occupied these lands since time immemorial,” notes Jessie Doe Biard, a Wampanoag leader, currently involved in the fight to overturn President's Trump attempts to legally dissolve the tribe.

She continues, the story of Thanksgiving in 1621 at Nauset (Cape Cod) didn't take form as the holiday story we understood today until 200 years later. In 1863, in an attempt to reduce strained relations between North and South, President Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday. The imagery of Pilgrims and Native people celebrating together took root at this time. Conclusion: The real story was 200 years of violence, interrupted by one large after-hunt dinner party.

It's customary at this time to count our blessings and share thanks. Let us celebrate the holidays and give thanks for our bounties. Be thankful for families and friends, for the food on the table and those who brought it there, and especially to caregivers who bear an enormous burden from the COVID -19 outbreak. I'm also very grateful for those in our Fellowship who contribute, week after week, to put on quality services, invest in maintaining and beautifying our sanctuary building, and care for others. Religious traditions from all over (and scientific evidence) encourage expressions of gratitude. It's good for our physical, mental and spiritual health. I'd add that it would help our politics too – to stop all this whining. In this holiday season, we will resolve to do better, to find common ground in decency and love of our fellow creatures, big and small, and to create new stories to be shared tomorrow. Happy holidays, everyone.

Chris McDermott
571-265-4189
surfbiker55@yahoo.com

All Sunday services will be presented online through Zoom video conferencing until further notice. The meeting ID will be posted on the UUFSA website, www.uufsa.org, and will be emailed to everyone on the UUFSA members and friends lists several days before each service. If you are not on either of those lists and would like to be, please send a note to uufsacontact@gmail.com. The starting time for services has changed to 9:30 a.m. instead of the traditional 10:30 a.m. to avoid overloaded Zoom servers during the peak church hour.

Sunday, December 6, 9:30 a.m.
“Staying Healthy in a Pandemic During the Holidays”
Allen Deprey

Service Leader: Renee Jones

Music: Taffy Rook

Story for All Ages



Allen Deprey will encourage us to care for ourselves with natural means available to all of us: diet, rest, exercise, meditation, proper hydration and maintaining social connections to help ameliorate the stresses many of us are feeling during these turbulent times.

Allen Deprey has a BA in Psychology from the University of Maine, and is a 1989 graduate of Life Chiropractic College in Marietta, GA. He is a Licensed Chiropractor in Florida and has been in private practice in St. Augustine since 1990. In 2002, he moved to his present location and opened the St. Augustine Natural Health Center. He is a member of the St. John's County Chiropractic Network. His purpose is to support the health and wellbeing of our community by helping as many people as possible to regain their health naturally through chiropractic care and adjunctive natural healing methods.



Sunday, December 13, 9:30 a.m.

“Seeking Wisdom in the Arts during a Pandemic: Why the Humanities Are Essential Knowledge During Crisis”

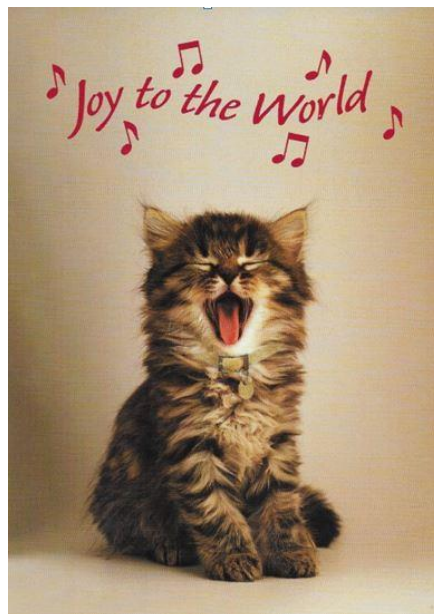
Jeffrey Nall

Service Leader: Ruth Weber
Music: Alex Richman
This I Believe

Our public discourse often diminishes and marginalizes Humanities as a frivolous or non-essential area of serious human study. But our collective turn to film, poetry, paintings, philosophy, religion and literature for insight and consolation during COVID-19 reveals how mistaken such dismissals are. In *The Sane Society* (1955), pioneering social psychologist and philosopher Erich Fromm wrote, “The whole life of the individual is nothing but the process of giving birth to himself; indeed, we should be fully born when we die – although it is the tragic fate of most individuals to die before they are born.” In this talk Dr. Jeffrey Nall highlights the renewed interest in Albert Camus’ 1947 novel, “The Plague” to argue the humanities uniquely acknowledge that the human being is a project in process, requiring active effort to approximate the full flowering of humanity. Camus’ novel teaches us to recognize the pathology of centering life on business and mere material survival, and the primacy of moral decency, friendship, and love - in a word: “biophilia,” the love of life.



