

The Flaming Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue

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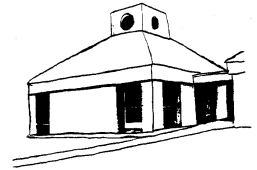
Valdosta, GA 31604

Minister: Rev. Fred Howard

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Carol Stiles - President	Doug Tanner – Vice President-
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 send email to uuvaldosta@yahoo.com to contact us!

What's going on... **December 2014**

Sun	Dec. 7	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Judaism: Creation and the Hebrew Prophets” Meet & Greet after the service
M	Dec. 8	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
Sun	Dec. 14	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, “How the Unitarians Invented Christmas” Meet & Greet after the service Afternoon: Caroling at Wild Adventures!
M	Dec. 15		<i>Deadline November newsletter</i>
Sun	Dec. 21	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, “Moravian Lovefeast”
Sun	Dec. 28	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Celebrating the Season” Meet & Greet Coffee after the service

December....

Winter kicked in early this year, but still beautiful weather in South Georgia! Our annual Guest at Your Table campaign for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has kicked off – throughout the month of December consider sharing the stories provided by the UUSC, as you make your annual contribution to this fundraising and social justice awareness effort, in whatever way you are willing and able. Join us for caroling at Wild Adventures, on Sunday, Dec. 14! Don't forget to write a note about things that you are thankful for and drop it in the Thankful Jar at the front of the church! Early in the New Year the notes of gratitude will be read out loud after Meet & Greet. Due to holiday activities, Living the Welcoming Congregation as well as our Friday evening events will return in January!

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, Dec. 7 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Judaism: Creation and the Hebrew Prophets”

Judaism has always linked religious practice with a quest for engaged activity in the here and now. We will explore how Judaism discovers meaning in creation, history, and prophetic call for communal responsibility. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, the religious life should be grounded in a communal vision wherein "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." What can we learn from Judaism to help make that vision a reality?

Sunday, Dec. 14 – Rev. Fred Howard, “How the Unitarians Invented Christmas”

Have you ever been asked whether Unitarian Universalists celebrate Christmas? Given what’s generally known about our faith tradition - that it draws inspiration from many of the world’s religions and that our members come from rather diverse religious backgrounds - it’s a fair question. But what’s not generally known is that the holiday would not even exist if it weren’t for Unitarians. By “exist” I mean exist in the way it’s commonly celebrated in American culture today. So the best comeback if you’re ever asked that question is, “Celebrate it? Why we invented it.” This morning I’ll explain how we can justify this audacious claim.

Sunday, Dec. 21 -- Rev. Fred Howard, “Moravian Lovefeast”

The Moravian Lovefeast is a simple service with music, a brief homily, and the serving of a sweet roll and coffee or hot chocolate. This will be our fifth year of celebrating the Lovefeast as our lead in to the holidays. It has become tradition in many Unitarian Universalist churches as the ritual symbolizes so many themes of our faith. With the sharing of food we mark a return to simplicity and an acknowledgment of our common needs. The Lovefeast is a wondrous celebration of the Divine Spirit that unites us all. Come and be a part of this tradition – sure to delight your taste buds as well as your heart and spirit. Our worship team has been planning some wonderful music for this year’s service!

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. UUSC sponsors social justice work around the globe supported by contributions. Although UUSC shares the values of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), it does not receive funding from the UUA. Consider joining UUSC as part of your contribution this year. Membership is \$40 annually. Many of our members are already UUSC members.

Sunday, Dec. 28 – “Celebrating the Season,”

This congregation-based service will offer a chance to share stories and memories of the winter holiday season.

Caroling at Wild Adventures

On Sunday, December 14, our congregation has been invited to carol at Wild Adventures. Anyone who can make a joyful noise is invited to join us, no special musical talent required. In years past many families have joined us and used this as an opportunity to enjoy fellowship with our church community and then have a family outing at the park. Everyone who participates gets free admission for the remainder of the day. We will gather at the employee’s entrance to the park at 1:30 pm and begin singing at 2 pm. Please note the following information sent to me regarding the event:

“We have made a few changes to the program this year. To help our guests identify you as a caroling group, we are asking everyone in your group wear the same color pants, slacks, jeans or skirts and a red shirt or sweater. We will also have signage this year to identify your group that will be displayed when you sing. Each group will need to prepare to sing three Christmas carols at three locations in the park, beginning at the park Christmas tree. All singers will received free admission into the park and are encouraged to stay and enjoy the park after your performance.”

