

QUEST



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

June 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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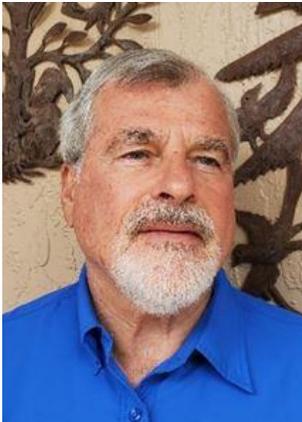


The *Quest* is published monthly September through July.
Materials for the July-August issue are due by June 18.
Don Brandes, Editor: donaldblandes@gmail.com
Thanks to Adele DelSavio for proofreading.

From Your President

“Nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so.”

~Shakespeare



Rabbi Nadia’s talk with us recently about non-duality and gender somehow got me to thinking about duality in thinking, and, in particular, in making important decisions. Her talk inspired a dream bringing me back fifteen years to a critical choice I made regarding an ongoing country assignment with USAID. I was sure that there were but two choices – and only two. One was consistent with a previous job commitment and reaffirming of my career, and another which I thought was essential for success in my second try at marriage. When I informed my future boss that I wasn’t coming to work with him, he took it badly. It

damaged my standing considerably. The dream showed another way, as it was ONLY me which framed it as an “either/or.” In waking, I saw a train wreck which might have been avoided by bringing in the people affected by my decision. *If* I had only trusted them and brought them in to my dilemma, we might have all reached a workable solution – good for both my career and my family. But, I never gave it a chance. By taking the binary approach, deciding on my own and without making others a part of it, I damaged my career prospects, and lost out on what might have been a better path. What made me think there were only two choices – and I had to make the decision alone?

The possibility that something beyond A or Not A existed made me ask if it would ever be possible to accept the political views of those opposed to mine. Is it possible that two contradictory viewpoints can exist in good people? “Does there have to be a winner and loser, or can the goal be *continuation*, and perhaps even *evolution*?” asks Jonathan Lauer in his blog at <tiny buddha.com>. Let’s be honest, I have a lot of trouble accepting right-wingers and conspiracy slingers – like a lot of people I know.

This blog cites author Richard Rohr’s views on this “non-duality,” describing it as “our ability to read reality in a way that is not judgmental, in a way that is not exclusionary of the part that we don’t understand. When you don’t split everything up according to what you like and what you don’t like, you leave the moment open, you let it be what it is in itself, and you let it speak to you. Reality is not totally one, but it is not totally two, either! Stay with that necessary dilemma, and it can make you wise.” Richard Rohr seems to think Jesus preached messages that many nominal Christians will never understand, and he writes a lot about that. I intend to read more of his stuff.

I’m convinced that by letting ourselves out of the duality trap, that we MUST do something or NOT, and by opening up to others who may not agree with us, we can reach understanding we hadn’t imagined. Imagine that. I’m trying.

Chris McDermott

mcnoodle55@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, June 6, 9:30 a.m.

“Our Six Sources: Earth-Centered Traditions”

Phillip Baber

Service Leader: Nana Royer
Music: Alex Richman
Story for All Ages

Many Unitarian Universalists are well-versed in the “Seven Principles” found within the UUA Association Covenant; however, considerably fewer are familiar with the “Six Sources” embedded in the same document. Today we explore the last of the Six UUA Sources: Earth-Centered Traditions.

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, June 13, 9:30 a.m.

“Queer Theology”

Rabbi Nadia Siritsky

Service Leader: Michael Read

Music: Taffy Rook

This I Believe



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, as an interfaith hospital and hospice chaplain and social worker, and as a psychotherapist. She is passionate about interfaith work and helping people recognize that we are more alike than different.

Sunday, June 20, 9:30 a.m.

“Investigating the Future of Journalism”

Lance Tapley

Service Leader: Chris McDermott

Music: Alex Richman

Third Sunday Plate Collection: St. Johns Food Pantry

The internet has killed thousands of newspapers and sucked people into obtaining information within ideological silos. As the most experienced investigative reporter in Maine and former media critic for Maine Public Television, Lance has concluded that print news has a future only as Sunday papers and niche magazines. Daily and weekly journalism will exist only online, with exceptions like the New York Times.

Few private online sites, however, have figured out how to make money but there’s a promising alternative: non-profit news operations funded by readers, listeners, foundations, organizations, and communities. Lance will describe how community members can organize news non-profits. In the end, a better journalism is possible than what privately owned papers have offered.

