

The Flaming Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2342

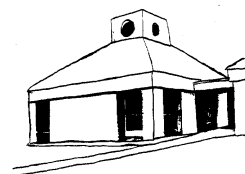
Valdosta, GA 31604

Minister: Rev. Fred Howard

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Tom Phillips – President	Carol Stiles - Vice-President /Program Chair
Rosie Asbury –Treasurer	Susan Bailey - Director of R.E.
Kimberly Tanner – Director of Membership	Jim Ingram –Director of Building & Grounds –
Tom Aiello – Secretary	Carol Stiles – Newsletter Ed.

Please contact us by e-mail at uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

What's going on... **April 2018**

Sun	April 1	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, "The False Dichotomy of Easter" Meet-n-Greet after the service
Sun	April 8	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. George Bennett, "Growing in Love's Likeness" Meet & Greet after the service
M	April 9	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
Sun	April 15	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, "Does Unitarian Universalism Have a Theology?" Meet & Greet after the service; Annual Congregational Meeting!
Sun	April 22	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Lars Leader, "Malaysia's Open House Tradition and How It Might Relate to UUs" Meet & Greet after the service
Sun	April 29	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – TBA

April, 2018

Five Sundays in April, join us when you can!

Mission Statement

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta is committed to building a community of acceptance and love, where all people may strive for intellectual, moral, and spiritual enlightenment. We offer a place to celebrate life's passages and to join in social action on behalf of local and global communities.

Sunday Services

Sunday, April 1 – Rev. Fred Howard, "The False Dichotomy of Easter"

One of the most powerful and confounding artistic works about spring's moving feast is John Updike's short poem "Seven Stanzas at Easter." This morning I want to take a serious look at the Christian meaning of Easter as seen through the lens of John Updike's memorable life and works and also ruminate a bit on a deeper meaning lying in the empty tomb for us liberal religionists.

Sunday, April 8 – Rev. George Bennett, "Growing in Love's Likeness"

God gives us our core identity as sons and daughters "from the beginning." (Ephesians 1:4-5) Throughout our lives we co-create our unique likeness as we grow and mature. My Christian teacher, Fr Richard Rohr calls this classic pattern of spiritual transformation: "Order-Disorder-Reorder." Paul says this is the foolishness of the Cross.

Now that I am near the end of my seventh decade I am moving from either/or thinking to both/and thinking. I increasingly live with paradox and mystery and no longer think in terms of win/lose, but win/win.

I believe that we are called to act out our God given nature fully, at whatever cost. Martin Luther King's execution fifty year ago shows he cost. This is the deepest meaning of life. We are here to give back freely what was first given to us. **Sunday, April 15 – Rev. Fred Howard, "Does Unitarian Universalism Have a Theology?"**

A perplexing question actually. Do we have a theology? A great criticism of our faith movement is how difficult it is to nail down our beliefs. I submit that we do have a theology – a profound

and noble one in which we can all take pride. This morning I'll elaborate.

Share the Plate Sunday: *Donations to the plate this Sunday, not otherwise designated as pledges, will be donated to Break Bread. The Break Bread program has been in existence since 1973 and is organized by the First Presbyterian Church. Our participation in delivering the meals once (or twice) a month to low-income, home-bound seniors is coordinated by David Rodgers, and the program is supported through donations.*

Sunday, April 22 - Dr. Lars Leader, "Malaysia's Open House Tradition and How It Might Relate to UUs"

During years living in and visiting Malaysia, I've experienced many aspects of this country's culture. One of the most lasting memories is the variety of ways that holidays are celebrated in this multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual society. With all the differences seen at these events, one thing common to them all is the "open-house" tradition. Open house is a way for the various peoples in Malaysia to come to better understand their fellow citizens. During a holiday, the people who celebrate it invite friends, neighbors, and just about anyone from other ethnicities and religions to their homes and organizations to enjoy the time with them. Reflecting on the meaning of this tradition, we will consider what it might have to tell us in the US and in our own community. What UU values might relate to this tradition? How do we/could we better understand those in our own society and community who are different from us?

Sunday, April 29 – TBA

Watch Facebook and email for announcements.

