

The Flaming Chalice

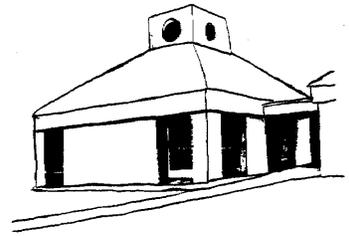
Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2342
Valdosta, GA 31604

Minister: Rev. Fred Howard
<http://uuvaldosta.net>

229-242-3714

e-mail: uuvaldosta@yahoo.com



What's going on... **February 2013**

Sun	Feb. 3	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Yoga, Healing, and Chronic Illness,” Dr. Michael Stoltzfus Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
W	Feb. 6	6 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church
Sat	Feb. 9	7-11 PM	Rainbow Mixer at the church
Sun	Feb. 10	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - “Mythic Love – A Sermon for Valentine’s Day,” Rev. Fred Howard Meet & Greet Coffee after the service Power of Myth Class after Meet and Greet
M	Feb. 11	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
F	Feb. 15	6:15 PM	Pizza and a Movie at the church Deadline for March newsletter
Sun	Feb. 17	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - “Finding Our Fault Line,” Rev. Fred Howard <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> Meet & Greet Coffee after the service Power of Myth Class after Meet and Greet
F	Feb. 22	7-9 PM	VAMA Coffeehouse at First Christian Church
Sun	Feb. 24	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - “There's Not Just One Right Type of Person (or Animal!),” Holly Prall Meet & Greet Coffee after the service

February ... “Love is reckless; not reason. Reason seeks a profit. Love comes on strong, consuming herself, unabashed.

Yet, in the midst of suffering, Love proceeds like a millstone, hard surfaced and straightforward. Having died of self-interest, she risks everything and asks for nothing. Love gambles away every gift God bestows. Without cause God gave us Being; without cause, give it back again.”.... Rumi

If a ❖ appears on your mailing label for this edition, please contact the editor if you wish to continue to receive a mailed copy of this newsletter.

For those of you who prefer reading this newsletter on our website, contact the editor if you wish your name removed from the mailing label list. (Note that the web version does not contain some of the personal information that appears in the print version.)

Sunday Services

Sunday, February 3 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Yoga, Healing, and Chronic Illness”

How does Classical Yoga and Modern Yoga therapy represent and respond to chronic illness? Yoga, in its many manifestations, tends to depict chronic illness as a condition of physical disease, but also as a state of suffering that can potentially involve healing through yoga’s spiritual path. While in its long history yoga has always offered the promise of freedom from suffering, only in modern times has yoga literature directly addressed medically defined chronic illness and elaborated on the specialized applications of yoga for such conditions. Yoga therapies incorporate a non-dual mind-body relational sense of self that is flourishing within integrative and holistic medicine in contemporary health care and self care dynamics.

Sunday, February 10 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Mythic Love – A Sermon for Valentine’s Day

Words have been used to describe romantic love ever since humanity developed the capacity for language. Of course, words are not up to the task. Fortunately, a rich mythology developed around the phenomenon of romantic love as humanity has sought to understand and explain this powerful force. The message of these myths is evocative and timeless. The stories not only delight and amuse, they speak great truths about love. This morning I will share some thoughts on a couple of these myths.

Sunday, February 17 - Rev. Fred Howard, “Finding Our Fault Line”

It is perhaps one of the greatest problems of human existence – determining what we are and are not responsible for in this life. Most all of us, at one time or another, take either too much or too little responsibility and this inability to discern what is and what is not our responsibility leads to a great deal of our suffering. This morning I will elaborate on the acceptance of responsibility, one of Scott Peck’s four disciplines for a healthy and fulfilled life, using an illustration from the movie Good Will Hunting.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the offering plate not designated for pledges will be donated to the South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness (SGPEH). SGPEH serves 18 counties in southern Georgia and provides support and assistance to individuals and families, as well as transitional housing and community outreach programs.

Sunday, February 24 – Holly Prall, "There's Not Just One Right Type of Person (or Animal!)"