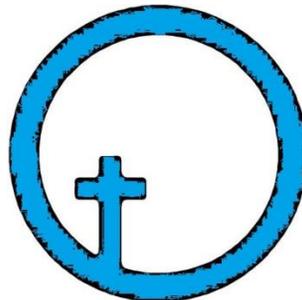
Lance has worked for the Providence Journal, San Francisco Chronicle, and many Maine media. His articles have appeared in the Washington Post, the Nation, and many other national outlets. His exposés on prison solitary confinement received international attention and were instrumental in Maine and other states deciding to dramatically reduce the use of solitary confinement.

Sunday, June 27, 9:30 a.m.
“GA Wrap Up”
Renée Jones and Gina Jonas

Service Leader: Chris McDermott
Music: Taffy Rook
Green Minute



Our incoming President, Renee Jones, and Vice President Gina Jonas, will be attending the virtual UUA General Assembly, and briefing us on the latest news from the UUA.

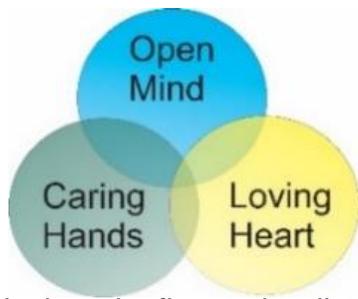


Universalist Convocation
August 6 - 7, 2021

Since 1990, Unitarian Universalists have been celebrating our Universalist heritage at an annual convocation. This year the Universalist Convocation is going to be held at Northwest UU Congregation in Sandy Springs, GA. Everyone is invited to come!

Guest speakers include former UUA President Rev. Peter Morales, Rev. Dr. M’ellen Kennedy, Rev. Rhett Baird and Rev. Vernon Chandler, Co-Founder of the Convocation.

Registration opens June 15. For more information, go to: www.UniversalistConvocation.org



Programs for Children and Youth

It has been a very busy month for our students in the Harry and UU Hogwarts School for Social Action. As you may recall, one of their action plans to combat **Hate** was to designate one bench on a playground at the Otis Mason Elementary school as a **Friendship Bench**. This bench has now been dedicated and identified with the sign designed by our **Enchanting Activists** and donated by the UUFSA. Stella Shuford

designed a flyer to be distributed at the school explaining what a **Friendship Bench** is. Thanks to our teacher Kelly Sommer, mom Kelly Shuford and all our **Enchanting Activists** for spearheading this effort.

A Buddy Bench also will be constructed for our Fellowship's backyard, and the children will paint and decorate it as soon as it is constructed.



Our **Enchanting Activists** are now well into their studies of the **Horcrux of Environmental Degradation**. As part of their studies, they investigated the pesticides currently used on St. Johns County playgrounds, and they learned how to use **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)** to discover if any of the chemicals in these pesticides are harmful to good insects (like bees) or mammals, like themselves. They discovered that some of the chemicals used are **VERY NASTY**, so the students are designing posters and letters to county commissioners urging them to stop their use. Some are also considering testifying before the Board of County Commissioners!

In addition, students planted seeds for edibles, which have now sprouted, and decorated coffee cans which they turned into habitats for wild bees.



Finally, some of our students, parents and friends joined a work party this month to paint and protect the picnic table in the UU's backyard and do some weeding in the UU's backyard garden.

This will be our last *Quest* report on our Programs for Children and Youth until August. School is out at the end of May, so our students will be off doing other things. We wish all our parents and our **Enchanting Activists** a wonderful summer break full of new discoveries, and we look forward to seeing all of you at UUFSA again in August.

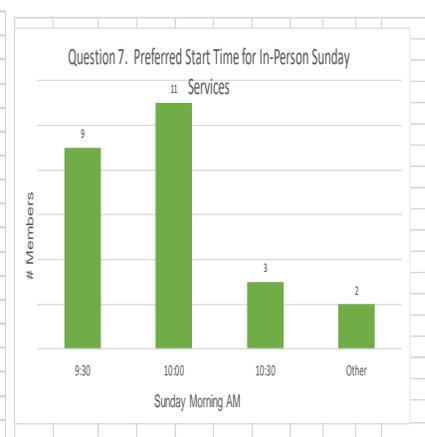
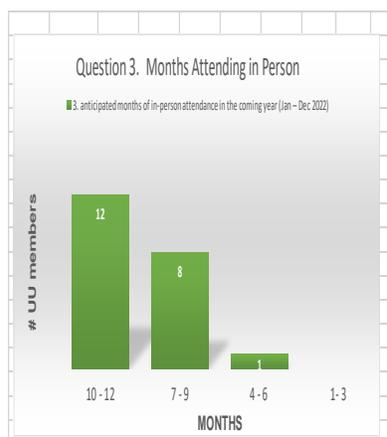
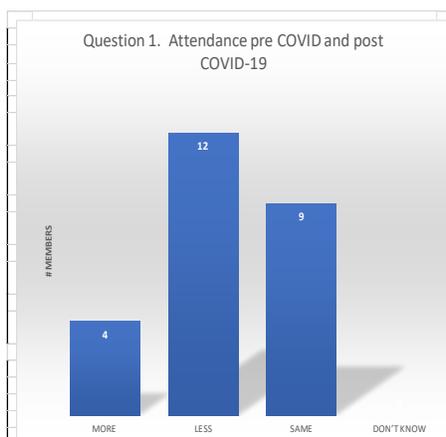
Sunday Service Preferences – Survey Report

