



The Flaming Chalice

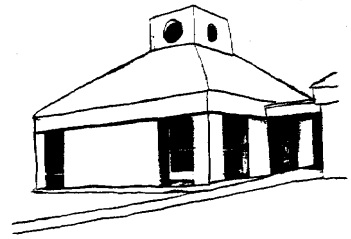
Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue
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What's going on... **December 2013**

Sun	Dec. 1	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “What Does Your Ticket Say?,” Rev. Fred Howard Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
W	Dec. 4	6:00 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church
Sun	Dec. 8	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Lamentation as Spiritual Practice,” Dr. Michael Stoltzfus Meet & Greet Coffee after the service <i>Bring items for Break Bread Gift bags</i>
M	Dec. 9	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
F	Dec. 13	6:30 PM	Decorate the church for the Holidays and enjoy some Holiday cheer!
Sun	Dec. 15	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Moravian Lovefeast,” Rev. Fred Howard <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> Meet & Greet after the service <i>Deadline for the January Newsletter</i>
Sun	Dec. 22	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Thomas Roberts Meet & Greet
W	Dec. 25		Christmas Day
Th	Dec. 26		Kwanzaa begins
Sun	Dec. 29	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Informal Holiday Gathering Meet & Greet
M	Dec. 30	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
T	Dec. 31		New Year's Eve

December ... Lots planned holiday wise for December. We're so glad Fred will be back with us as he and Kathy figure out how to deal with Kathy's recent health diagnosis. Please honor their request for some privacy in this matter. Hope you can join in the services and other celebrations. We miss you when you are away.

Happy Holidays!

Sunday Services

Sunday, December 1 – Rev. Fred Howard, “What Does Your Ticket Say?”

Physical journeys make such wonderful metaphors for the journeys we make in the spiritual realm. And once in a while stories of great adventure will achieve such a fortunate resonance that we refer to them as mythic. To me “The Polar Express,” Robert Zemeckis’ movie that was an adaptation of a simple children’s storybook, qualifies as just that –a mythic story. Hop aboard the Polar Express with me this morning as I share some thoughts on how the characters in this story are illustrative of the journeys many of us are on.

Sunday, December 8 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Lamentation as Spiritual Practice”

Lamentation or giving voice to sorrow, suffering, or struggle is central to all spiritual traditions and it has the power to help move people and communities from despair to hope, frustration to transformation. Lamentation invites people to speak the unspeakable. In discovering a language to for their suffering, people may claim an agency beyond silence, may give voice to others, and in so doing may create a space for coping, resistance, and healing. We will explore the power of lamentation in Jewish and Christian traditions in particular.

Sunday, December 15 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Moravian Lovefeast”

The Moravian Lovefeast has become a holiday tradition for our congregation as it has for many Unitarian Universalist churches. It’s a very sweet, simple service consisting of music, a brief homily, and the serving of a sweet roll and hot drink. The ritual aspects of the service symbolize many themes of our faith. A return to simplicity with the sharing of the agape meal (“agape” meaning the highest form of love) of the first century church. An enactment of our willingness to transcend our individual differences and be reconciled with one another. And a wondrous celebration of the Divine Spirit that unites us all. The sweetness of the roll and the warmth of the cocoa are physical reminders both of our common human need for food and drink and the comfort and satisfaction we enjoy when we are all a part of a covenanted community such as ours. Come and be a part of this tradition – sure to delight your taste buds as well as your heart and spirit. After the service the joyous spirit continues as those who wish to can join us for caroling at Wild Adventures theme park.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the plate this Sunday, not otherwise designated as pledges, will go to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Guest at Your Table campaign. The UUSCommittee, has currently activated a fundraising campaign to provide immediate and long-term help for victims of the typhoon in the Philippines.

Remember also, during the month of December, to keep your Guest at Your Table boxes near your dinner table for regular contributions. The GAYT boxes will be collected at a service in early January.

Sunday, December 22 - Rev. Thomas Roberts

Rev. Thomas Roberts is a retired Methodist AME minister who has been attending our services since the end of the

summer. He will bring our message today. Please join us for his first message in a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Sunday, December 29 - Informal Holiday Gathering

While many will be traveling between Christmas and New Years, those who are in town for the holidays are invited to a special holiday gathering. This will be an informal service and all are invited to join us, share stories from the current year and prepare to start a new year.