The Lunar New Year is a time of joyous celebration and renewal in some Asian countries. With Chinese New Year's eve falling on Feb. 9 this year, the festival time will end 15 days later with the Lantern Festival in China, which falls on this Sunday. This will be the year of the Snake (as many Chinese restaurant placemats will inform you), which might just be your Chinese zodiac sign. As a former UU Director of Religious Education and English to Speakers of other Languages teacher, I hope that you will learn in this service not only what sign and which of the five Chinese elements you

were born under, but also what Chinese astrology has to suggest about diversity and community.

“The Power of Myth” Class

After the service until 1PM

Fred Howard is facilitating this class on “The Power of Myth” using video from the popular PBS series of conversations between the mythologist Joseph Campbell and journalist Bill Moyers. The class meets after Meet and Greet on the Sundays Rev. Howard is in charge of the Sunday service.

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.



Sue Bailey and children in RE during the MLK Sunday service. Thanks for all your wonderful work Sue! Look how rapt those children are.

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

February 2013

"I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life."

I imagine most of you recognize these words of Henry Thoreau either from a literature class, or study of our Unitarian heritage (Unitarians claim Thoreau although I'm not sure he claimed us), or from their paraphrase in the movie Dead Poets Society. Beautiful, inspiring, motivating words. I like a writer that speaks the truth straight up, without candy coating or soft pedaling anything. Thus my affinity to Thoreau and Emerson.

A more contemporary writer that spoke truth in much the same tone was Scott Peck. A friend of mine absolutely insisted that I read Peck's book, *The Road Less Traveled*, back in 1986. This was a particularly difficult time for me as I was living without any real direction in my spiritual life. The book grabbed me from the first sentence. "Life is difficult." Wow. As I read, I kept saying two things to myself. One – this is the first time another human being has been totally honest with me about life. Two – this is exactly what life is like, but no one else (to my knowledge) has ever put it into words like this. The book was a transforming event in my life. Those of you who have been around a long time have heard me say this, but those who are relatively new to our community may have not.

Almost a generation has passed now since the book was first published in 1978. It spent an astounding 694 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list (that's over 13 years.) But today enough time has passed that many people in this generation have not been exposed to the richness of Peck's thought. Even those who don't agree with Peck seem to agree that his theses are thought provoking and extraordinary. For me reading the book was like finally, at the age of 31, finding a handbook for living. A sort of Life 101.

Beginning this month I will be doing a series of sermons on some of the key ideas in *The Road Less Traveled* using some illustrations from contemporary culture. I am enjoying revisiting the material again after many years, and I am struck by how much it still has to say to us today and how applicable it is to contemporary issues. I hope you will enjoy my reflections even if you have read the book. If you haven't, I give you my highest recommendation to get a copy now and read along. As usual, even if you haven't read it I think you will be able to follow my presentations.

Grace and Peace, Fred

Fred Howard is our part time minister. You may contact Rev. Howard by email (preferable) at fredhoward3622@gmail.com. He is available for consultations on Monday and Wednesday afternoons on most weeks from 2-5PM by appointment. Fred welcomes any questions you may have about membership in our congregation. He is also available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

❖ *Our members and friends experiencing health difficulties or concerns...*

Thank You! Thank You!

For layleading services: Doug Tanner, Valerie and Bill Webster, Amy Wells

For speaking at Sunday services: Susan Bailey, Jim Ingram
For Sunday service music: Amy Wells, Bill Webster, Meredith Covert, Rhett Watson

For Stories for All Ages: Sue Bailey, Fred Howard, Amy Wells

For helping with Children's RE: Sue Bailey, Kimberly Tanner

For serving as Meet and Greet Hosts: Doug Tanner, Betty Derrick, Lars Leader

For greeting visitors: Kimberly Tanner, Doug Tanner, Betty Derrick, Fred Howard, Carol Stiles

For delivering Break Bread meals: Frank and Rosie Asbury,

For cleaning the church: Frank Asbury, Lars Leader, everyone who came in mid-January for a Friday afternoon cleanup day including-Carol Stiles, Betty Derrick, Dee Tait, Fred Howard, Sue Bailey, Lars Leader, Kimberly and Doug Tanner, and others.

