

The Flaming Chalice

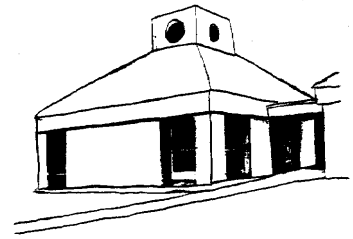
Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

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... **January 2014**

W	Jan. 1		Happy New Year !!!!!
Sun	Jan. 5	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Searching the Stars,” Rev. Fred Howard <i>We will collect your Guest at Your Table contributions during the service this morning. Please convert your contributions into a <u>check made out to UUSC. Be generous!</u></i> Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
W	Jan. 8	6:00 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church
F	Jan. 10	6:30 PM	Pizza and Movie Night at the church
Sun	Jan. 12	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Love as Spiritual Practice ,” Dr. Michael Stoltzfus Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	Jan. 13	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
W	Jan. 15		<i>Deadline for February newsletter</i>
F	Jan. 17	6:30 PM	Potluck and Book Discussion at the church
Sun	Jan. 19	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Southern Liberalism and the Legacy of Atticus Finch,” Rev. Fred Howard <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> Meet & Greet after the service Conversation about the sermon with Fred Howard after Meet and Greet
F	Jan. 24	6:30 PM	Games Night at the church
Sun	Jan. 26	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “The Brahman in Humans and Animals,” Dr. Ubaraj Katawal Meet & Greet after the service

January ... Lot's going on as we begin a new year. Come participate and volunteer. Keep a number of our members and friends, who have various health difficulties, in your thoughts. Come when you can. We miss you when you are unable to join in the activities in our community. Hope to see you in the New Year!

Sunday Services

Sunday, January 5 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Searching the Stars”

Human beings have searched the night sky from time immemorial. The stars pique our curiosity, and compel us to search for answers. Sometimes they may just furnish a backdrop for us to contemplate our existence and to put it in perspective. Today is Epiphany Sunday, the time in the traditional church year when the visit of the magi to the baby Jesus is celebrated. One way to understand that story is in terms of the perspective it gives us on the human situation. Nearly two thousand years later, the astronomer Carl Sagan gave us another story that invites us to some similar speculation. Just as a star beckoned to the first century magi, so too did a star beckon to Ellie Arroway, the protagonist in the movie *Contact*. I will offer a reflection on the similarities of these stories today, and how both stories can continue to teach and inspire us.

Sunday, January 12 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Love as Spiritual Practice”

What is love? How many types of love are there? How do we cultivate, develop, sustain, practice, embody, and receive love? What do some of the great spiritual traditions have to say about these questions? How are deeply rooted spiritual responses different from contemporary cultural perspectives? Our topic will be love as spiritual practice.

Sunday, January 19 - – Rev. Fred Howard, “Southern Liberalism and the Legacy of Atticus Finch”

Hard to believe, but Harper Lee’s novel “To Kill a Mockingbird” is now over fifty years old. The hero of the story, Atticus Finch, has been inspiring the idealistic minded to enter the legal profession for altruistic reasons for over a generation. Recently, however, the book has come under rather harsh criticism and has even been banned from educational use in some school systems. The controversy itself can be a useful educational tool as it highlights how different the struggle for civil rights is today as compared to fifty years ago. This morning I’ll share some personal reflections on the book and some thoughts on this controversy and invite you to consider some of these issues with me. So today I will plan to hold a facilitated conversation on the sermon topic and this timely subject immediately after meet and greet.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the plate this Sunday, not otherwise designated as pledges, will go to The Haven. The Haven provides training and education, services and safe space to victims of domestic violence in the Valdosta area.

Sunday, January 26 - Ubaraj Katawal, “The Brahman in Humans and Animals”

In Hindu and Native American traditions, nature plays an important role to cure a person suffering from mental or physical wounds. In Native American tradition, animals function as a connection between the land and the people. A person suffering from mental illnesses such as war-fatigue can reconnect with the past by help from animals, and find meaning in life once again. Similarly, most animals are revered and worshipped in Hindu tradition. A tiger, for

example, is vehicle of Durga, the goddess of ferocity. These traditions hold that since brahman or higher spirit resides in both humans and animals, learning the ways of animals can help us to know the brahman within ourselves. Dr. Ubaraj Katawal is an Assistant Professor of English at Valdosta State University. He is a newcomer to VSU and a specialist on 20th and 21st post-colonial literature. Welcome him to UU Valdosta.

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.

