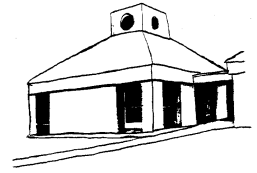




The Flaming Chalice

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



Please note that although individual personal contact information has been removed from this online newsletter, you can obtain more information on any event or ask questions by sending an e-mail to uuvaldosta@yahoo.com.

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

Sun	Feb. 2	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Vedic Practice: The Ten Living Principles,” Dr. Michael Stoltzfus Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
W	Feb. 5	6:00 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church
Sun	Feb. 9	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Love Becomes Divine – The Myth Behind Valentine’s Day,” Rev. Fred Howard Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	Feb. 10	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
F	Feb.14	6:30 PM	Fifth Annual Rainbow Mixer at the church
Sat	Feb. 15		<i>Deadline March newsletter</i>
Sun	Feb. 16	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Spiritual Development and the Golden Rule,” Rev. Fred Howard <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> Meet & Greet after the service
F	Feb. 21	6:30 PM	Potluck and Book Discussion at the church
Sun	Feb. 23	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of Mary and Philip,” Dr. Lily Vuong Meet & Greet after the service
F	Feb. 28	6:30 PM	Games Night at the church

February ... Your newsletter is arriving this month in a slightly different format. As most of you know there were complaints from the post office about our more usual bifold format. For now we will be using this trifold format, limited to 6 pages, mailed in a business envelope. If any of you have other suggestions please let your editor know. Also, if you find that you would just as soon access the newsletter through our website and no longer wish to receive a mailed copy, please let the editor know. The web version is the same as the print version except that some personal information has been removed from the web version.

We have a number of activities going on this month, the main one being the Fifth Annual Rainbow Mixer at the church on Valentine’s Day. This is a family event and is great fun---our contribution to Standing on the Side of Love’s Thirty Days of Love. See more in the newsletter!

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.

Sunday Services

Sunday, February 2 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus “Vedic Practice: The Ten Living Principles”

Vedic or Hindu traditions do not ask people to believe anything until they have experimented, tested, and found their direct experience to be sound. The paradox of this approach is that is that there is no reward to strive toward, because the practice of the principles is the reward. Some of the living principles we will explore are compassion for all living things, commitment to truth, not stealing, contentment or equanimity, not grasping, and a burning enthusiasm for life in all of its manifestations. Through practicing these living principles we try to become the type of person that we would like to have as a friend.

Sunday, February 9 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Love Becomes Divine – The Myth Behind Valentine’s Day”

This coming Friday is Valentine’s Day. Around the world people give cards, flowers, chocolates, and other tokens of love and affection to significant others. These objects are ornately covered with mythic symbols, but few realize the nature of these symbols or their meaning. This is unfortunate, because the mythology that inspires Valentine’s Day has so much to teach us about the very nature of love in all its myriad of forms. This morning I’ll explore some of the complexity of the foundational myth of Valentine’s Day.

Sunday, February 16 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Spiritual Development and the Golden Rule”

Most all religions contain the golden rule in one form or another. Indeed, it’s been stated that the golden rule is the essence of religion and the rest is merely commentary. But many people have made valid criticisms of it and have provided illustrative counterexamples. My own spiritual odyssey took a decided turn one day as I thought about how to apply the golden rule and its ethics of reciprocity. This morning I want to delve into the golden rule a bit deeper since a better understanding of it might prove helpful for all of us in choosing the better path in our spiritual journey.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the plate this Sunday, not otherwise designated as pledges, will go to South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness. (SGPEH). SGPEH is a non-profit organization working to end homelessness in 18 South Georgia counties. SGPEH works with federal, state, and local agencies as well as various organizations to provide services and support to those in poverty without homes.

Sunday, February 23 - Dr. Lily Vuong , “Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of Mary and Philip”

Dr. Vuong's message will offer a general introduction to Gnosticism and the Nag Hammadi library that was unearthed in upper Egypt in 1945 and explore the portrayal of Mary Magdalene as offered by the Gospel of Mary and Philip. Dr. Vuong is an Assistant Professor in the VSU Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. Welcome her to our services for the first time.

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.

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.

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.



Neel Family, just after signing the membership book , along with Rev. Howard. Welcome to UU Valdosta!



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard

February 2014

We finally have the treatment plan for Kathy's cancer going forward. She has finished radiation treatments and now she will be getting chemotherapy every 3 weeks until the end of April. So far she is tolerating the treatments well.

Chemotherapy has come a long way since my days in medical school when we so often made patients terribly sick with the chemotherapy drugs. A lot has been learned since those days long, long ago (-:-) about how to administer the drugs so that they are much better tolerated. I feared for Kathy having to undergo chemotherapy because of my memories of what chemotherapy patients went through. But so far it has not been anything like that for her.