For sweeping the sidewalk: Doug Tanner

For providing food and helping with setup and cleanup for the MLK service lunch: Susan Bailey for coordinating and everyone who brought food and helped out including-Kimberly and Doug Tanner, Fred Howard, Holly and Raynae Jones, Lars Leader, Dee Tait, and everyone else who helped out.

For arranging for the Compassionate Communication lecture, workshop, and service with Rev. LoraKim Joyner in January: Carol Stiles

For participating in the Compassionate Communication lecture, workshop, and service: All who were able to do so!

For preparing lunch for workshop participants in January: Doug Tanner

Doug Tanner and Holly Jones washing dishes after the MLK Service luncheon.



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.

Let's Have Some Fun!!

Rainbow Mixer

Saturday, February 9 7-11 PM at the Church

This is our fourth year holding this event. There will be music, dancing, karaoke, awards and door prizes. Come Stand on the Side of Love with us at this family-friendly event. South Georgia Pride and the Accepting Difference Project are co-sponsors for the event. Please see Sue Bailey if you would like to volunteer to bring refreshments. Plan to come join in the evening's fun.

PIZZA AND A MOVIE

Friday, February 15 6:15 PM at the church

The movie is Avi Nesher's (2007) film *The Secrets*. We will meet at 6:15 p.m., and begin the showing at 6:30 p.m. A donation for pizza and refreshments is \$5.00

Secret lives and secret desires precipitate a compelling relationship between Noemi (Ania Bukstein) and Michel (Michal Shtamler) when they unexpectedly become roommates at a madrasah, a post-high school seminary for Jewish women. The madrasah is located in Safed, home of the Kabbalah, a discipline and school of thought devoted to exploring mystical aspects of Judaism. Noemi, the daughter of a revered Talmudic scholar, postpones meeting conventional expectations of her family's orthodox heritage to become a submissive wife at an early age by persuading her parents to allow her to engage in religious studies for a year; but this is her strategy to become a rabbi rather than marry one. Michel reluctantly arrives from her home in France at the behest of her family to gain discipline and an appreciation of her Jewish heritage. Naomi's serious, disciplined pursuit of her ambitions profoundly contrasts with Michel's chain smoking and free spirited rebelliousness. Despite significant personality differences, they discover they share a passion for liberating their feminist and feminine instincts. The Kabbalah curriculum includes learning the mitzvoh, a task of charity and human kindness initiated out of religious duty. The unlikely pair receives a mitzvoh assignment to collaborate in delivering groceries to Anouk (Fanny Ardant), an impoverished woman released from imprisonment for killing her artist lover. Although initially repulsed by her disturbing lifestyle, Naomi's empathy for Anouk's past life and current diagnosis of cancer compels her to enlist Michel in moving beyond their initially modest assignment to delve into the mysteries of tikun, a Kabbalistic cleansing rite, and to give personal significance to mitzvoh by expanding how they apply it to meet Anouk's needs. In order to cleanse Anouk of her sins, the two Kabbalah initiates perform daven, the recitation of Jewish liturgical prayers while swaying back and forth. Crossing many religious, social, and academic boundaries reveals shared secrets of the heart to the two madrasah students as well as previously hidden domains of their femininity, identities, and spirituality.

Contact Fred Howard or David L. Rodgers if you have films to suggest for future gatherings.

Games Night and Fire Pit - Come to the VAMA Coffeehouse this month on our usual Games Night evening! Our regular schedule will resume in March.

VAMA Coffeehouse

Friday, February 22 7 - 9 PM
at First Christian Church

The Valdosta Area Ministerial Association (VAMA) is sponsoring its second coffeehouse to benefit the South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness (sgpeh.org.) at First Christian Church fellowship hall (located on N. Patterson St. 2 blocks north of the VSU campus).

It will be an evening of marvelous musical entertainment with a variety of musical performances from the very best of Valdosta's local talent. The music has been especially selected to appeal to all age groups and we are planning the event with families in mind. There will also be coffee, an espresso bar, hot chocolate for the kids and a selection of desserts provided by local bakeries. Everyone connected with the event is volunteering their talents, time, resources, and energy so that all proceeds will go to this most worthy ministry. Please come out and enjoy an evening of wonderful entertainment and fellowship while you also support the work of SGPEH. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. See Fred Howard for a ticket.

