

QUEST



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

April 2021

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

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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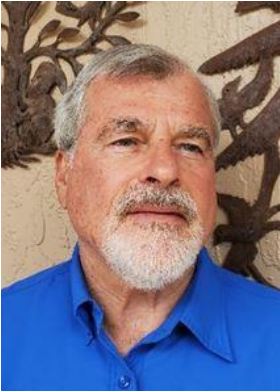
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Materials for the May issue are due by April 16.

Don Brandes, Editor: donaldbrandes@gmail.com

Thanks to Adele DelSavio for proofreading.

From Your President



The muse has been a silent monkey on my back this month. What to write about? As a sense of panic moved in, I googled, “What do we commemorate in April?” Such a cornucopia! So many things to celebrate, leaving me only a few lines to fill in. Check out these celebrated themes for April listed by day.

- April 1. April Fool's Day
- April 2. National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day.
- April 3. National Chocolate Mousse Day.
- April 4. National Walk Around Things Day
- April 4. Easter
- April 22. Earth Day (US)

Well, the first few didn't grab me, but, on the 22nd, it's Earth Day. What's more worthy of celebration than our planetary home? For starters, how about a quiz? If you look on <Conservation.org>, there is an interesting quiz to test your knowledge. Here's one I got wrong: “percent of global breathable oxygen produced by the Amazon rain forest?” I guessed, “ten,” but the answer is “twenty.” And the ocean produces over half of the oxygen we breathe. How scary is it that the Brazilians are busy cutting down the rainforest? And what about increasing temperature and salinity of the oceans? Well, just as scary. Don't panic yet, we've got a bit more time before corporations start bottling Florida **air** in mass quantities and selling it back to us in plastic bottles or bags. They won't be reusable or recyclable. But, think of the sales you'll shop! (Dr. Seuss) Now, dear reader, you may suspect me of **cynicism**. To check, I googled that too. Below are some pertinent quotes to help us judge between cynicism and realism:

Scratch any cynic and you will find a disappointed idealist. — **George Carlin.**

There is nothing more important than appearing to be religious. — **Niccolò Machiavelli**

... liberals are no less cynical, shortsighted, and parochial than anyone else, and they understand their fellow-Americans just as badly as they themselves are understood. When liberals look at red-state voters, they see either a mob of pious know-nothings or the insensible victims of militarism and class warfare. Yet...[such people] defy fixed categories, which means that they have to be figured out the hard way--on their own terms.” — **George Packer (Atlantic magazine).**

Although the warning signs of climate disaster ring loud and clear, the denial and short-sightedness of *homo sapiens* make us deaf to the alarm. Nonetheless, there are sources of hope and inspiration. Here are just a few of the worthy practices that may keep you from falling into the dark pit of cynicism. Nature: A walk (or bike ride) along a shaded path far from the roaring roadways. Pause a moment and try to identify the sounds. Take out the kayak or walk along the shore of the Matanzas. Chair bound? PBS and Natural Geo can take you to some amazing places. The sky above: Worthy of a second look. Yoga: Walking and meditation. Many two-legged earth huggers find these activities soothing. Finally, if you're too tired for all that, you can play Beethoven's Fifth (or any great music) and just breathe. Keep up the climate activism by all means. But, take time to enjoy the earth and the sky, just as they are. Happy Earth Day!

Mc noodle55@gmail.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, April 4, 9:30 a.m.
“Our Six Sources: Jewish and Christian Traditions”
Phillip Baber

Service Leader: Chris McDermott
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 talk we will explore the Jewish and Christian roots of Unitarianism, Universalism, and contemporary Unitarian Universalism. We will also wrestle with the question: "What is the role of Christianity in UUism today?"

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+ rights.



Sunday, April 11, 9:30 a.m.
**“The State of Immigration:
This is Not the Time to Stop Witnessing”**
Joshua Rubin

Service Leader: Renée Jones

Music: Alex Richman

This I Believe: Michael Read

Joshua Rubin, a software developer from Brooklyn, New York, is the founder of Witness at the Border. He was a witness at the Tornillo, Texas tent detention facility for migrant children, and at a similar influx shelter in Homestead, Florida. These facilities held over 3,000 children at their peak; both no longer hold children. Rubin led the Witness project on the ground in Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Mexico from January through March 2020, and now virtually.

<https://witnessattheborder.org/>



Sunday, April 18, 9:30 a.m.
“A Sunday Kind of Love”
Mama Blue

Service Leader: Robin Mahonen

Music: Taffy Rook

Third Sunday Plate Collection: Wildflower Clinic

Mama Blue is an original. She puts the “live” in live performance. Her connection with her audience, whether they’ve ever heard her before, or even heard of her, has to be experienced to be appreciated. Her original songs are the core of her performances. Her songs are unsparing in their self-examination, but compassionate and supportive of those around her. Mama Blue’s originals are destined to reach an audience far beyond the area in which she has, until now, performed live. Her songs are about her own life, the lives of people she’s known, and the lives of everyone. They’re about the joy and pain of love, about being a mother, about the social forces that influence our lives.

Born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, Mama Blue graduated from the city’s prestigious Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. She earned a scholarship to Jacksonville University, where she majored in vocal performance and drama. Mama Blue has performed at festivals from Springing the Blues, Dancin’ in the Streets and Porch Fest in Jacksonville, to the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, and at events and nightclubs across Northeast Florida and beyond.