Even though I've been in practice continuously for the past 30 years, my experience with chemotherapy has been quite limited since those early years of my training. Medicine, in regards to cancer treatment, has apparently come a long way in that time. Much farther than I realized. My practice of general medicine just didn't give me exposure to the great advancements that have been made in oncology. It's such an anguishing thing to watch someone you love have to suffer and I was needlessly burdening myself by anticipating something that hasn't materialized - at least not yet. Walking with a loved one through this disease is educating me in a whole new way. We now have reason to hope (based on actual experience) that Kathy will be able to make it through the chemotherapy with relatively few side effects. I'm so grateful that we are living in a time when treatments are available that aren't so harsh and have proved their ability to prolong a quality life for cancer patients.

A few days ago a dear friend showed me a poem by Wendell Berry called "The Peace of Wild Things." I immediately shared it with Kathy. It has become a light for both of us in negotiating the darkness of these days. In all of Berry's writings there is this constant theme of the virtue of living in harmony with nature. In this poem he speaks of "The peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief." For me that line captures perfectly where I have to strive to live these days. In the present moment.

It seems that a unique feature of human beings is our ability to imagine the future. This has obvious advantages for us as a species as it compels us to anticipate the possibilities and thus make plans and prepare. Because it has its advantages our tendency is to make dwelling on the future one of the constant meditations of our lives. But when faced with a life threatening illness there can be a huge downside to this tendency for it robs us of the possibilities and the richness of living in the now. Berry's poem made me acutely aware that this is not the way life has to be lived. More than that - it's not the way life is MEANT to be lived. And so Kathy and I are taking a lot more time to be in each other's company now and to be with those who are open to the possibility of being in the present with us. Kids are so good at this before our culture begins to "educate" it out of them by teaching them the things they need to know to prepare for their future. I suppose that's why we're enjoying being with our grandkids most of all. Our grands are our teachers now, because they constantly call us back to the present and what's really important.

Thanks to all of you for your continued patience, love, and support in our living of these days. 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.

Break Bread Volunteers Needed: David Rodgers has agreed to help with this UU responsibility 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 make it possible to adjust to changing personal schedules.

Guest at Your Table

Thank you to all who contributed to the holiday time Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) Guest at Your Table event. 13 families, plus others who contributed anonymously to the Share the Plate donations, contributed \$835.38 to UUSC during this event. You can follow the work of UUSC and contribute to their work throughout the year. See their website at UUSC.org. Consider joining this important organization which follows our UU Principles as it works throughout the world for social justice. Betty Derrick is stepping down as our church representative to UUSC. Thank you to her for her work for a number of years on behalf of the UUSC and our congregation. Thank you also goes to Lars Leader who has agreed to take on this position. We are happy to have you in this important position Lars.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee Contact Carol Stiles or Kimberly Tanner if you would be able to help out with this committee. Several of this committee's 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 serious health difficulties or the loss of loved ones...

Congratulations to

- ❖ Valerie Webster and her new grandson and his parents. Best wishes to all!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

CAROL STILES

Today I received an e-mail with the Standing on the Side of Love campaign's Thirty Days of Love kick-off announcement. Thirty Days of Love happens between Martin Luther King, Jr., Day and Valentine's Day (which, in the first year of the campaign, was exactly 30 days!). Each day, the Standing on the Side of Love campaign sends an e-mail (to those signed up) with a different daily theme involving love and justice. It is a "period of intentional action, service, education, and reflection to focus on [the] essential work" of "harnessing love to stop oppression."

On Feb. 14, we will hold the Fifth Annual Rainbow Mixer, which started as and continues to be a Standing on the Side of Love event. It is a time to celebrate diversity in a family-friendly setting – with music, snacks, door prizes, and fun!

I hope you will join us for this celebration and also join us as we continue our path of social justice work in the Valdosta area. In March, we are planning an evening panel discussion – open to our friends and neighbors and the general public - to bring awareness and attention to issues affecting migrant worker families in our area and around the nation. The tentative date is Wednesday, March 12 – watch the Sunday program, the e-mail list and the March newsletter for more details.

In community,
Carol

Source and more information:

<http://standingonthesideoflove.org/2014-30daysoflove/>

Thank You! Thank You!

For Stories for All Ages: Sue Bailey, Fred Howard

For delivering Break Bread meals in December: David Rodgers

For agreeing to accept the position of church representative to UUSC: Lars Leader and thank you to Betty Derrick for serving in this position for a number of years.

