

QUEST



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

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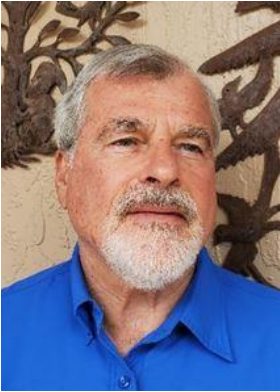
The *Quest* is published monthly September through July.

Materials for the June issue are due by May 21.

Don Brandes, Editor: donaldbrandes@gmail.com

Thanks to Adele DelSavio for proofreading.

From Your President



I've heard remarks recently to the effect that "foreign aid is mostly wasted." Some even implied that ALL charity is wasted. Most of my adult life involved work in foreign aid or volunteering, so I want to respond. I believe the answer is a tale of two tails. My short dive is based on both "best sources" and my personal witness.

Question 1: Is the US the most generous country with foreign aid? Opinion polls report that Americans believe foreign aid is about 25% of the federal budget, when it is actually far less than 1%. The latest reports show China 1st, US 2nd and Germany, France and Japan are next. In terms of giving per GDP, the US 0.18% level (of GDP) ranks 27th out of 27 high-income countriesⁱ. Also, 65% of US aid is military assistance, and recent expert surveys rank much of US assistance as "low quality."ⁱⁱ

Question 2: How does foreign aid work? Most of the U.S. assistance goes to "strategic partners" and is not administered by the Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID funding is noted for its layers of oversight and reporting. Just 17% of the U.S. total passes through global partners (e.g. the World Bank, UNICEF or the Global Funds).

Question 3: Who got the most U.S. foreign aid in 2020? Reliable sources peg Afghanistan at \$5.9 billion, Iraq at \$1.1 billion (\$3 billion in 2016), Israel \$3.1 billion, and Egypt and Jordan each at over \$1 billion in aid. The US hands Israel a "no conditions" check each year, and it amounts to \$340 per Israeli. Central America' on the other hand, received no new funding from 2017 to 2019, despite protests that our withholding would result in worsening conditions and greater desperation to immigrate. Biden proposed \$4 billion for Central America, but Congress has not yet approved it, insisting on strict anti-corruption criteria for release. As an alternative, USAID proposes to fund non-government organizations (NGOs) and manage it with more direct control. Today, U.S. assistance in Central America has largely dwindled and, as it has for years, dwarfs in comparison with U.S. funding for the Middle East.

My 29 years with USAID followed graduate school at Michigan and service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in South Korea. In 1982, I left the NYC Budget Office and took a \$10,000 pay cut to join USAID. Twenty-five years of my career were spent overseas, where we developed pro-health and anti-poverty programs in countries like Haiti, Liberia, Malawi, Egypt and Pakistan. Looking back, I'm confident that nearly all of the \$500 million or so I've managed was well accounted for, and, saved thousands of lives and illness days lost. Interventions such as safe childbirth, vaccinations, malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention have real impact. Got bad governance? Most of the USAID activities in "poor governance" countries are carried out by NGOs. Incidences of misuse were rare, and quickly dealt with. Conversely, war zones are different. In Kabul, I led USAID's primary education efforts, and interacted on a daily basis with the military. We were able to dramatically increase the number of girls (and boys) in school, but, in some places the Taliban chased them away. The Special USG Auditor reported (2011) that \$1 billion (one-third) of US cash assistance was wasted. It's not easy to oversee activities or create lasting change in war zones.

Over three decades, my living conditions overseas ranged from a big apartment in Cairo to a modest 3-bedroom house in Lilongwe, and in Kabul, a half of a shipping container was home for nearly two years. Everywhere, security is always a major concern. Remember the Embassy/USAID bombings in Nairobi and Dar Salaam? Please do. To oversee activities, I spent nights swatting mosquitoes and sweating in candle-lit shacks after a long day riding on 'roads' that were just dirt craters. My family

and I were evacuated twice after days of rioting. The Kinshasa exit (9/91) was made on Congo river barges escorted by armed Belgian paratroopers. I've survived dozens of bomb threats and nearby shootings, and incoming rocket attacks. U.S. diplomats accept world-wide assignments, and many of them aren't cushy. At the end of the day, I am convinced that our foreign assistance is critically useful, but not all. Moreover, personal giving to effective NGOs and UN programs can be both life-changing and lifesaving. Knowing the difference takes some work. Dismissing our diplomats and foreign aid workers strikes me as very wrong. Write me or join me during my office hours if you want to talk about it.