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

January 2014

Nelson Mandela died on December 5. World leaders, celebrities, journalists, our own Peter Morales, most anyone positioned to command the attention of others has been falling over themselves to offer a tribute to him. Mandela is, perhaps, the last great example from the 20th century of how one person can make a real difference in the world. I've read and heard many of these tributes and have been almost uniformly disappointed. One exception being that of Swarthmore College's Timothy Burke, which you can read at <https://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/blog/2013/12/06/benelson-mandela/>

As I understood Mandela the man, it would seem to me that the real takeaway he would want us to get from his life is this: Where should we be looking for the next Mandela? That probably won't be in the privileged halls of power and influence. That kind of prestige comes only rarely to one such as a Mandela, and that only after they have taken the really significant actions of their life. It'll be in those places where the rare individual who dares to speak out against the forces of institutional oppression are typically to be found. Places where dissidents are found. Places like prisons, picket lines, perhaps in asylum over in some other country or the embassy of another nation. Even perhaps somewhere like the internet, if we search past the ubiquitous saturation of our mainstream media to where, if diligent enough, we might find their prophetic words on some obscure blog.

A few people really seemed to get Mandela. I can only hope that I'm one of them.

On a completely different note, I just wanted to offer an update on Kathy. She began chemotherapy and radiation on December 16th. If attitude is important to the success of cancer treatment, and everyone who has experience with treatment of cancer tells us it is, then she is in a great place. Because her attitude has been wonderful, and continues to amaze and inspire me and the rest of our family and friends. Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

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.

Break Bread Volunteers Needed: David Rodgers has agreed to help with this UU responsibility for now. Betty Derrick, for now, will no longer be able to regularly help with the food delivery. Dee Tait is back but will be leaving again soon. 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

We will collect contributions to your Guest at Your Table 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 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Consider making a donation during the holidays sufficient to become a member. Many of our members are already 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 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...

❖ *Several of our members and friends experiencing serious health concerns.*



PRESIDENT'S CORNER CAROL STILES

It is the busy holiday season, when some of us leave Valdosta at least for short periods of time, to visit family and friends. In fact, I am writing this while in Kansas. Although often busy with travel, shopping, planning for gatherings, I try to use this time to reflect upon all the things that have happened over the past year – before the reality of the new year sets in! It is a time to be grateful for the goodness in people around us, to be grateful to all who are part of our communities, both in Valdosta and family and friends elsewhere.

I certainly am grateful for those who have stepped forward this fall to help with our fundraiser and to take on many tasks when some of our core members have been unable to do so. And I know that we will be there for each other in the year ahead, and I am grateful for that too.

May you also find time to reflect, to breathe, to enjoy the holidays....

In community,
Carol

Thank You! Thank You!

For layleading services: Doug Tanner, Carol Stiles

For speaking at Sunday services: Doug Tanner, Carol Stiles

For Sunday service music: Bill Webster, Doug Tanner, Our UU Choir: Bill and Valerie Webster, Jim Ingram, Amanda Crossley, Rhett Watson

For Stories for All Ages: Sue Bailey, Fred Howard

For helping with Children's RE: Those who helped Sue Bailey, especially Dawn Renner and Teagan Dunn

For serving as Meet and Greet Hosts: Doug Tanner

For greeting visitors: Kimberly Tanner

For delivering Break Bread meals in December: David Rodgers

For donating items for the Break Bread gift bags in December: All those who donated items or money and to Sue Bailey, Dawn Renner, Teagan Dunn, Melanie Hubbard for putting the bags together and to David Rodgers for delivering the bags.

For decorating the church for the holidays and providing snacks for the decoration party: All who helped!

For bringing the gingerbread house kit and helping the kids put it together: Melanie Hubbard

For caroling at Wild Adventures: All who participated!

Volunteers and Thank Yous!!! Each month we try to recognize recent volunteers that make our congregation work. Recently that has been repeatedly the same few people, who could use your help.

If you are a relative newcomer to our community and/or to Unitarian Universalism, you may not realize that our communities and congregations are governed by an elected board, not a ministerial hierarchy, although our minister certainly participates, and guides. Essentially all of the activities at the church, including our Sunday Services, social activities like Meet and Greet on Sundays, all of our social justice activities, the religious education for children, even cleaning of the church are performed by member and friend volunteers.

We invite you as a newcomer to get to know us and then, when you are ready, consider making your own contribution to the on-going functioning of our community. We will not pressure you, but when you are ready we could use your help. Recently several of our core members and volunteers have found themselves unable to participate, for health reason, as they have in the past. Many of these people hope they will be able to volunteer again in the future, but for now the on-going activities of our community have depended on the dedication of too few of our members. While we thank them for their dedication and wonderful efforts, they could use your help. Contact a member of our board, listed at the top of the newsletter, if you could help out. We'll "train" you to do whatever the job is you would be willing to "tackle."

Thank you for being part of community and we hope you'll feel comfortable volunteering to make our community work and thrive in the future.



Newest members: Bonnie and Tracy joined after the Love Feast Service on December 15. Welcome them to our community!

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.

Several of our members volunteered to help Cliff and Mary Ellen Adams with a ride for adults and children with special needs. This is a special project the Adams have developed over recent years in their north Florida community.



Tom Aiello and Bill Webster: UU cowboys!

Volunteers walking with one of the special needs children enjoying a horseback ride.



Let's Have Some Fun!!

