

# QUEST



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

January 2021  
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**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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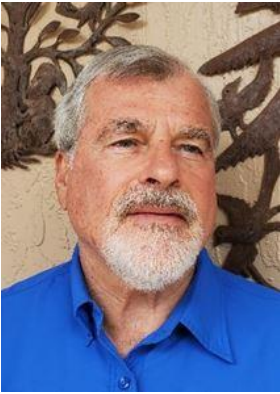
## Board of Trustees 2020 - 2021

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**Materials for the February issue are due by January 22.**  
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Thanks to Adele DelSavio for proofreading.

# From Your President



As the year of “20 two times” nears to an end, how many of us aren’t glad to see it go? Since it’s clearly been an awful year, does that mean the new one will be better? Let’s hope so. To start us off, let’s look backward at some new-year traditions. Roman scholars regard Janus as the god of all beginnings and his association with doorways lasted centuries. His two-faced image representing looking forward and backward was hung over major doorways and gates. Roman citizens invoked him as the first of any gods in public liturgies, the god who would bless beginnings – including the new day, month, year, and agricultural seasons. The month of January is named for him. All hail Janus, although he is two-faced and can’t make up his mind if he’s looking backward or forward. New Year’s Celebrations are a big deal all over the globe.

Celebrations observed in many countries include making noise – to scare away evil spirits (and doomsayers), and as I recall from Korea, the custom of giving presents to parents and elders is the norm. It’s kind of a reverse Christmas I guess. Paying homage to ancestors is also de rigeur, along with ingesting the special festival foods that make it delightful. Optimism and forgiveness of others are other hallmarks of the New Year. May yours be a renewal of hope and good cheer – even if that takes putting on rose-colored sunglasses to see it that way.

As we commemorate the birthday of Martin Luther King on the third Sunday of January, it’s good to reflect upon his legacy. Was he only important to black Americans? When we look at liberation movements around the world, we often see a trail of war and blood, of violence and strife. The U.S. Civil War ended legal slavery, but, it didn’t make everyone equal or guarantee their rights. It was also the deadliest conflict of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This week, I’m learning a lot from the PBS special with Professor Gates on “Reconstruction,” reminding us of the bitter spoils of war. For instance, after Confederate plantation owners “apologized” to President Andrew Johnson, they received their land back, depriving the freed slaves of any recompense, and leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and plunder. The failed reconstruction and the lingering bitterness of war appear to divide us even unto today. From post-bellum times until the later decades of the last century, serfdom and destitution were the fruits of war for tens of thousands of freed slaves, and thousands were killed for asserting their rights. When Malcolm X, who advocated separation of the races and Islam, was assassinated in 1965, some influential black leaders leaned toward taking up arms to secure those rights. MLK was among those who led the non-violence movement, and many believe that because of his leadership this country did not erupt in a civil war. Blocks of Detroit and Watts burned, downtown DC burned. But, the country did not convulse in a race war. We can be thankful to MLK for that.

I’m pleased to write that our Fellowship has donated to the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual MLK Commemorative event in St. Johns County by placing a half-page greeting in the journal. Though we will not be attending in person due to COVID-19 concerns, we join in remembrance of the man who came to march peacefully in St. Augustine in June 1964, but ended up jailed for “disturbing the peace.” Dozens of people who marched in downtown St. Augustine that fine June day, including future mayor Andrew Young from Atlanta, a Catholic nun and many black children, were beaten and suffered severe injuries. Our own St. Augustine was front and center in the struggle for civil rights and we should never forget our history, or forget that liberty isn’t free. I’m thankful to MLK and his brave friends who stood up to power and injustice in his day, and to those who continue to do so in our times. As we look ahead to this New Year, may our resolutions be to be a little kinder, to be more generous, and to work harder for justice and the common good. Best wishes for a very happy and just New Year to all.