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- The inherent dignity and worth of every person,
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations,
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations,
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning,
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large,
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all,
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Grateful for the religious pluralism, which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

Ministerial Musings

Rev Fred Howard

March 2018



"Me Before You," winner of the 2017 People's Choice Award for favorite dramatic movie, was the blockbuster romance of last summer. It's impossible to watch the movie without being touched. Apparently in more ways than one. The film has also aroused some bitterly negative feelings. Based on the bestselling novel of the same name, it has gained not only accolades - but ire. According to a recent article in Huffington Post, "The Disability community is pissed AF about 'Me Before You.'" No movie in recent times has stirred the media to such opposite extremes. Without giving spoilers, the movie invites viewers into an existentialist dilemma in the mind of a quadriplegic individual.

The film is being subjected to increasing fire by the disability community as being "ableist," even being called "a disability snuff film." Tonie Cross, who works with and supports individuals with disabilities, admits the story "is flawed in more ways than one" in its "representation of individuals with disabilities." She wrote a thoughtful piece about the movie entitled "Me Before You: Advocacy or Ableism?"

(<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/before-advocacy-ableism>) In the article she says, "Understanding advocacy and learning to embrace what we can't comprehend or get on board with are skills that are important not just within the community of individuals with disabilities but on a wider, more general scale too. They are skills that help to empower yourself and others while being respectful of both sides of any conflict, something I believe that everyone could benefit from."

There is another entire dimension to add to the debate over the movie's merits – that being the clarion call of the movie to the "right to die" debate. As most of you know, my partner, Kathy, is dealing with a life-threatening illness. We have watched "Me Before You" multiple times and it has not only facilitated many in-depth conversations around end of life issues for us but has led to some profound conversations in several larger circles of

family and close friends. Conversations that likely would not have taken place without the movie setting the tone for them. That, to me, is the great function of art.

Art's great function, according to James Joyce, is to "arrest the mind before the grave and constant in human suffering." Whether we agree or disagree with the political or sociological implications of a movie or any other artistic work is, of course, quite important, but is beside the point in the greater decision of what makes something truly a work of art.

Should this movie be shown at our church? Yet another dimension that touches on a sensitive issue for me – that issue being - should we as a wider faith movement be self-censoring? I say that because, based on my rather extensive internet searches, UUs do not appear to be engaging in the larger conversation our society is having about issues related to the movie. I'm of the opinion such tendencies risk violating our fourth principle "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning." Beyond that, though, I think there is a much simpler but more profound question before us today - that question being: "How can we, as a faith movement, take part in a civil conversation about the inherent worth and dignity of marginalized groups within larger society, if we can't even have these conversations within our own ranks?"

I hope I've stirred your interest in seeing the movie, so you can form your own opinion. Beyond that however, my greater interest is in whether, having heard about the movie or viewed it on your own, you would like to see our community have a conversation about some of the very difficult questions the movie raises. If you do, please RSVP to me at fredhoward3622@gmail.com. Thanks for reading.

Fred

Rev. Fred Howard is our part-time minister. He can be contacted by email (preferable) at fredhoward3622@gmail.com. He is available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting of the membership of UU Valdosta will be held on Sunday, April 15, after the service for the purpose of election of the Board of Trustees and approval of the proposed budget, for 2018-2019. **All voting members should plan to attend.** From the bylaws: "Any member, who is at least seventeen years old, who has been a member for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the vote and has made an annual monetary contribution of record to the congregation, is eligible to vote."

Proposed Budget for 2018-2010: A proposed budget prepared by Treasurer Doug Tanner, revised, and approved by the UU Board will be placed on the agenda for the annual meeting.

Report of the Nominating Committee – Dee Tait (chair), Dawn Renner, and Mary Ellen Adams. The Nominating Committee presents the following slate of officers to stand for election at the annual congregational meeting to be held April 15th:

President	Tom Phillips
Vice-President/Program Chair	Carol Stiles
Secretary	Joyce Rapier
Religious Education Director	Susan Bailey
Treasurer	Doug Tanner
Membership	Kimberly Tanner
Bldg & Grounds	Jim Ingram

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles
Newsletter deadline is the 20th of the previous month!

If you prefer reading this newsletter on the website, e-mail the editor to remove your name from the mailing label list.