Chris McDermott

In late April, a questionnaire was emailed to all UUFSA members with 7 multiple-choice questions and space for open-ended comments. The results were put into Excel tables, graphed and analyzed. This report was prepared by me with the assistance of several UUFSA members. A summary is presented below; please contact me at mcnoodle55@gmail.com if you'd like the complete report.

The response rate was 30% or 25 of the total 84 listed members of the UUFSA. Not all on the list are active, however, so the percentage responding of ACTIVE UUFSA members may be higher than the reported figure. Key findings are below.

1. About half of our respondents (12 of 25) attend Sunday services LESS since Zoom began; 9 respondents (36%) attend ABOUT THE SAME, and 3 attend MORE with Zoom. Conclusion: On-line services are NOT as well attended as in-person services.
2. On the Quality of services, on-line services are seen as GOOD or better for MOST of our respondents; on the other hand, just over one-third of Fellows responding didn't take to Zoom.
3. Looking ahead to attending in-person services, 50% (12) of respondents anticipate attending 10 to 12 months of the year while 33% (or 8 of 24) will attend 7-9 months; with the remaining 17% attending six months or less. One member couldn't say.
4. With regard to on-line services, there are 2 distinct points of view. A majority or 64% contend that ONLINE services are VERY or SOMEWHAT important, while 9 of our 25 respondents (36%) say ONLINE services are NOT important.
5. MOST respondents favor adding capacity to stream in speakers (to show during in-person services). Some 75% of our respondents agree that it's VERY (10) important or SOMEWHAT (8 more) important. About 25% didn't find it important.
6. It's apparent that 9 respondents or about one-third (36%) are early birds as they prefer online services continue to start at 9:30 a.m. But, 11 members would prefer a 10:00 a.m. start and 3 (just 12%) prefer the services start an hour later than present at 10:30 a.m.
7. The question was asked about preferred start time for in-person services. The most preferred start time (44%) is 10:00 a.m., or 30 minutes earlier than what we were doing pre-COVID. Slightly less popular (9 of 25 or 36%) is an EARLIER start at 9:30 a.m. Fewer than 20% of UU respondents would like to start at 10:30 a.m. as we have in the past. Conclusion: The Leadership of the UUFSA might consider a 10:00 a.m. start as it would be responsive to the expressed preferences of 20 of 25 (or 80%) respondents.



Welcoming Congregation



You've Got To Be Carefully Taught*

Since last month's letter, my desire to support LGBTQ people has grown – along with my awareness. I've come to realize my expression of gender was taught to me from my earliest days onward. (My bedroom walls were pink, my brother's were blue!)

Little did my loving, liberal-minded parents suspect their choices were forming a worldview: it's normal, i.e., good, to be heterosexual. By implication, to be homosexual, transgender, or queer would not be normal, i.e., not good. Attending university, my sociology class presented an amoral take on human community: the bell curve with its large, center swelling and tapered ends. Whether this diagram represented inclusion or exclusion was not clear.

Today, as a member of the UUFSA community, I actively seek to live the words of our spoken covenant: "Love is the doctrine of this congregation." Adding pronouns after my name has become a way to enact that love. I've learned that this simple act supports those who don't fit the default binary (people whose gender is expressed as male or female) and their families. It helps make it safe for LGBTQ people to live without fear in the only body they have.

Let's not let society criminalize or discriminate against people who happen to live at the bell curve's tapered ends. Below, Sarah Miller offers some statistics, the results of hate and fear, in the fervent hope her transgender daughter will not become one of them – that we will be able "to transform the world by our care."

Sarah sends some stats to consider:

- In 2019, at least 25 transgender or gender non-conforming people were fatally shot or killed by other violent means. 91% of them were Black women, 81% were under the age of 30. (The Human Rights Campaign)
- This past year in the U.S., at least one LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13–24 attempts suicide every 45 seconds. Because many LGBTQ youth report attempting suicide multiple times in a given year, this likely underrepresents the rate. (The Trevor Project, whose mission it is to save young LGBTQ+ lives.)