**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](http://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](mailto: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, January 3, 9:30 a.m.**  
**“Our Six Sources: Direct Experience of  
Transcending Mystery and Wonder”**  
**Phillip Baber**

Service Leader: Michael Read  
Music: Taffy Rook  
Story for All Ages

Many Unitarian Universalists are well-versed with the “Seven Principles” found within the UUA Association Covenant; however, considerably fewer are familiar with the “Six Sources” embedded in the same document. In this sermon, Phillip Baber will briefly discuss the history of the Sources and their place in the Unitarian Universalist faith, and then take a closer look at the First Source: “Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and openness to the forces which create and uphold life.”

Phillip Baber is the pastor of The People’s Church of Jacksonville and the Regional Director of the Poor People’s Campaign of Northeast Florida. He is the former pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville and has served as co-president of I.C.A.R.E., the Jacksonville-based Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation, and Empowerment. Phillip’s ministry is dedicated to the advancement of our collective liberation, leading him to advocate in support of criminal justice reform; police accountability; racial and economic justice; justice for refugees and immigrants, and LGBTQIA+.



**Sunday, January 10, 9:30 a.m.**  
**“A Brief History of the Cross Florida Barge Canal  
and the Efforts to Restore the Ocklawaha River”**

**Jim Gross**

Service Leader: Don Brandes  
Music: Taffy Rook  
This I Believe: Eddie Mahonen



The Cross Florida Barge Canal has a lengthy history dating back to the 1800s. Initial work on the project began in 1935, largely to create jobs during the Great Depression. The project stopped after just one year of work due lack of funding. Congress allocated funds again in 1963 and work began in 1964. Florida Defenders of the Environment (FDE) was organized in 1969 to oppose and halt construction of the project. FDE filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1969, and was successful in obtaining a court order stopping the project in 1971. However, by then the Rodman Dam across the Ocklawaha River had already been constructed. Efforts to restore a free-flowing Ocklawaha River have continued to the present time, but they have been obstructed by a number of environmental and political hurdles.

Jim Gross, Executive Director, Florida Defenders of the Environment, is a professional geologist with over 40 years of experience in water resources. He is a native of California and earned his bachelor's degree in geology at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Jim worked in geothermal energy exploration and development early in his career, then returned to graduate school to earn a master's in geology at New Mexico State University. Jim has more than 20 years of professional experience working in Florida, including fourteen years in water management. He is a licensed professional geologist in California and Florida and is certified as a Professional Geologist by the American Institute of Professional Geologists. In addition to being the Executive Director of Florida Defenders of the Environment, Jim also is an adjunct professor of Earth Science at Santa Fe College in Gainesville.

**Sunday, January 17, 9:30 a.m.**  
**“From King to Kamala”**  
**Judge Dawn P. Fields**

Service Leader: Chris McDermott

Music: Alex Richman

Third Sunday Plate Collection: Wildflower Clinic



Our UU hymnal includes the immortal words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” More than fifty years later, his words have continued to inspire and move us to continue to march and advocate for civil rights. It has been remarked that Rosa sat, so Ruby could walk, so Kamala could run. We welcome Judge Dawn Fields for her remarks on the progress toward Dr. King's dream and her participation in the criminal justice system.

Volusia County Court Judge Dawn P. Fields was elected to the bench in 2006. Before becoming a judge, she was an assistant state attorney for the Office of the State Attorney, Seventh Judicial Circuit, and a high school math teacher. She earned a master's degree from the University of Central Florida and juris doctor from the University of Georgia. Judge Fields currently hears civil cases at the Volusia County Courthouse Annex at City Island in Daytona Beach.



**Sunday, January 24, 9:30 a.m.**  
**“Welcoming Congregations”**  
**Bruce Knotts**

Service Leader: Renee Jones  
Music: Taffy Rook  
Green Minute



Religious spaces haven't always been welcoming places for all people, especially when it comes to gender and sexuality. As UUs, we are out to change that. For 25 years the UUA has worked hard to make sure lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people are full members of our faith communities. Being welcoming means striving for radical inclusion and creating spaces that honor every part of our identities, backgrounds, and experiences. This program explains what it means to be a Welcoming Congregation, and affirms our intent to formalize this status with the UUA by a congregational vote in our May Annual Meeting.