Our group has decided on blue jeans and a red shirt, sweater, or coat.

Hope you can join us!

Fred



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard, December 2014

Death with dignity has been prominent in the news recently, primarily because of the high profile case of Brittany Maynard. Maynard, 29, was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor called a glioblastoma earlier this year. After much thought and research, and having educating herself extensively about her illness and its prospects, she decided to end her life on her own terms. Quietly and at home surrounded by family and friends, she did just that on November 1. Maynard spent much of the last weeks of her life advocating for death with dignity laws. Much notice was taken of her advocacy both because of the immediacy and intimacy of the issue to her own life, as well as her engagement with a wide audience through her use of social media.

Maynard became a high profile case for the death with dignity in the first place largely through her own efforts through Facebook and other social media. She became the face for death with dignity legislation, which is already law in three states. Two other states have similar laws to protect physicians who participate in death with dignity acts, and death with dignity bills have currently been introduced in seven other states. It's clearly an issue that is gaining traction.

As you might imagine, death with dignity laws also have many critics that base their objection on religious concerns. Predictably, right to life groups have been out in the media recently also, voicing opposition to death with dignity legislation. However, some of the opposition has come from less polarized groups that have a more rational basis to their arguments. Ira Byock, of the Institute for Human Caring of Providence Health and Services, spoke out against it, saying, "When doctor-induced death becomes an accepted response to the suffering of dying people, logical extensions grease the slippery slope." His "slippery slope" apparently referring to the ethical slippery slope involved in such questions as, "What constitutes a terminal illness?" "And just who can we say is mentally competent to make such decisions?" You can read more about his opinion and about other oppositions to death with dignity legislation at

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/10/06/expanding-the-right-to-die/doctor-assisted-suicide-is-unethical-and-dangerous>

Public opinion is also divided, but the results of questionnaires and polls depend largely on how the question is framed. Seventy percent of Americans were in favor of allowing physicians to "end a patient's life by some painless means," but only 51 percent were in support of allowing doctors to help a patient "commit

suicide." These are two very different ways of understanding the issue.

It seems that much more education on the subject will be needed before the general public will be ready for a rational, civil, and compassionate conversation on this very important and timely issue – one that absolutely affects everyone at some point. I encourage our community to become more informed and knowledgeable about death with dignity so that we might make a meaningful contribution to the dialogue.

Grace and Peace,
Fred

Rev. Fred Howard is our part time minister. He is usually in the pulpit on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. He may be contacted by email at fredhoward3622@gmail.com (preferable). He is available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

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.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

- ❖ Please send news to Carol for the January newsletter!

Keep in your thoughts

- ❖ Keep in your thoughts other members and friends who are dealing with health issues of their own or of family members.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee Dee Tait chairs this committee. If you would be able to help, when requests for help are received, please let her know. Other members include David Rodgers, Betty Derrick, Kimberly Tanner, and Carol Stiles. Get in touch too if you or someone you know needs the services of this committee.

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 through Valerie Webster and the Worship Team or let Sue Bailey know if you can help on a given Sunday.

Notes from RE – Sue Bailey

We continue to explore our Unitarian Universalist principles in our lessons and will also be doing holiday themed activities and crafts. During one recent lesson we shared the many things we are thankful for and made thankful trees. We talked about the importance of expressing gratitude every day, not just at Thanksgiving. Be sure to ask your child/children about the Thankful Jar they brought home for their families to fill with notes about the things they are thankful for. In another lesson, we read part of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and talked about our hopes and dreams both big and small. The RE kids made dream clouds and each child wrote a hope or dream that they had for themselves on one side and a hope or dream for the world on the other side. The dream clouds and thankful trees are on display in the church. As always, if you would like to volunteer to help in RE, please see Sue Bailey.

Friday evening events will return in January!

Pizza and a Movie, Games Night and Fire Pit, and...

Potluck and Book Discussion Friday, January 16, 6:30 p.m.

The book for January is *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love, & So Much More* - Janet Mock. This selection is part of the Welcoming Congregation curriculum as well.

We gather for fellowship and potluck at 6:30 and then about 7:30 begin discussing the book. It is helpful to have read the book, but not a requirement – join us!



Dee, Doug, Lars, and Ray, at Habitat for Humanity Building on Faith, setting up for lunch, Nov. 21, 2014

Welcoming Congregation sessions will return in January!