Sarah tells me that understanding gender identity is a life-saving effort, that many first experience gender dysphoria – the feeling of discomfort or distress in people whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth – very young. The early symptoms are self-harm and thoughts of suicide. It may seem a simple gesture, she says, to remember someone's pronouns or address them by their chosen name, but it can lead to serious harm and complications when someone is mis-gendered. It's also worth noting that today in academia stating pronouns is standard practice:

Gina Jonas (she, her) and Sarah Miller (she, her)

(Continued on next page)

* Lyrics for “**You’ve Got To Be Carefully Taught**” from **South Pacific**. If you’re not familiar with the song, give it a listen – sung by Matthew Morrison on YouTube.

You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear
You’ve got to be taught from year to year
It’s got to be drummed in your dear little ear
You’ve got to be carefully taught

You’ve got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made
And people whose skin is a different shade
You’ve got to be carefully taught

You’ve got to be taught before it’s too late
Before you are six or seven or eight
To hate all the people your relatives hate
You’ve got to be carefully taught

Gina Jonas
904-679-4610



An Invitation to UUFSA Adult Learning

Your Spiritual Brain on Religion: The Neuroscience of Religious Belief

6:00 p.m. on Zoom

June 8

The Believing Brain

June 22

The Brain's Influence in Religious Ideas

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

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



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



The St. Johns Food Pantry will continue its regular schedule in June and throughout the summer months. It is open Monday – Friday afternoons, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The UU team is covering every Friday afternoon. Many thanks to this dedicated team lead by Chris Fosaaen. The other volunteers are Mary Holmes, Annette Jones, Mary Kellough, Sandy Lenney, Pat Maguire, Cal Marshall, Nana Royer, Marsha Williams, Maggie Hankamp and Jon Gorecki. Much appreciation to all of you.

If you wish to become a volunteer, please contact Chris Fosaaen at (904) 673-5630. Or if you have more general questions about the Pantry, please contact Cherie Dolgin at (904) 461-1604.

If you would like to donate to the Food Pantry, you can send a check made out to UUFSA and note Food Pantry on the Memo line. Our esteemed Treasurer, Barbara Battelle, will then send one check to the Food Pantry. The Fellowship's mailing address is: UUFSA, 2487 A1A South, St. Augustine, FL 32080. Or if you prefer, you can donate via PayPal, on the Food Pantry's website at www.stjohnsfoodpantry.org.

**Wishing everyone a safe and relaxing summer,
Chris and Cherie**

Great Decisions

Great Decisions will be on summer break during June, July and August.

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.

The autumn 2021 discussion topics are:

- 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

Meetings will be on Zoom until further notice:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4p9x5pk>

Meeting ID: 216 526 385

Passcode: 831270

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, June 6, 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



The Care Connection extends a huge “thank you” to Claudia Atkins for her dedicated service to this committee. Claudia has served as Chair of the Care Connection for more than three years and through her creativity and devotion to our cause, she developed the means for us to continue our work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in June, Claudia will be stepping down as Chair, but thankfully, she will remain on the committee. Rosemary Wheeler and Maureen Herth will now be Co-Chairs and hope to serve the UUFSA with the same kindness and empathy that Claudia demonstrated.

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.

Maureen Herth, Co-Chair.....904-463-1032
Claudia Atkins386-717-6765
Adele DelSavio315-529-6287
Pat Hall914-787-9184

Rosemary Wheeler, Co-Chair .. 352-339-4157
Cynthia McAuliffe..... 904-864-1303
Anne Wilke 904-797-1944



June Calendar



- 4 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 6 – Food drop-off for Dining with Dignity 4:30 – 5:00 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.
- 11 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 14 – Board of Trustees meeting, online 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 18 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 18 – Deadline for July-August Quest contributions 5:00 p.m.
- 20 – Third Sunday Plate Collection – St. Johns Food Pantry
- 22 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 25 – 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.

Some Pandemic Jokes:

After a month of not going out I saw someone I knew walking by on the sidewalk outside. I immediately ran to the window and started yelling at him. Now I understand dogs.

Health tip: If you keep a glass of wine in each hand, you can't accidentally touch your face.

This being stuck at home isn't all that bad. It's interesting that in one bag of rice there are 47,704 pieces and in another there are 46,563. Someone is getting cheated.

Coronacoaster (noun): the ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing workouts, baking banana bread and going for long walks and the next you're crying, drinking gin for breakfast and missing people you don't even like.