With a signature flower in her hair as the finishing touch to her visual style, and a unique ability to reach people at the center of their souls, Mama Blue brings the warmth and understanding of an irresistibly genuine person to the stage. <https://www.mamabluesings.com/>



Sunday, April 25, 9:30 a.m.
“Can Spirituality Coexist with Skepticism?”
Rabbi Nadia Siritsky

Service Leader: Gina Jonas
Music: Alex Richman
Green Minute



Rabbi Nadia will be drawing upon the Jewish tradition and insights from science and postmodern theory to try to answer the question, can spirituality co-exist with skepticism? She will explore new ways of thinking about our spiritual journey and recognizing the sacred value of our questions and doubt.

Rabbi Dr. Nadia Siritsky, MSSW, BCC serves part-time as rabbi for Temple Bet Yam, while also teaching adjunct social work at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky. She fell in love with the St. Augustine community while leading Bet Yam for High Holy Days and has welcomed every opportunity to return since then. She has extensive experience as a congregational rabbi, an interfaith hospital and hospice chaplain and social worker, as well as a psychotherapist. She is passionate about interfaith work and helping people recognize that we are more alike than different.

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. 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-a-ways 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



Welcoming Congregation – Give Us Your Opinions

As most of you know, the **Welcoming Congregation** Committee has been hard at work actioning many aspects of the UUA guidelines to be recognized as a **Welcoming Congregation**. To become a UUA Welcoming Congregation we need to be inclusive and expressive of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender in every aspect of congregational life.

But you might say, “but we are already inclusive.” This is true of course but isn’t it time to go that extra mile and get recognized for that inclusivity and show everyone inside and outside our community what that really means? *We welcome everyone.* The UUFSA welcomes and values diversity and does not discriminate on the basis of race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical or mental ability, social and educational background, age, and citizenship status.

We have already held human/LGBTQ/SOGI rights-focused services; now we want to expand into our Adult Education programs, social events, and alliances with regional LGBTQ organizations. As part of our plan to apply for **Welcoming Congregation** status, this last couple of months our Sunday services included LGBTQ and Black topics and speakers; we have supported LGBTQ-friendly ordinances; expanded our alliances with LGBTQ and Black organizations; started to include more diverse artwork and signage in the lobby and the Sanctuary; and next year we plan to launch a new program series that includes LGBTQ, Black and Human Rights issues.

We plan to take a UUFSA vote at our Annual Meeting in May and we hope you’ll support the **Welcoming Congregation’s** quest for recognition.

Our Welcoming Congregation Committee – Gina Jonas, Renée Jones, Robin Mahonen, Sarah Miller and Cindy Nobles – looks forward to your involvement and feedback on this very important issue. Call Renée Jones at 267-514-5302 with feedback or to join the committee.



An Invitation to UUFSA Adult Learning Your Spiritual Brain on Religion: The Neuroscience of Religious Belief 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

April 13: Religion and Health

Repeated scientific studies have been shown to correlate with overall better health and well-being.

April 27: Religion and Brain Dysfunction

Are religious or spiritual experiences normal or pathological? How are specific psychological and neurological disorders associated with religious and spiritual phenomena?

Please join us for new learning and participation in discussion

Surindar Paracer
Chair, UU Adult Learning

Zoom login through August 31:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83179766261?pwd=bFZ3aXN1MHRtaWxScXBGVVNkV0hZQT09>

Meeting ID: 831 7976 6261

Passcode: 145234

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

April 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom

“Brexit and the European Union”

Led by Chuck Chambers

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:

- 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 or 904-808-2717.



Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be **Sunday, April 4, 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, 904-217-9837.



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



We are very thankful for the generous donations that many of you have made to the St. Johns Food Pantry over the winter months. The COVID pandemic has led to millions of Americans relying on food pantries to put meals on their tables. At the St. Johns Food Pantry, the number of folks seeking food assistance is dramatically up from last year.

In February 2020, we gave out 427 bags of food. This February we distributed 1,560 bags of food to 1,911 adults and children, in 588 households. We count on community members like you to assist us in our mission to provide food for any family needing it in St. Johns County.

You can donate to the Food Pantry by sending a check to the UUFSA (2487 A1A South, St. Augustine, FL 32080), made out to UUFSA, and writing "Food Pantry" on the memo line. Or you can donate online by going to st.johnsfoodpantry.org. Your compassion is very much appreciated.

If you have questions or want to volunteer, please contact Committee co-chairs:

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
 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

April Calendar



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

On the Lighter Side

A new addition to the Quest. Submit a short joke/piece of entertaining humor you'd like to share for consideration. Submit to Michael Read at mickread@gmail.com. For example:



Since happiness consists in durable peace of mind, and since durable peace of mind depends upon the confidence we have in the future, and since this confidence is susceptible to unpredictable catastrophes caused by humans, it follows that happiness is a lost cause. After that, I skipped Philosophy.

Groucho Marx portraying a love-stricken man imploring woman: "Oh, why can't we go away and lodge with my fleas in the hills? I mean, flee to my lodge in the hills!"

People are using the word lockdown because they don't know how to spell kwarinteen.

Stay inside, isolate or practice social distancing, clean yourself. OMG, I've become a house cat!