Worship Team Chair: Carol Stiles
Website Manager: Carol Stiles
e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles or Kimberly Tanner
Facebook: Kimberly Tanner
Local Publicity: Dee Tait

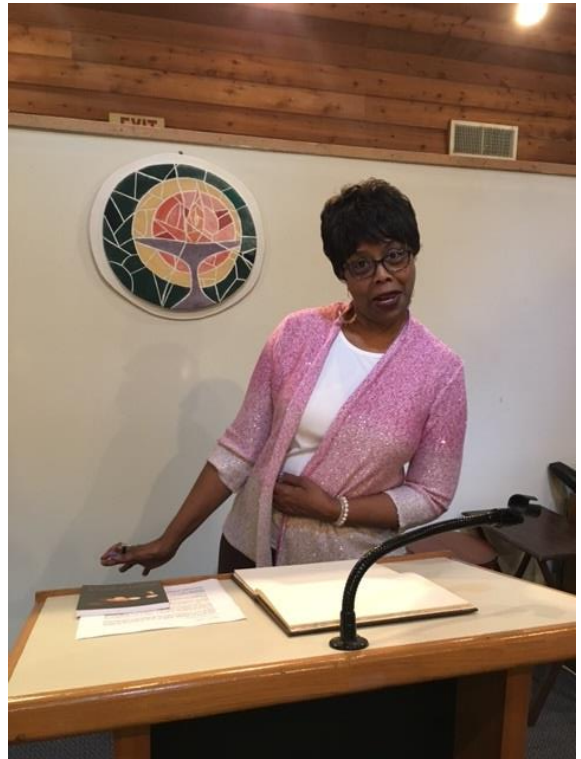
Social Action Activities

Break Bread Together

We deliver meals with the Break Bread Together program on the 2nd Monday (and 5th when there is one) of each month. Let David Rodgers know if you are interested in helping with this service.

Welcome New Members!

Joyce Rapier



Mary Thieme, with Fred Howard



Photos by Kimberly Tanner

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts...

- ❖ Our members and friends experiencing health difficulties.

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News

March 7, 2018, 6:00 p.m.

Among other items reported elsewhere in this newsletter, highlights of the UU Board meeting:

- Set the annual congregational meeting for April 15th after the service.
- Possible music coffeehouse in May
- Next Meeting: TBA.

Worship Team

Each Sunday, there will be a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the sanctuary for sign up for the upcoming services. You can also send an e-mail to Carol Stiles and she will put you on the list for that task.

At the Church-in-the-Woods... Sangha Tuesdays

The KTD Buddhist reading and meditation group is meeting on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m.

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin. You can e-mail the group at georgia@taoist.org

Oaken Circle CUUPS Chapter

Oaken Circle, a chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, meets each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m., with an officers' meeting on the first Wednesday of the month.

You can contact the group by e-mail at: valdostaoakencircle@gmail.com or on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/oakencircle/>

Thank You! Thank You!

For lay-leading services: Cliff Adams, Dee Tait, Carol Stiles

For speaking at Sunday Services: Tom Hochschild, Lars Leader

For providing music at services: Nephtali Santiago, Doug Tanner (via technical services).

For Meet & Greet: Dawn and Teagan, Mary Ellen Adams, Doug and Kimberly Tanner

For leading RE: Sue Bailey

For assisting with RE and nursery: Teagan Dunn

For taking out trash and recycling: Dee Tait, Lawrence Rapier, Lars Leader, Sue Bailey, and others.

For delivering Break Bread meals: David Rodgers

For photos for newsletter: Kimberly Tanner

For leading the Caring Committee: Dee Tait

UUA General Assembly, June 20-24, 2018 - Kansas City, MO

General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through a democratic process. If you are interested in going, see Carol Stiles (Vice-President) for more information!

Azalea Festival!

Here's Ryan at our UU table at the Azalea Festival, March 10 – 11, 2018.





Dr. Linda Bennett Elder, Rev. Floyd Rose, Bob Elder (with microphone), Paul Ransom (in the back). (Photos by Carol Stiles)

March for Our Lives, March 24, 2018

The local March for Our Lives began at Serenity Christian Church, with speaker Paul Ransom, an 84-year-old Vietnam veteran. The march proceeded across Moore Street to Williams St. then south to the Valdosta City School Board Office, where Bob Elder and Rev. Floyd Rose spoke. About six members of the UUs joined the local March for Our Lives today. Because few people had made individual signs, we shared our Side With Love and other UUA signs with many others in the group!

March for Our Lives was held in Washington, DC, led primarily by the students of Parkland High School in Florida where 17 students were shot to death last month. Other marchers were organized in many other cities in the U.S. and around the world. Millions of people joined these marches. The marchers called for action to end gun violence.