BOOK DISCUSSION AND POTLUCK

Friday, March 8 - 6:30 PM - At the church

The book is "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" by Michelle Alexander. This book is the 2012-13 UUA Common Read. The author "asserts that crime-fighting policies and systems in the US such as the "war on drugs" and the incarceration system disproportionately and intentionally affect Americans of color. She describes multifaceted, lifelong discrimination and disenfranchisement that affect people who are branded felons." The UUA Bookstore is offering a 10% discount on single copies and a 20% discount on orders of 10 or more copies. Get a copy and join this important discussion.

Bring a dish to share. Coffee and tea will be provided. You are welcome to bring other beverages. We socialize over our potluck meal for the first hour and then promptly begin our book discussion drawing to a close with the selection of our next book by about an hour later. We have been selecting books that deal with difference. Contact: Betty Derrick.



Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Betty Derrick

Website Manager: Carol Stiles, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

Facebook: Kimberly Tanner

Local Publicity: Dee Tait

February 15: Deadline for the March newsletter.

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

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

CAROL STILES

Observations. Feelings. Needs. Requests. These are the four components of Compassionate Communication, also known as Non-Violent Communication (NVC, online at www.cnvc.org). NVC involves “empathetically listening” and “honestly expressing” these four components. Nine UU’s participated in a day-long workshop with Rev. LoraKim Joyner on Saturday, Jan. 12, at the church. Many of us felt, by the end of the day, and after Rev. Joyner’s service the next morning, that Compassionate Communication offers a great tool by which we can deepen relationships – with our self, within our families, within our congregation and with the larger community. In the months to come, we will provide our members and friends with more information on NVC to help us build the beloved community.

Another way to do that, I believe, is to involve as many people as possible in congregational life. There are many opportunities to be involved – as volunteers before, during and after Sunday services, by participating in our various social events and in our social justice outreach efforts. For example, in February, our Share-the-Plate donations will go to the South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness and there will be opportunities for our young people (everyone, really) to join with VAMA and SGPEH in a fundraiser to work toward ending homelessness in our region. There will be a social and outreach event as we host the Fourth Annual Rainbow Mixer on Feb. 9, a Standing on the Side of Love event. And speaking of SSL, the “Thirty Days of Love!” campaign begins on Jan. 19.* This month is part of SSL’s long term goals to confront bullying and violence, to advance equality for the LGBTQ community, and to work toward comprehensive immigration reform. The first quote of the campaign is from UU minister Rev. Tom Owen-Towle: “Love isn’t an emotion or even an intention, but a policy, a vow, a behavior. It must be embodied to become real. Love exists only in action.”

In community, Carol

*More info: <http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/30daysoflove/>
Standing on the Side of Love is an interfaith public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love’s power to stop oppression, sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Notes from Kids' RE - Sue Bailey

We’re ringing in the New Year with stories, crafts, and games that help us learn about our UU principles. In a recent lesson, we read the story “Wings” by Christopher Myers about Ikarus Jackson, a new boy at school who has beautiful, proud wings and can fly. Because he is different, he is whispered about, shunned, and even dismissed from school. One quiet girl, who understands loneliness and what it feels like to be different, doesn’t think Ikarus is strange. Standing up for him, she tells the other children to leave him alone and tells Ikarus “what someone should have long ago” – that his flying is beautiful. We talked about treating each other kindly and inherent worth and dignity (everyone is important). The children dot-painted beautiful wings on photos of themselves. For Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we will continue the discussion about the first and second principles and make a craft project using paper peace doves. Other lessons will incorporate art around the

world as we continue to explore our UU principles and our world. If you would like to volunteer to help in RE, please see Sue Bailey.



Story for All Ages during MLK shared service.

Social Action Activities

Break Bread Together

Our date for meal deliveries with the Break Bread Together program is the 2nd Monday (and 5th when there is one) of each month. If you would like to help deliver meals beginning about 11:00 AM, please contact Frank or Rosie Asbury.

If you wondered whether this program is worthwhile, read on: Recently there was a message on the church answering machine from the daughter of Sally Holmes, now 94-years-old, on the Break Bread route. She wanted to thank those who have delivered meals to her mother over the years. She had hoped to talk to someone in person (but did not leave her number). She did say she also spoke to the person who delivered meals last.