To Recent Volunteers from Doug Tanner for various tasks: Rhett Watson, Bill Webster, Sue Bailey, Lars Leader, Kimberly Tanner, Doug Tanner, Betty Derrick, Dee Tait, Carol Stiles, Rosie Asbury, Dawn Renner

Let's Have Some Fun!!

Rainbow Mixer

Friday, February 14 6:30 – 10:30 PM at the church

Come help us make Valentine's Day extra special this year! This is our fifth year holding this event. There will be music, dancing, refreshments, and more. Come Stand on the Side of Love with us at this family friendly event. Please see Sue Bailey if you would like to volunteer to bring refreshments. Plan to join in the evening's fun.

Please note that Pizza with a Movie has been displaced by this event. Watch for its return next month!

Book Discussion and Potluck

Friday, February 21 6:30 PM - At the church

Nelson Mandela's autobiography "Long Walk To Freedom" is our book for this month. It is "his moving and exhilarating autobiography, destined to take its place among the finest memoirs of history's greatest figures. Here for the first time, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela tells the extraordinary story of his life--an epic of struggle, setback, renewed hope, and ultimate triumph." The book was first published in 1995 and should be readily available.

Bring a dish to share and join in the fellowship and discussion. It's always better if you have read the book but we welcome you whether you have or not. During the first hour we fellowship over our potluck meal and then move into a circle to have a discussion. We try to wind up by about 9 PM at the latest. We continue to choose books about difference. Let Betty Derrick know if you have books to suggest. We choose the next book at the end of the discussion as well as decide when we will next meet. Please join us!

Games Night

Friday, February 28 6:30PM - until at the church

Often we play Mexican Train (dominoes), but we enjoy learning new games. If you have a game that is not limited to small numbers of players, please bring it along! Contact: Susan Bailey

Notes from Kids' RE - Sue Bailey

The focus for the RE kids as we enter the New Year is to continue learning about our 7 Unitarian Universalist principles and how to make them part of our everyday life. We will explore our world and our principles through stories, songs, games, and crafts. Lately the children are choosing to take their projects home. We hope to have more artwork up around the church soon for everyone to enjoy. If you would like to volunteer to be an RE helper one Sunday, please talk with Sue Bailey.



Sue Bailey along with RE kids in late December.

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Betty Derrick
 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.
 Website Manager: Carol Stiles, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com
 e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles
 Facebook: Kimberly Tanner
 Local Publicity: Dee Tait



RE Kwanzaa activities

Treasurer's Report – Rosie Asbury

December 31, 2013

Receipts	December	July-December (6 mos)
Plate	\$ 160.63	\$ 678.47
Pledge	6100.00	11110.00
Rent	100.00	1200.00
Share the Plate (LACC/UUSC)	<u>274.55</u>	<u>760.95</u>
Total Receipts	\$ 6635.18	\$13749.42
Outstanding Debt		
Air Cond. Loan	\$ 500.00	(plus interest)
Disbursements		
Speakers' Fees	200.00	1415.00
Minister Expense	700.00	3150.00
Maintenance (roof/window)	1313.99	1415.00
Pest Control	35.00	210.00
Postage(newsletter)	46.00	46.00
Supplies	0.00	92.52
Utilities	312.13	1674.51
Advertising	0.00	350.00
UUA Dues	577.00	1154.00
Donations (LACC/UUSC)	274.55	760.95
Others	<u>37.00</u>	<u>150.86</u>
Total Disbursements	\$ 3495.67	\$ 10845.80
Net Receipt	\$ 3139.54	\$ 2903.62

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. **UU Church of Valdosta Board of**

Directors Meeting News January 8, 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:

- Voted to authorize Jim Ingram to investigate and purchase a new or used dishwasher.
- Voted to approve a policy banning firearms from church grounds.
- Voted to support the AAUW's Sister-to-Sister Summit in March with \$100 from the Accepting Difference Project.
- Next meeting, Wednesday, February 5, 6:00 p.m.

At the Church-in-the-Woods

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday: Beginner's class 5:30- 6:30 PM; Continuing class 6:30-8 PM. 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

Feb 21 4pm – Feb 22, 2014 NE Cluster, Communities Coming Together UUF of Vero Beach, FL

March 13, On Being Unitarian Universalist - We All Lead A leadership learning experience for the Southern Region of the UUA (Cost \$350 covers food, lodging, and materials), Penn Center, St Helena Island, South Carolina.

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. For more information and an application, contact Rita Sizemore: (contact Betty or Carol for this info).

A message from Kenn Hurto, Southern Region Congregational Life Consultant: So, a new year unfolds. The annual rite of making of resolutions is in process. This notion has its origins in ancient cultures, notably setting people free from literal or spiritual enslavements.