Religious Education

For Children: The RE program for children under 15 years of age meets at 10:45 AM concurrent with the Sunday morning service. Older young people will remain with the adult service. Two adults are needed each Sunday to help with RE. Sign up on the weekly e-mail volunteer list or let Sue Bailey know if you can help on a given Sunday.

Adult Religious Education: The fall series has been discontinued for now. Watch for a possible continuation sometime in the future.



RE Kids in November

Sangha Tuesdays

5:30-7:00 PM at the church

The KTD Buddhist reading and meditation group meets on Tuesday evenings at the church. Everyone interested in Buddhist practice and meditation is welcome. Tea, 5:30-6: Buddhist shamata meditation, 6-6:30; Discussion of reading, 6:30-7. Participants should supply their own pillow for sitting, although using a chair for those unable to sit on the floor is allowed. The group shares books and the liturgy.

S-O-S VALDOSTA

VALDOSTA SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP

This support group hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta is facilitated by Tamara Hardesty. The group meets at the church on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8 P.M. Contact via e-mail at sosvaldosta@yahoo.com or connect online at **VALDOSTA SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP** or ‘Like’ us on **facebook** for online support, daily affirmations, links to resources, and information on upcoming meetings.



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard

December 2013

Dear Congregation,

Thank you so much for your understanding as Kathy and I begin to cope with the shocking news we received on November 6. Kathy went to see the doctor with a flu-like illness and ended up being given a diagnosis of cancer of the lung. She has never smoked nor lived with anyone who smoked. It just seems so unfair.

Besides dealing with the medial aspects of this finding – getting further tests and taking measures to get treatment started - we have also had to get a handle on the emotional aspects of this disease. Something that will be an ongoing challenge for us. I've only gotten to the point that I can talk about it in the last few days and still there are tears right below the surface. I've found that there's a tension to navigate in sharing our struggles. That is, it's both helpful to share this with friends and family, but it's also a very difficult thing for me to do. We're so blessed to have such a supportive community who know how to listen to us no matter where we happen to be in the wild emotional swings this is putting us through.

With the board of director's blessing, I'll be returning to the church next month in a limited capacity. The plan is for me to lead the worship services on the first and third Sundays. Right now that's about all I have the time or emotional energy for. Hopefully Kathy and I will get further clarity on what the future holds in the next few weeks and we can begin to reorder our lives as we see fit. I'm finding that having sermons to write and services to plan is a needed distraction for me. If I don't keep my mind distracted, I tend to dwell on the "what ifs" and that is not always a good thing. So thank you congregation and board of directors for that also.

I look forward to being with you all once again. You all have been so respectful of our need to retreat for awhile and get our minds and hearts around this, and yet you have been there for us when we needed a listening ear or anything else for that matter. We couldn't make it through this without you.

In Faith and Community,
Fred

Fred Howard is our part time minister. You may contact him by email (preferable) at fredhoward3622@gmail.com should you need to reach him. He is available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

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.

Volunteer Needed: For now Betty Derrick will no longer be able to regularly help with the food delivery. In fact Dee is

currently unavailable also and we appreciate David taking over for now. We are seeking someone who would be willing to see that this monthly service to which our church is committed continues. Please let Betty, David, or Dee know you are available. Several volunteers makes it possible to adjust to changing personal schedules.

Gift Bags: We will prepare gift bags for our clients (approx. 6 people) on Sunday, December 8. Bring some small items or a dolloar or two to purchase items. Thanks.

Guest at Your Table



The Guest at Your Table annual tradition at UU churches fosters understanding and awareness of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) human-rights work. Contribution boxes were distributed at a special service in November. If you did not receive a box then, you will find some available in the entry way to the sanctuary. Please pick one up and use it through the holiday season.

We will collect the boxes during the Sunday service on January 5. Please convert your cash contributions to a check made out to UUSC-GAYT and place it in your box. Complete the information on the side of the box too. We will send our donations as a church to UUSC.