Mcnoodle55@gmail.com

i George Ingram, <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/what-every-american-should-know-about-us-foreign-aid/>

ii Global Center for Development, Annual Foreign Aid Index, 2018; reported at <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/09/18/649155725/>
<https://www.usaid.gov/>

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

UUFSA Annual Meeting

May 16, After Sunday Service

The UUFSA Annual Congregational Meeting is just about upon us. All members please plan to attend on Zoom after the May 16 Sunday service. The meeting will include election of officers and trustees and approval of the 2021-22 budget. It's important that we attain a quorum, so please plan on attending. A Zoom link will be provided later. A meeting agenda and documents for review and approval by the Congregation will be sent to all members in early May.

Anyone who is not currently a member but would like to join before the meeting please contact Fred Dolgin: fdolgin@bellsouth.net

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, May 2, 9:30 a.m.
“Our Six Sources: Humanist Teachings”
Phillip Baber

Service Leader: Nana Royer
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. Phillip Baber will describe and explain another of the Six Sources this month.

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, May 9, 9:30 a.m.

“God is a Mother: The Difference between Having and Making and What it Means for Reproductive Rights”

Jeffrey Nall, Ph.D.

Service Leader: Chris McDermott

Music: Alex Richman

This I Believe

Women do not “have” babies, they create them. In this talk, Jeffrey Nall, Ph.D. draws on his book, 'Feminism and the Mastery of Women and Childbirth', to argue that ordinary attitudes, communication, and cultural expression concerning pregnancy and childbirth contribute to the repression of women’s reproductive rights and foster a lack of reverence for creativity and agency of our mothers. Nall contends that we often speak in a manner that envisions women’s creation of new life is a passive and predetermined act. This thinking is rooted in an ancient patriarchal consciousness that often unintentionally gives credence to anti-abortion arguments. By more mindfully thinking and speaking of childbirth, argues Nall, we can foster a more honest and respectful way of thinking about the full gamut of women’s reproductive rights, including abortion and childbirth.



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

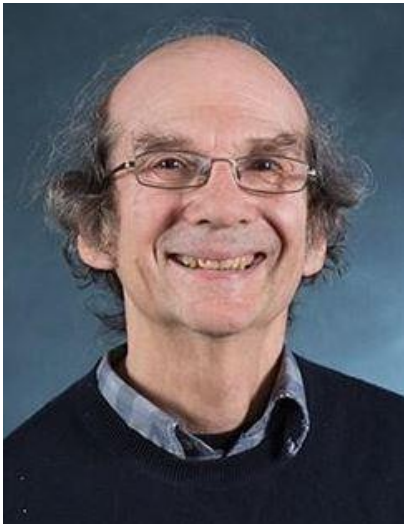


Sunday, May 16, 9:30 a.m.
**“Glorious Causes: The Irrationality of
Capitalism, War and Politics”**
Charles Derber, Ph.D. and Yale Magrass, Ph.D.

Service Leader: Fred Dolgin, M.D.

Music: Taffy Rook

Third Sunday Plate Collection: Home Again St. Johns



Charles Derber

In an era of upheaval and political confusion, how can we understand the emerging world and still have hope for the future? Dr. Magrass and Dr. Derber provide a critical analysis of our past and the crisis-ridden present and provide insightful answers that not only explain the roots of America's deep trouble, but point to ways that we can re-imagine our country and make it once again a beacon for humanity. It is a powerful call to study, understand, and confront the deep-seated ills that are tearing this nation apart. In an age of profound existential crises led by climate change and the growing threat of nuclear war, we must heed their sage advice that "there is no more glory in glorious causes."

Charles Derber is Professor of Sociology at Boston College. An internationally renowned scholar and public intellectual, he has written 21 books, translated into eight languages, and more than 100 articles, including op-eds for the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Newsday*, *Truthout*, and others. He is internationally recognized, and has spoken on hundreds of television and radio shows.

Yale R. Magrass is Chancellor Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. He is the author of eight books and over 60 articles, and frequently makes public appearances and presentations.



Yale Magrass

Sunday, May 23, 9:30 a.m.
“Laughter is the Best Medicine”
Renée Jones and Robin Mahonen

Service Leader: Robin Mahonen
Music: Alex Richman
Green Minute



Renée

Robin

In these uncertain times of global pandemic, we do well to try to keep our sense of humor not only intact, but alive and well. We plan to bring a smile and tickle your funny bones today with this sharing service. We hope you'll join us with your own anecdotes.