There is something appealing about putting old habits to rest and think of a new year as a "fresh start," a "new page," or a "blank slate" upon which to write a new chapter. But we all know the power of the status quo to get in the way. We can anticipate news articles early next month about how few people were able to sustain their resolve for even a month. Ah, yes, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Even so, marking time's passing helps one focus: what have we learned? What does that suggest for our next steps?

The last three years have been a period of trying new things for our Region, even as we coped with sustaining what is already in place. Your staff and Boards have embraced the notion of "experi-fail" to indicate the vulnerability we feel as we seek to create something very new to serve our Unitarian Universalist future and our existing congregations.

Thirty Days of Love: A Spiritual Journey for Social Justice

(Material from the Standing on the Side of Love website, used in the interest of informing our Valdosta UU congregation.)

Standing on the Side of Love is a community of people compelled to speak out against oppression, united in the common belief that love is the ultimate guiding force of our world. The Thirty Days of Love is a period of intentional action, service, education, and reflection to focus on this essential work. Will you commit to join us on this spiritual journey for social justice? 30 Days of Love

What started as a reimagining of February 14th as National Standing on the Side of Love Day eventually blossomed into a beautiful Thirty Days of Love, bracketed by Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Valentine's Day, Saturday, January 18- Sunday, February 16, 2014. Go to standingonthe sideof love.org to sign up for daily stories and for more information about Standing on the Side of Love.

An example of the daily stories from this year is the one for Day 4, January 21 entitled *I walk in two worlds*, by Dayna Edwards, Director of Religious Exploration for Children and Youth at Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church and Life Coach, AWAKE! Ministries in Annapolis, MD. See the website for further examples and to sign up for your daily story.

"In my public world, I walk around as a middle-class, white woman in America. Because of my skin color, I have the privilege of walking into stores and not being questioned about my intentions. I can go into upscale hotels and people assume I am a guest, not a worker. Like most people, there is more to my story than just the color of my skin.

"In my personal world, I am married to a man of Afro-Caribbean descent and have two daughters who are bi-racial. We have been married for 11 years and our two daughters are seven and two. I am raising two young ladies who will not have the same privileges as me in America, solely based on the amount of melanin in their skin pigmentation. I have to teach them how to survive in this world as black women, without, myself, being a black woman. Luckily, I have had some wonderful friends, family, teachers, role models, and guides. I have come face-to-face with my own "white-privilege" and I have come out on the other side knowing that it is time to change the collective narrative about race.

"We can change the American story of race from one of separate-ness and other-ness to one of inclusion and inter-connectedness. Inclusion and inter-connectedness do not mean, "I don't see color," (which by many, has been coded language to say – "we're all okay as long as we all fit into the norms of the power culture.") The 20th Century paradigm of

race – one of separateness and other-ness – will not work for the upcoming generations in the 21st Century. The 20th Century paradigm certainly doesn't work for "hybrid-families" (aka bi-racial families) like mine. After all, there is no "other-ness," when the blood of the "other" runs in your veins. The 21st Century story of race must be one of strength, survival, inclusion and inter-connectedness.

"Inclusion and inter-connectedness means that when my family goes to church they hear stories and sing songs that represent both of our cultural heritages. It means that my daughters see people that look like their mother AND their father in the pulpit. It means our faith community makes room and resources available in the liturgical calendar for celebrations outside of the norms of the European-American calendar.

"Inclusion and inter-connectedness means that when my older daughter learns about how, "Columbus sailed the ocean blue," I tell her the whole story: Some Europeans did awful and reprehensible things to the people who lived in the Caribbean (her ancestors). Columbus is not a hero. However the story is more complicated than that. If it weren't for European explorers AND the strength of her Carib Indian ancestors, she would not be here today. I am clear with her that, yes, her ancestors were victimized by the Europeans, and they SURVIVED. The story she tells herself about race will be one of strength and survival.

"Bearing witness to the atrocities of colonialism, slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, and current racism is a necessary part of the healing process. Changing the story of race in America, to me, means that we don't stop the process at bearing witness. It means we also bear witness to the resistance movements that each of these atrocities sprouted. It means we change the story to include the voices of ALL my daughter's ancestors – the Caribbean ancestors and the Irish ancestors. It means that we recognize that racism is a disease that afflicts and affects both the offender and the offended. As historian Howard Zinn once wrote, "What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction."

In order to "send this spinning the top of a world in a different direction," we must listen, ask questions, and accept when we are wrong. When we are inspired to forgive and to be forgiven then we can truly connect and be inclusive. Zinn goes on to say, "The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory." I challenge you to live into your principles and live as you think human beings should live.

"Let's "begin again in love" and re-write this story together. In faith, Dayna Edwards"

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.