You'll find information on the box about how you can join the UUSC. Consider making a donation during the holidays sufficient to become a member. Many of our members are also members of this worthy organization. It is one way we, as individuals, can globally support our UU principles. By celebrating Guest at Your Table in our congregation we are helping nurture a spirit of gratitude and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." Donations of \$100.00 or more can be matched by a special fund available to UUSC. Please be generous.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee Contact Carol Stiles or Kimberly Tanner if you would be able to help out with this committee. Several of the core members are themselves in need of care right now. Get in touch too if you or someone you know needs the services of this committee.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts

❖ Our members and friends experiencing health difficulties....

❖ PRESIDENT'S CORNER

CAROL STILES

It has been a busy month at UU! On Nov. 16th, we held our first fundraising event in quite some time, a low country boil followed by great music! We served about 50 meals to our guests, some of whom are members of Tai Chi, the Buddhist meditation group, PFLAG and SGP, and we made some new friends, too!

My great appreciation goes to Jim and Josette Ingram, who donated food items and prepared the dinner, Bill Webster, for his wonderful music, Kimberly and Doug Tanner who prepared a dessert, Valerie Webster who made two pound cakes and prepared lovely table centerpieces, Reba Nelson and Kim Richardson who, along with those already listed, helped set up and serve the meal, plus Sue Bailey, Lars Leader, and others who helped clean up and restore the sanctuary afterwards.

Kimberly Tanner was the grand champion ticket seller, selling nearly ½ of the tickets sold! In addition to the almost 50 tickets sold, we received a few donations from friends who could not attend, and the total raised was \$946 – way to go, UU's! As indicated this money will go to paying off the new HVAC system loan, as well as restoring our general fund, after purchasing new lights and repairing the roof on the cupola.

On a more somber note, a number of our UU members and friends are experiencing serious health concerns, or are with family members dealing with serious health concerns, right now. Some of these individuals are members of our Caring Committee, so I would like to invite others to join the Caring Committee, to help out with this important aspect of our congregation. If you are willing, please visit with either Kimberly Tanner or myself. Along with this, we are also seeking volunteers to help deliver Break Bread meals for lunch on the 2nd Monday (and 5th when there is one) of each month. We truly appreciate each person's willingness to step forward when some of our long-time core members are unable to do so.... Thank you!

In community,
Carol

INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

If you are interested in becoming a member of our fellowship, we encourage you to talk with our minister, Rev. Fred Howard or our President, Carol Stiles, or Membership Director, Kimberly Tanner. We welcome your questions, and we extend an open invitation to all who want to join our liberal community of faith.

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Betty Derrick
December 15: Deadline for the January newsletter.
If you prefer reading this newsletter on the website, e-mail the editor to remove your name from the mailing label list.
Website Manager: Carol Stiles
e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles
Facebook: Kimberly Tanner
Local Publicity: Dee Tait



Bill Webster playing at fund raiser. The contribution plate was for additional coins to repair our third broken window in 6 weeks! So far the person breaking into the church has not stolen anything but the expense of the window is becoming an issue.

Thank You! Thank You!

For layleading services: Doug Tanner, Valerie Webster, Bill Webster, Betty Derrick

For speaking at Sunday services: Doug Tanner, Carol Stiles

For Sunday service music: Bill Webster, Doug Tanner

For Stories for All Ages: Sue Bailey, Fred Howard

For helping with Children's RE: Those who helped Sue Bailey

For serving as Meet and Greet Hosts: Doug Tanner, Carol Stiles

For greeting visitors: Kimberly Tanner, Sue Bailey

For delivering Break Bread meals in October: David Rodgers

For donating and cooking food for the Low Country Boil Fund Raiser at the church last month: Jim and Josette Ingram

For to those who helped with, organized, and provided salad and desserts for the Low Country Boil Fund Raiser at the church last month: Carol Stiles, Kimberly and Doug Tanner, Lars Leader, Sue Bailey, Valerie Webster and others who helped.

For a wonderful evening of music at the Low Country Boil Fund Raiser at the church last month: Bill Webster

For organizing our Faith Build participation at the build and the Friday lunch: Valerie Webster and all who worked and provided food.

For supporting our Fund Raising efforts in November: All the groups that use our church facilities. We were so glad to see Tai Chi, PFLAG, The Buddhist Sanga, South Georgia Pride there enjoying the Low Country Boil!