Jeffrey Nall, Ph.D. is an engaged citizen, father, and professor. He teaches philosophy and humanities courses for Indian River State College and the University of Central Florida. Nall also teaches courses in Florida Atlantic University’s Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department. For more information on Dr. Nall’s work, go to www.JeffreyNall.com



Sunday, December 20, 9:30 a.m.
“Making Spirits Bright”
Bella Costa String Quartet

Service Leader: Gina Jonas

Music: Taffy Rook

Third Sunday Plate Collection: Food Pantry

The Bella Costa Quartet will perform seven musical selections that embody the joy and hope of the holiday season. Back by popular demand after their appearance at UUFSA with a String Quartet Sampler last January, the Bella Costa String Quartet comprises principal members of the St. Augustine Orchestra: Patti Coleman, concertmaster; Rebecca Simpson, first violin; Heather Turvey, principal violist and Alexander Lynn, principal cellist. Formed in the summer of 2018, the Bella Costa String Quartet has been staying active musically throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by working on virtual projects and gathering for socially-distant rehearsals.



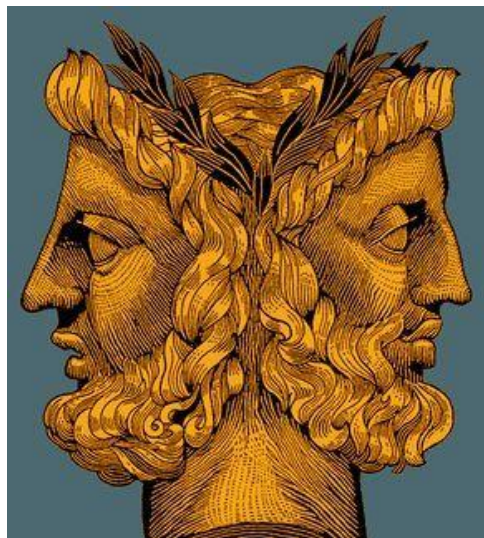
From left to right: Alexander Lynn, Heather Turvey, Rebecca Simpson and Patti Coleman

- Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah – Handel
- Air on the G String – Bach
- Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring – Bach
- Fantasia on Greensleeves – Ralph Vaughn Williams
- Ave Maria – Schubert
- Selections from the Nutcracker Suite – Tchaikovsky
 - March
 - Trepak
 - Waltz of the Flowers
- Joy to the World – Handel

Sunday, December 27, 9:30 a.m.
**“New Year: Looking Back, Looking Forward:
A Sharing Program”**

Service Leader: Robin Mahonen
Music: Alex Richman
Green Minute

January is named for Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and transitions, who presided over passages, doors, gates and endings, as well as in transitional periods such as from war to peace. Janus was usually depicted as having two faces looking in opposite directions, one towards the past and the other towards the future.



As we wind up 2020, we look back into our past for touching memorable moments, and look forward to a future with hopes for a better year ahead for us all. Is there a holiday story from your past you'd like to tell us about? Do you have a dream for a happier, healthier 2021 that will help inspire us all? This is a Sharing Program, and we encourage you to bring your own story to this program.

Chris McDermott Office Hours
Thursday Afternoons, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.
(except Nov. 26 and Dec. 24)

I'm going to be holding "office hours" every Thursday afternoon from 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. at the UUFSA until further notice. Come by to chat, share news or meditate. We'll be social distancing and/or masking, and we will probably hang outside, weather permitting. I'd like to just keep it open and if those present want to meditate – we'll sit down for that, or we can pull weeds with Mary or just chat. Please bring a chair (for outside), your drink (no throw-aways please) and your mask. When you come by, you might want to bring your monthly donation; you can drop it in the mailbox out front. A two-fer! In this time of COVID-19, we are unable to safely gather all at once, but I believe we can safely meet in small groups for a limited time period. Thursday afternoon. We'll try this day and time and adjust if it's not suitable. See you there!

Chris



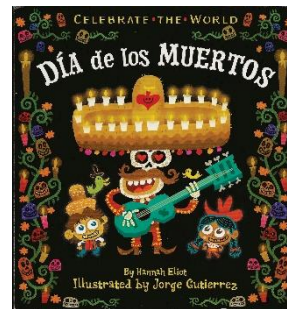
Programs for Children and Youth

With your support, the 12 young Enchanting Activists in *Harry and UU Hogwarts School of Social Action* raised over \$500 for the Rogue Valley, Oregon, Wildfire Relief Fund. Thank you very much for your generous support of our children's efforts.



They will focus next on fighting the Horcrux of Poverty by creating gift bags for the homeless to be given to Home Again St. Johns. More about that in the coming days.

During this past month, we hope you enjoyed our children's reading of "Día de los Muertos." They had fun reading it for you. In their class this past month, the **Enchanting Activists** also had fun decorating their own Día de los Muertos masks, making magic potions, great smelling hand-rubs to keep or give away and Thanksgiving cards. We hope you enjoyed receiving yours.



We wish all of you a happy and healthy start to the holiday season. We are indeed thankful for every one of you.

To learn more about or to join our program, please contact *Professor Kelly Sommer* (Kelly.winten@gmail.com) or *Co-Headmasters of the UU Hogwarts School of Social Action* Jindy Gelow (jindyms@yahoo.com) or Barbara Battelle (Battellebarbara@gmail.com).