Renee and Robin are members of our fellowship who believe in the power of love and laughter, and hope to bring some into your lives today, and inspire you to share your own with us.

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.

My opinions may have changed, but not the fact that I am right. – Ashleigh Brilliant

Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.
– Mark Twain

Murphy's Law is recursive. Washing your car to make it rain doesn't work.

Who is it you always want to have nearby, but never want to see? Your doctor.

It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.

Instead of a sign that says “Do not disturb” I need one that says “Already disturbed, proceed with caution.”

Sunday, May 30, 9:30 a.m.
**“The True Meaning of Memorial Day:
Honoring All Who Died”**
Chester Wilson, Ed.D.

Service Leader:
Music: Taffy Rook

Memorial Day is a time to honor both men and women who died in the pursuit of freedom and liberty. It is the time to remember all our war dead – white, Black and people of color – who made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our way of life and right moral wrongs.

Black troops also fought valiantly and died in all our wars. Those who died were rarely remembered and those who didn't die were rarely recognized for their contributions but instead came home to face Jim Crow and segregation.

We welcome again Dr. Chester Wilson, who will make a presentation on the meaning of Memorial Day and honor the deaths of all Americans who gave their lives so that we could remain free.



Dr. Wilson is a Human Services, Criminal Justice and training professional with his own consulting firm in Daytona Beach, Florida. His life's mission is to use his skills to assist individuals, families and communities in need and to ensure that others are given the opportunity to acquire skills that will afford them the opportunity for professional and personal growth.



“Yes, and how many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
And how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, and how many deaths will it take 'til he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind”

Bob Dylan

Programs for Children and Youth



Our Programs for Children and Youth, which use the Harry and UU Hogwarts School for Social Action curriculum, remain strong under the leadership of Religious Educator Kelly Sommer with assistance from Jindy Gelow and Barbara Battelle. Children remain engaged in their Zoom classes with fun and challenging Harry Potter themed activities as they learn about societal ills (Horcruxes) and take action to combat them. Their action plan to combat Hate was to create Buddy Benches to promote inclusion.

We received permission from Otis Mason Elementary school to designate a bench on one of their playgrounds as a “**Friendship Bench**” with the sign shown to the right. The sign was designed by our own **Enchanting Activists** who are recognized as the donors. Kelly Shuford (Grace and Stella’s mom) spearheaded this effort along with Kelly Sommer. So, our children continue to spread our UU values beyond our Fellowship’s walls. A Buddy Bench also will be constructed for our Fellowship’s back yard, and the children will paint and decorate it as soon as it is constructed.



Ayla's Acres



NO-KILL ANIMAL RESCUE
Aid. Adopt. Advocate.

At this writing, the children are wrapping up their study of **Animal Cruelty** with the action plan of collecting food for Ayla’s Acres, a no-kill animal shelter. They will then move on to the Horcrux of **Environmental Degradation**. We thank all in the UUFSA for their support of our young people’s activities.

We hope you enjoyed the children’s reading of this month’s Story for All Ages “**What Do You Do with an Idea.**” If you missed it or any of the other Stories for All Ages presented by our children, you can find them all in the past services on our website.

To learn more about or to join our program, please contact:
Professor Kelly Sommer
(Kelly.winton@gmail.com) or

Co-Headmasters of the UU Hogwarts School of Social Action
Jindy Gelow (jindyms@yahoo.com) or Barbara Battelle
(Battellebarbara@gmail.com).

Welcoming Congregation



Why I joined the Welcoming Committee

Joining the UU Welcoming Committee meant, I assumed, there was more to “welcoming” than met the eye. Unexpectedly, discovering what lay out of sight has become a path to personal growth.

The first step was checking out the UUA’s “Welcoming Congregations Program.” To my surprise, using “welcoming” was a code “to help us learn how to undo homophobia – and later, transphobia (prejudice against transgender people) – in our hearts and minds, our congregations, and our communities.” At a recent UU service, speaker Bruce Knotts helped me understand our mission even better. If we wished LGBTQ people to feel welcome, we would need to create a particular kind of environment.

In all honesty, I initially felt some resistance to making this special effort. At the same time, I wanted to support the UUFSA’s aim to be a “dynamic, loving community” – one that values “the inherent worth and dignity of every person.” The power of these values moved me to examine my resistance.