Thank You! Thank You!

For helping with the Habitat for Humanity lunch: Dee Tait, coordinator, Kimberly and Doug Tanner, Lars Leader, Ray Perez, Carol Stiles, Sue Bailey, Betty Derrick, Valerie Webster

For providing music at services: Rhett Watson, Nephtali Santiago

For lay-leading services: Doug Tanner, Betty Derrick, Valerie Webster, Cliff Adams

For speaking at November services: Lars Leader, Carol Stiles

For Meet & Greet: Valerie Webster, Mary Ellen Adams, and Dawn Renner

For fixing the lights in the foyer and on the sign: Doug Tanner

For assisting with RE: Fred Howard, Kimberly Tanner, Teagan Dunn, Lars Leader

For sweeping sidewalks: Richard Schofill

For delivering Break Bread meals in November: David Rodgers

For coordinating the Caring Committee: Dee Tait

For submitting photos for the newsletter: Kimberly Tanner, Sue Bailey, Carol Stiles

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. Several volunteers make it possible to adjust to changing personal schedules. Please let David know if you are available to deliver meals. It is helpful to have two people on the route.

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Worship Team Chair: Valerie Webster
 Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles
 December 15: Deadline for the November 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

Treasurer's Report for October 2014

Operating Receipts and Disbursements

	October	YTD (July-pres)
Receipts		
Plate	\$190.06	\$581.19
Pledge	\$1,142.00	\$6,392.00
Rent	\$100.00	\$300.00
Total Receipts	\$1,432.06	\$7,597.19
Disbursements		
Minister Expense	\$700.00	\$1,898.20
Pest Control/Termite Bond	\$35.00	\$140.00
Speakers' Fees & Expenses	\$200.00	\$1,200.00
Repairs & Maintenance		\$0.00
UUA Dues	\$611.00	1,222.00
Utilities	\$334.17	\$1,163.80
Total disbursements	\$1,880.17	\$6,468.32
Net Receipt (Disbursement)	-\$448.11	\$1,128.87

Ed. Note: \$145 was collected for Habitat for Humanity and \$81 for Rotary's Imagination Library in Share-the-Plate collections over the two months prior.

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News Nov. 2, 2014

(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:

- Habitat for Humanity Building on Faith, Nov. 15-22
 - Jim Ingram replaced board damaged by termites, will paint it along with trim after window is replaced.
- Next Meeting: TBD.



Story for All Ages

At the Church-in-the-Woods...

PFLAG Meeting – 4th Tuesday each month, 7:00PM

Contact: Doug Tanner. The web page for PFLAG

Valdosta: <http://community.pflag.org/Valdosta>

Taoist Tai Chi – We'll combine the 2 classes starting Monday, December 8 (6 - 7:30 p.m.). The next beginner class with start Monday January 5, 2015 (5:30 - 6:30). Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin. You can e-mail the group at georgia@taoist.org

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.

 **VALDOSTA**

VALDOSTA SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP

This peer-to-peer support group **will begin meeting at another location in December:** Hilton Garden Inn, 1702 Gornto Rd. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Dec. 17. The facilitator is Tamara Hardesty. 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.

Carol's Comments: It's Guest At Your Table season! Lars Leader kicked off the UUSC's Guest at Your Table annual campaign on Sunday, Nov. 23. Guest at Your Table is an annual fundraising campaign to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. UUSC is affiliated with the UUA but receives no funds from the UUA. UUSC has partner networks all around the globe and works to help those most marginalized, not only during times of disaster, but consistently through long-term planning and commitment to social justice efforts. Unlike many other immediate disaster response organizations (also of course, greatly needed), UUSC is in it for the long-term – still working in Haiti for earthquake recovery and in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and India after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, for example. The UUSC focuses not only on human rights in humanitarian disasters, but also civil liberties, economic justice, and environmental justice (such as the right to safe drinking water). This year's theme is "food sustainability."

Many of our UU Valdosta members are also members of UUSC – you can join, too, during this campaign for only \$40 (donations of \$125 may be eligible for matching funds from the Shelter Rock UU Congregation in Manhasset, NY). You can also participate just by placing a cash donation in the collection plate on Sunday, December 21, when we will hold our monthly Share-the-Plate collection. And don't forget to share the *Stories of Hope* – more information here: <http://www.uusc.org/guest-at-your-table-for-beginners>
Thank you!

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.