Bruce Knotts is the Director of the Unitarian Universalist Office at the United Nations. He was born and raised in Southern California. He got his Bachelor's Degree in History from Pepperdine University and his Master's Degree in International Education from the Monterey Institute of International Studies – both in California. Bruce was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia. He worked for Raytheon in Saudi Arabia and on a World Bank contract in Somalia, before he joined the Department of State as a U.S. diplomat in 1984. In 2004, Bruce was elected to the Board of Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA). Bruce retired from the Foreign Service in 2007 and joined the Unitarian Universalist Office at the United Nations as its Executive Director at the beginning of 2008. For more information contact: [lgbtq@uua.org](mailto:lgbtq@uua.org)

**Sunday, January 31, 9:30 a.m.**

**“Giving Back to Nature”**

**Kelly Ussia**

Service Leader: Nana Royer

Music: Alex Richman

Have you ever been out in nature, had an awe-inspiring experience, and wondered, how can I as an individual, or we as humans, possibly reciprocate the gifts we receive from nature? In her book “Braiding Sweetgrass,” indigenous author Robin Wall Kimmerer suggests that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. When we can hear the language of other beings we will be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return.

Kelly Ussia is a Parks Naturalist with St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, and has covered topics such as: Sustainable Living; Turtles of Florida; Living with Snakes and Alligators’ Treasures of the Beach; Dune and Beach Ecology, and Undiscovered Parks of St. Johns County.



**Chris McDermott Office Hours**

**Thursday Afternoons, 3:00 – 5:15 p.m.**

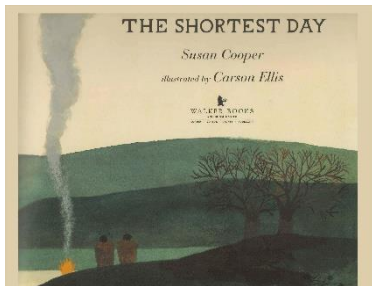
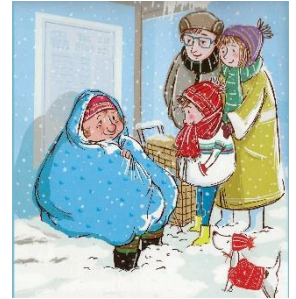
I’m going to be holding “office hours” every Thursday afternoon from 3:00 – 5:15 p.m. at the UUFSA until further notice, starting on January 7. Come by to chat, share news or meditate. We’ll be social distancing and/or masking, and we will probably hang outside, weather permitting. I’d like to just keep 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



The UUFSA's *Enchanting Activists* in the UUFSA's *Harry and UU Hogwarts School for Social Action* thank you for remembering the homeless during this holiday season. At this writing, the entrance to our Fellowship is piled with blankets, sleeping bags, warm clothes and other goods, and we expect more will arrive before everything is delivered at the end of the month to Home Again St. Johns.



We hope you enjoyed our children's reading this month's "Story for All Ages," *The Shortest Day*. If you missed any of these stories or would like to hear them again, they are now posted on our website (UUFSA.ORG) under *Religious Education* and *Past Sunday Services*. Each reader of our monthly "Story for All Ages" receives a small gift of a chocolate frog and a collectible Harry Potter card.



Pictured is Quinn enjoying his chocolate frog for his reading of *Día de los Muertos*. Our "Stories for All Ages" will take a break in January, but it will return the first week in February.

Our children had great fun this month creating holiday decorations for their own homes and holiday postcards that we hope all of you enjoyed receiving. They also did some studying. This month marked the end of their first semester in the UUFSA's *Harry and UU Hogwarts School for Social Action*, and as in all schools, the semester ended with an exam. They took the exam very seriously. Professor Sommer reports that everyone passed with flying colors! And all our students are looking forward to the Spring Semester in the UUFSA's *Harry and UU Hogwarts School* for social action and for fun. We will keep you posted about their activities.