Thanks to Frank and Rosie Asbury for coordinating our participation and making sure the meals are delivered all these years!



Guest at Your Table

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year’s Unitarian Universalist Service Committee(UUSC) Guest at Your Table (GAYT) event. Our total contributions from the church were \$766.00 from 13 families plus those of you who contributed to the Share the Plate donations to UUSC in November. Betty Derrick, our local UUSC contact, hopes you will go to the UUSC website (uusc.org) to learn more about this organization and its work. If you would still like to make a contribution to GAYT or support UUSC as a member you can do so through the website. If you have questions about UUSC or the GAYT annual event, speak to Betty. Later this spring we will celebrate Justice Sunday, another opportunity during the church year to learn more about this UU organization, which, through memberships, supports the work of human-rights leaders around the world. Thank you for your support.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee Contact Dee Tait if you or someone you know needs the services of this committee.



Dee Tait practicing with her giraffe and jackal voices at the Compassionate Communication Workshop.

Rev. LoraKim Joyner Compassionate Communication Lecture and Workshop in January was a real success. Thanks go to Carol Stiles for making the initial arrangements and to everyone who participated. Special thank you to Doug Tanner for fixing a wonderful lunch for everyone who participated in the workshop on Saturday.



Story for All Ages at the compassionate communication service in January-Rev Howard talks with the giraffe searching to communicate using his giraffe voice and understanding his jackal voice.

MLK, Jr. Special Service with Guests

On January 20 members of the congregation from Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Center (LCFC) joined us for a special service and lunch at the UU church. Members of our congregation were guests at LCFC recently for one of their services.

On this MLK weekend, Rev. Fred Howard spoke on *Restructuring the Edifice: Would MLK Jr. Have Occupied Wall Street?* In his sermon Rev. Howard noted that “Rev. King is most noted for leading the Civil Rights Movement, but in the last years of his life he was really more focused on economic justice. At the time of his death, he was organizing a Poor People’s Campaign for a march on Washington to bring attention to an ‘Economic Bill of Rights.’” Rev. Howard pointed out some of the economic injustices of our era and tried to answer the rhetorical question he posed in the title of his sermon.

The visitors joined our congregation for a potluck lunch hosted by members of the UU congregation. It is our hope that this relationship between congregations will continue.



Pastor Benjamin and members of the Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Center at lunch after the January MLK Service.

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News January 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:

- Plans for Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Center to attend MLK, Jr. service.
- Developing descriptions of various volunteer activities to encourage participation.
- Potential upcoming special programs, such as a drumming workshop / service.
- Rainbow Mixer will be February 9 (details elsewhere).
- Next meeting, Wednesday, February 6, 6:00 p.m.

**Treasurer’s Report – Rosie Asbury
December 31, 2012**

Receipts	<u>December</u>	<u>July -present</u>
Plate	\$100.25	\$ 810.72
Pledge	2340.00	8620.00
Rent	100.00	1240.00
Share the Plate	<u>273.00</u>	<u>884.28</u>
Total Receipts	\$ 2813.25	\$11555.00
Disbursements		
Speakers’ Fees \$	200.00	\$ 1200.00
Minister Expense	700.00	3558.16
Maint. (lights)	3734.42	4201.16
Pest Ctrl.	35.00	210.00
Supplies	27.72	265.96
Utilities	248.89	1735.62
RE Program	0.00	10.59
Advertising	0.00	700.00
UUA Dues	852.00	1276.00
Dona.(UUSC)	273.00	984.28
Others	<u>0.00</u>	<u>136.00</u>
Total Disburs.	\$ 6089.20	\$ 14295.94
Net Receipt	\$ -3275.95	\$ -2740.94

At the Church-in-the-Woods

New Hope Christian Community Church- Sunday evenings: Choir practice at 4:30 PM. Service at 6:00 PM.

<http://www.wix.com/nhccc1/nhccc>

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday: Beginners Class 5:30-6:30 PM; Continuing Class 6:30-8 PM. Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin.