At the first UU Welcoming Committee meeting, we discussed how to achieve official recognition as a UUA Welcoming Congregation. When the topic of “pronouns” came up, I realized I truly did not understand why it was important to “state your pronouns.” Hence, my volunteering to work on it with another committee member, Sarah Miller. Twice on Zoom, I have met Sarah, who has a transgender daughter. Between our meetings, I read links Sarah sent about sexual orientation and gender identity, and how stating pronouns supports LGBTQ people. More personally, Sarah shared the story of her 14 year – old daughter and the family’s journey. (Sarah will share this story at the Sunday service on October 23rd.)

This personal connection has taken me beyond the statistics related to mental health, social/physical abuse, and suicide that may attend the expression of non-conventional gender. The empathy I feel for Sarah, her daughter and family, has led to a more heartfelt understanding. I now invite you to join me, to become honorary members of the Welcoming Committee, and to talk freely about how you feel on this subject as you find your own way to “acceptance of one another” (3rd Principle). Please reach out to me if you would like an ear in advance of the Annual Meeting vote to achieve WC status with the UUA.

Gina Jonas
904-679-4610

Note: The Program Team has chosen “On the Side of Love” as its theme for next year. This choice was sparked by a desire to more deeply understand our Spoken Covenant’s first line: “Love is the doctrine of this congregation.”

**Green Team
Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery
Walking Tour
May 14, 10:00 a.m.
Gainesville, Florida**

Tours typically take about 45 minutes to one hour, including a brief history of the organization and what conservation burial is. The talk will tell about what a burial at PCCC is like, its conservation and restoration work, and burial planning. Staff will be able to take questions throughout the tour.

Please contact Nana Royer 904-377-1600 or nana@nrp.net to hold your spot. After the tour we could either bring our lunch to eat on – site or find a restaurant (to be decided before we go). For more information: <https://www.prairiecreekconservationcemetery.org/>

A golf cart will be available for the mobility impaired.



General Assembly: The Unitarian Universalist Association's Annual Meeting



General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through the democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to have voting delegates.

The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolution making the 2021 UUA General Assembly a **100% virtual event**. Let's reach record-breaking attendance **June 23-27, 2021!**

Why Virtual General Assembly?

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. That remains true even when we cannot gather physically. Last year, GA had more than 4,900 registered attendees participate from remote locations around the world. Although we give up the face-to-face interaction and hugs that are prevalent when we meet in – person, we retain our dedication to community and make our experience more accessible and more environmentally sustainable.

For more information and registration, go to: <https://www.uua.org/ga>

An Invitation to UUFSA Adult Learning

Your Spiritual Brain on Religion: The Neuroscience of Religious Belief 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

**May 11
Transmitters to God**

**May 25
Near-death Experiences and the Brain**

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

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 31Reality and Beyond



Great Decisions

May 17, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom

“The Korean Peninsula”

Led by Chris McDermott

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:

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.

St. Johns Food Pantry

(AKA St. Johns Ecumenical Ministries Inc.)



Many improvements have been completed at the St. Johns Food Pantry this year. Capital funds have allowed the pantry to purchase a new freezer, a refrigerated trailer for picking up frozen food, parking lot gravel and walkway paving, awnings on both entrances, new signs, and fresh paint to spruce up our building. More importantly, because of generous community support the food pantry is presently able to provide weekly assistance to needy families instead of every 60 days as before the pandemic.

The kindness and consideration of our teams along with these improvements provide a welcoming experience for our clients.

Thanks for all your support. If you have any questions regarding donations of money, food, or time, please call or email Chris Fosaaen or Cherie Dolgin.

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, May 2, 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.



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



May Calendar



- 2 – Food drop-off for Dining with Dignity 4:30 – 5:00 p.m.
- 2 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 3 – Program Team 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 6 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:00 – 5:15 p.m.
- 7 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 10 – Board of Trustees meeting, online 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 11 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 13 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:00 – 5:15 p.m.
- 14 – Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery Walking Tour
- 14 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 16 – Third Sunday Plate Collection – Home Again St. Johns
- 16 – **UUFSA Annual Meeting after service**
- 17 – Great Decisions online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 20 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:00 – 5:15 p.m.
- 21 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 21 – Deadline for May Quest contributions 5:00 p.m.
- 25 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 27 – Chris McDermott office hours 3:00 – 5:15 p.m.
- 28 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.