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



# **UUFSA Adult Learning**

## **Your Spiritual Brain on Religion: The Neuroscience of Religious Belief**

**January 5, 6:00 p.m.**  
**“Why Do We Have a Spiritual Brain?”**

**January 19, 6:00 p.m.**  
**“Brain Function and Religion”**

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.

**Zoom login information will be provided later.**

February 2 .....	Believers and Atheists
February 16 .....	Spiritual Development
March 2 .....	The Myth-Making Brain
March 16 .....	The Brain and Religious Rituals
March 30 .....	The Biology of Spiritual Practices
April 13 .....	Religion and Health
April 27 .....	Religion and Brain Dysfunction
May 11 .....	Transmitters to God
May 25 .....	Near-death Experiences and the Brain
June 8 .....	The Believing Brain
June 22 .....	The Brain's Influence in Religious Ideas
July 6 .....	How the Brain Changes God
July 20 .....	How God Changes the Brain
August 3 .....	Why God Won't Go Away
August 17 .....	The Mystical Mind
August 31 .....	Reality and Beyond

# Great Decisions

## January 18, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom

Great Decisions is an informal discussion group that meets most third Mondays at 6:00 p.m. to develop awareness, understanding, and informed opinion on U.S. foreign policy and global issues.

Until further notice, we meet on Zoom:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4p9x5pk>

Meeting ID: 216 526 385

Passcode: 831270

### The 2021 discussion topics are:

- January 18: "The role of international organizations in a Global Pandemic," led by Pat McGuire
- February 15: "The fight over the melting Arctic," led by Cal Marshall
- March 15: "Global supply chains and national security," led by Richard Lahey
- April 19: "Brexit and the European Union," led by Chuck Chambers
- May 17: "The Korean Peninsula," led by Chris McDermott
- June, July, August: SUMMER BREAK
- September 20: "China and Africa," led by Surindar Paracer
- October 18: "Persian Gulf Security," led by Louis Post
- November 15: "The End of Globalization?" led by Cynthia Thompson

Guests are always welcome. Please join us and consider bringing a friend!

For more information, please contact Yosi at [jomcintire@bellsouth.net](mailto:jomcintire@bellsouth.net) or 904-808-2717.

## Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be **Sunday, January 3, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** Food listed on the monthly emailed menu must be dropped off at UUFSA between 4:30 and 5:00 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](mailto:Lkellough@comcast.net), 904-217-9837.



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



The St. Johns Food Pantry has seen unprecedented need for food this year met by unprecedented generosity from our fellowship, all the SJEM member churches, individual donors, and corporate donors. On just one day last month, our team assembled 112 bags of food for 38 households of 140 adults and children. For the month of November, 1645 bags of food were provided to families in need.

Thanks for all your support throughout this year. We congratulate the UU team and everyone who helped the pantry succeed in meeting the new challenges that we faced this year.

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

## 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 | Cynthia McAuliffe ..... 904-864-1303 |
| Adele DelSavio ..... 315-529-6287        | Rosemary Wheeler ..... 352-339-4157  |
| Pat Hall ..... 914-787-9184              | Anne Wilke..... 904-797-1944         |
| Maureen Herth ..... 904-463-1032         |                                      |

# January Calendar



- 1 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 3 – Food drop-off for Dining with Dignity 4:30 – 5:00 p.m.
- 3 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 4 – Program Team 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 5 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 7 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:30 – 5:15 p.m.
- 8 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 11 – Board of Trustees meeting, online 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 14 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:30 – 5:15 p.m.
- 15 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 17 – Third Sunday Plate Collection: Wildflower Clinic
- 18 – Great Decisions online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 19 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 21 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:30 – 5:15 p.m.
- 22 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 22 – Deadline for January Quest contributions 5:00 p.m.
- 28 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:30 – 5:15 p.m.
- 29 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.