For all the members of the Board who have worked extra hard over the last several months to take up the slack from several of our long term members who haven't been able to volunteer so much recently: Carol Stiles for her leadership, Doug Tanner for programming, Meet and Greet and just about everything, Kimberly Tanner, Sue Bailey, and other members of the Board.

Let's Have Some Fun!!

HOLIDAY DECORATING PARTY

Friday, December 13

6: 30 PM at the church

We will have the holiday decorating “party” in lieu of Games Night and Movie Night. There’ll be Holiday music, decorating, and some holiday treats will be the order of the evening. Sue Bailey is coordinating the evening will ask for volunteers to bring nibbles (holiday cookies and confections and anything else folks would like to share). Come join the fun and get the Christmas Tree up!

Pizza and a Movie and Games Night will not meet this month. Note the Holiday Party instead and watch for January’s calendar!

Book Discussion and Potluck will be on Friday, January 17
The next book is “Things Fall Apart” by Chinua Achebe. “The novel shows the life of Okonkwo, a leader and local wrestling champion in Umuofia—one of a fictional group of nine villages in Nigeria, inhabited by the Igbo people (in the novel, “Ibo”). It describes his family and personal history, the customs and society of the Igbo, and the influence of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on the Igbo community during the late nineteenth century.” (Wikipedia) The book was published in 1958 and is widely read across Africa and elsewhere. The author, who won many awards during his lifetime, died this past March.

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News November 2, 2013

(Note that some matters appear in articles and announcements elsewhere in this newsletter and are not repeated here. The full minutes are posted on the RE wing bulletin board after approval by the board.)

The UU Board discussed:

- Some nearly final plans for the fundraiser on Nov. 16th.
- A proposed policy banning firearms from church grounds.
- Dishwasher is not working; considering how to replace.
- Schedule dates of various activities around the holidays.
- Next meeting, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 6:00 p.m.

Holly Jones’ honey for sale to benefit the church!!! Holly has some honey for sale for \$10 with all proceeds going to the UU church. Honey is located where our name tags are with a jar for the money.



Josette and Jim Ingram at Fund Raiser.

At the Church-in-the-Woods

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday: Continuing Class, 5:30-7 PM; Beginner’s Class, 7-8 PM. Mid-December both groups will meet at 6PM. A new beginner's class will start on Jan. 6, 5:30- 6:30 Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin . You can e-mail the group at georgia@taoist.org

South Georgia Pride –3rd Tuesday each month, 7:30PM
Contact Raynaé Jones www.southgapride.com

PFLAG Meeting – 4th Tuesday each month, 7:00PM
Contact: Doug Tanner The web page for PFLAG Valdosta:
<http://community.pflag.org/Valdosta>

UU Activities and Announcements

February 21 & 22, Communities Coming Together, two-day conference featuring 16 inspiring speakers, hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach. Visit the group's website.

March 21-23, The 4th annual Florida UU Women's Retreat will be held at DaySpring Episcopal Conference Center, Ellenton, FL. The 2014 program is being planned by women from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ft Myers. The theme is Women and Power. During our weekend together we will share stories and inspirations and explore the many aspects of power in our lives and in the lives of women of the world.

\$220 per person covers expenses, including semi-private room and six meals. A non-refundable deposit of \$20 will reserve your place. Final payment is due by January 15, 2014.

For more information and an application, contact Rita Sizemore: rsrsizemore@gmail.com or call 239-437-1014.

Reaching Out to Survivors in the Philippines: UUSC November 18, 2013

UUSC is working with and providing financial support to the following grassroots organizations to make sure that people living in society's margins aren't excluded from assistance:

- The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines, which is doing direct relief work in communities where people have lost crops, homes, and livelihoods
- IBON International, a long-term UUSC partner, which is working with the Citizen's Disaster Response Center to identify and bring much-needed support to people most marginalized by the mainstream relief efforts
- The National Rural Women Coalition, which, with a wide network of community-based organizations of farmers and fisherpeople throughout the islands, is exceptionally well positioned to identify needs and assist survivors in recuperation of food security and livelihoods To support survivors of the typhoon, please donate today to the UUSC-UUA Philippines Typhoon Haiyan Relief Fund.