UUFSA Adult Learning
Tuesday, December 8, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
“Why Evil Exists”
Chris McDermott

Zoom login information

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82211021377>

Meeting ID: 822 1102 1377

Password: 180319



Your Spiritual Brain on Religion:
The Neuroscience of Religious Belief

Start the New Year with the UUFSA Adult Learning Program on Zoom, Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

As in all complex behaviors, several brain parts get involved during religious experience. It seems that religion makes use of the same areas used by other functions. By analyzing brain scans of people in prayer, meditation, and rituals, we will explore topics such as stress management, spirituality and health, and the neurophysiology of religious experience. Other topics include the effect of spirituality and religion on health and wellbeing, the nature of near-death experiences, the human urge to create myths and rituals and the philosophical and theological implications of linkage between brain and spirituality.

In the last three decades, the biological basis of religion has been debated and explored in diverse fields such as evolutionary psychology, anthropology, genetics, and cosmology. Our guide in this adventure is Andrew Newberg, MD, Professor and Director of Research of Integrative Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Our first scheduled Zoom meeting of 2021 will take place on January 5, with the topic: “Why Do WE Have a Spiritual Brain?” Zoom login information will be provided later.

New Artwork Installed In UUFSA Foyer

A new rainbow quilt is now on display in the foyer of our UUFSA building. This quilt is a gift of Quan & Chris McDermott. Quan designed and sewed the colorful quilt using her artistic vision to create a new, fresh and original version of the LGBTQ rainbow flag. Don Brandes, Tony DeCrosta and Cal Marshall installed the quilt in the foyer above the stairs leading down to the Social Hall. The location of the quilt makes it visible to anyone who enters our building. It's the first thing anyone would see, and it says "welcome." We intend to expand the art collection in our building's foyer by adding more pieces by artists representing their diverse cultures. We are considering artwork that reflects African American and Indigenous cultures.



Beautification Team Seeks Volunteers

If anyone would like to join the Beautification Team in its work, please contact Rosi Angeli via text at 904-315-4284 or email rosiangel6@gmail.com. We have projects that volunteers can complete safely distanced from others.

Volunteers are needed to:

- Paint walls (restroom, printer room, stairwell to attic, small meeting room, etc.)
- Haul purged furniture and other items to Betty Griffin Thrift Store.
- Paint spots in Social Hall ceiling.
- Purge building supplies that we've saved but are not needed.
- Make a beautiful flower arrangement for the Sanctuary.
- Install a new piece of carpeting at the main entrance threshold.
- Repair loose chair arms.
- Paint and hang burlap sound-dampening panels in Social Hall.
- Select, renew, reframe and hang certificates honoring UUFSA on the Wall of Honor leading into Social Hall.
- Etc.

St. Johns Food Pantry (AKA St. Johns Ecumenical Ministries Inc.)



Since March, distribution of food has been very different at the St. Johns Food Pantry. Chris Fosaaen coordinated a team of UU volunteers, who wanted to continue working at the Pantry, despite the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. A special and heartfelt thank you goes out to Chris Fosaaen, Jerome Fosaaen, Annette Jones, Mary Kellough, Sandy Lenney and Marsha Williams. They made such a difference in the lives of those less fortunate in our community. Bravo!

We would like to wish all of you joy and a peaceful holiday season, despite the restrictions that COVID-19 is dictating. We are looking forward to a new year that brings better health and many more jobs. The Food Pantry will be here in 2021 to help all who need food in this time of transition. Thank you very much for your monetary and food donations, which keep us going. These are wonderful gifts you are bestowing on your community.

Co-chair: Chris Fosaaen, phone: 904-673-5630; cfosaaen@gmail.com
Co-chair: Cherie Dolgin, phone: 904-461-1604; cdolgin@bellsouth.net

Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be **Sunday, December 6, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** **Food listed on the monthly emailed menu must be dropped off at UUFSA between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m.** so everything can be assembled for distribution at 6:00 p.m. downtown. This is the new routine during COVID-19. For more information, contact **Mary Kellough, Lkellough@comcast.net, 904-217-9837.**



Great Decisions December 21, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom

For more information, please contact Yosi at jomcintire@bellsouth.net or 904-808-2717.

Care Connection



Our Care Connection remains dedicated to providing support and assistance to members and friends during this challenging time. In recognition that we won't be able to physically come together for a while, the Care Connection encourages you to reach out safely. Let's check in on each other. If you are concerned about someone's well-being, give them a call, or inform a member of our team. And don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Contact one of our members listed below if you are in need of a

helping hand or would like to be involved with the Care Connection Team. And remember, we are all connected through our shared commitment to our faith and to each other.

Claudia Atkins, Chair 386-717-6765
Adele DelSavio 315-529-6287
Pat Hall 914-787-9184
Maureen Herth 904-463-1032

Cynthia McAuliffe 904-864-1303
Rosemary Wheeler 352-339-4157
Anne Wilke 904-797-1944

December Calendar



- 3, 10, 17, & 31 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.
- 6 – Food drop-off for Dining with Dignity 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 6 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 7 – Program Team 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 8 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 10 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 14 – Board of Trustees meeting, online 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 18 – Deadline for January Quest contributions 5:00 p.m.
- 20 – Third Sunday Plate Collection: Food Pantry
- 21 – Great Decisions online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 24 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.