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

Yoga Basics – Wednesday, 6:00 - 7:30 PM. January 9-February 27. Contact: Jane Zahner, certified yoga teacher (RYT200). Donations (\$5-10 per session recommended) will be accepted to pay for facility usage; any extra will go to the UU Share-the-Plate collection for the month. Gentle instruction and guided practice in common yoga postures, breathing, and relaxation techniques support increased flexibility, strength, and stress reduction. Bring a yoga mat (or beach towel) and an active body; leave with a quieter mind.

UU Activities and Announcements

February 2-Youth Advisor Training, UUC of Charlotte

February 9-FLD Dream Builders organizational meeting,

First Unitarian Church, Orlando, FL 3:30pm

February 15-16 -Healing Our World and Ourselves

Conference, First Unitarian Church of Orlando, FL

February 16 –17-7th Annual Florida UU Chorale Festival,

UUs of Clearwater, FL

February 17–22 -Southern UU Leadership Training (SUULE),

Penn Center, St. Helena Island, SC

February 23, 2pm – 4pm- Installation of Rev. David Messner,

UU Church of Savannah, GA

March 1–2 -Annual Racial Justice Conference, UU

Congregation of Columbia, SC

April 26-Southeast District Annual Meeting, UU Church of

Charlotte, Charlotte NC



UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund

February 2012

jlund@uua.org

Although it is the month of love and Standing on the Side of Love is very important, once in a long while I decide to write a column of personal privilege, not something in which the UUA Board of Trustees is currently involved. This is one of those times and it is a tough column to write. Hopefully my words, and the assault weapons massacres of recent times, will generate some interest, if the topic has not already done so in your congregation.

For over 50 years I have been an advocate of controlling firearms in the possession of Americans. My interest began when as a young woman I was invited to be in the pulpit at the UU Church of Wilmington, DE and had to make a decision on a topic; chose gun control. I knew, and statistics showed at that time that handguns were causing problems in society but never dreamed of the proliferation of weapons I know so little about except that all types have turned our nation into a violent, fearful, gun toting place to

live. I know all the gun-rights advocates would say that there is a personal right to bear arms, even to the point of pre-dating the Second Amendment. But it was clear when the Second Amendment passed that Madison and the other MEN viewed the “right to bear arms” in the context of a “well-regulated militia” to defend the communities from massacres, not undermine it. The goal was to resist aggression from European powers, confront Native American tribes, and put down internal rebellions, including slave revolts. What is not happening in our country is quite the opposite of “security”, not what the Founders had in mind.

As American history has unfolded the American Right and today's arms industry have come to devote enormous resources to twisting the framers of our Constitution and Bill of Rights into extremist ideologues who put "liberties" like individual gun ownership ahead of all practical concerns about "security." And in today's world the propaganda spewed by many politicians has proved so successful that even those who favor common-sense gun control are deemed violators of the original intent of our Founders, as essentially un-American, and of course face defeat in elections.

Guns are robbing us of freedom, not insuring it. Eighty-three Americans die daily from gun violence in the USA, eight are children or teenagers. WE must put in place commonsense gun laws and enforce those laws. Our UUA is urging us to take action to prevent gun violence and the link to help your congregation work toward that end can be found at uua.org. I urge each of this to not let this goal fade from our vision and embark on congregational discussions about how we can reverse this tide of violence. I can be reached at jlund@uua.org.

WhaleCoast Alaska 2013

Have you always dreamed of visiting Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2013** is for you! Four Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bear, whales, bald eagles, seals, and caribou. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Enjoy all that our beautiful state has to offer. Programs led by Dave Frey, a member of the Fairbanks, Alaska UU congregation, an expert in Alaska travel. To find out more about your Alaskan trip of a lifetime, visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

Chalice Lighters The Florida District Chalice Lighter program was started in 1987 to assist neighboring congregations in their efforts to grow. Chalice Lighters are individuals who pledge to respond with a contribution when a call goes out to help a Florida District congregation (minimum of \$10, no more than three times per fiscal year). The suggested contribution amount at this time is \$25 per call. Some of our members are Chalice Lighters and our congregation has received a grant from this program in the past. For more information on the Florida District Chalice Lighter check the Florida District website or contact the Florida District office (uuafld@gmail.com or 407-894-2119). If you sign up to be a Chalice Lighter you will receive e-mail requests for donations several times during the year.