PIZZA AND A MOVIE

Friday, January 10 6: 30 PM at the church

The film for the January 10, 2014, UU Pizza and Movie Night is: *North Country*. Please contribute \$5.00 to cover pizza and refreshments. The showing begins at 6:30 p.m.

Director Niki Caro dramatizes in *North Country* (2005 Rated R) Lois Jenson's resistance to sexual discrimination after she became a coal miner in 1975. In 1991, *Jenson v. Eveleth Taconite Co.* became the first sexual harassment case to be given class action status. Caro fictionalizes Jenson in the character Josey Aimes (Charlize Theron). Aimes, a single mother, gains employment in one of the best paying positions available in North Minnesota: a coal miner in the North Country where only one miner in 30 is a woman. Most townspeople, including her father, Hank (Richard Jenkins), consider mining men's work. This conceit considers a female miner a thief of a man's job. Glory (Frances McDormand) disagrees. She avoids confrontation, becomes a miner, and serves as the only woman on the union negotiating committee. McDormand conveys her character in this film as persuasively as she portrays the police officer she plays in *Fargo*. Aimes's natural beauty and independence attract unwanted attention from male miners. They resent her presence; but, they also find her irresistible. Rumors about why she did not remarry characterize her as a tramp. And, they allege she stirs up female co-workers. Bullying, obscenities, and groping culminate in an assault on Aimes from Bobby Sharp (Jeremy Renner). She seeks legal redress with help from lawyer Bill White (Woody Harrelson). Settled in 1998, case precedent increased *discovery* process limits in sexual harassment cases and allowed psychological injuries Jenson suffered in assessing damage awards.

(I suggest consulting commonsensemedia.org to decide the film's suitability for oneself, children, or teens: <http://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/north-country> David L. Rodgers, Film Reviewer)

Book Discussion and Potluck

Friday, January 17 6:30 PM - At the church

The 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.

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, January 24 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

It has been a busy holiday season! The RE kids and I hope you have enjoyed the new art projects around the church. I am particularly proud of the beautiful menorah they made from paper towel tubes. Please take a look at them sitting on the table of decorations from different religious traditions. We will be back in the New Year with lots of new activities, crafts, and lessons. See you in 2014!



At the Church-in-the-Woods

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday: 6PM-7:30 PM until new beginner's class starts on Jan. 6, 5:30- 6:30 PM; at that time the continuing class will begin meeting 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>



Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Betty Derrick,
January 15: Deadline for the February 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

**UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News
December 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:

- Options for dishwasher replacement.
- An update and possible next steps on “Immigration as a Moral Issue” conversations.
- New policy banning firearms from church grounds, to be voted on in January.
- Reminders of holiday events, including preparing gift bags for Break Bread.
- Next meeting, Wednesday, January 8, 6:00 p.m.

Treasurer’s Report – Rosie Asbury

November 30, 2013

Receipts	November	July-Nov. (5 mos)
Plate	\$ 0.00	\$ 517.84
Pledge	120.00	4500.00
Rent	100.00	1100.00
Share the Plate	<u>0.00</u>	<u>486.40</u>
Total Receipts	\$ 220.00	\$ 6604.24
Outstanding Debt		
Air Cond. Loan	\$ 1400.00 (plus interest)	
Disbursements		
Speakers’ Fees	200.00	1015.00
Minister Expense	700.00	2450.00
Maintenance/Repairs (dishwasher repair)	60.00	527.97
Termite/Pest Control	35.00	175.00
Supplies	0.00	92.52
Utilities	279.00	1362.38
Advertising	0.00	350.00
UUA Dues	0.00	577.00
Donations	0.00	486.40
Others (CD player/mailbox)	<u>0.00</u>	<u>113.86</u>
Total Disburs.	\$ 1274.00	\$ 7150.13
Net Receipt	\$ -1054.00	\$ -545.89

(Rosie says please note that the above is her best approximation for now of November’s books. She is still catching up on the church receipts after spending many weeks in Tallahassee.)

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 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:

The Mountain, Highlands, NC

UUs sponsor a number of camps and conferences throughout the year. One place to check out is The Mountain, a lovely conference center in the NC mountains which offers a number of programs throughout the year. They have a website where you can learn more about their planned activities. It is a lovely, restful spot and the programs are terrific. Here are some comments they’ve recently sent.

Looking forward to 2014, we have a terrific Appalachian Spring program planned. Drawing on the success of the Southern Unitarian Universalist Fall Institute, this Sunday-Thursday gathering will be full of great programs and fun activities. Many participants are also planning to stay over for The Mountain Homecoming the following weekend.

MountainCamp and MountainCONS are of course scheduled, as is Family Camp. The 3rd Annual Southern Unitarian Universalist Fall Institute is October 6-9. Click here for the 2012 SUUFI Yearbook.



UU Valdosta caroling at Wild Adventures on a cold damp Sunday in mid-December!

Christmas Decorating Party at the Church.

The church really looks lovely this year. You guys did a great job and it looks like everyone who was there for the decorating party had a great time! Perhaps you are in one of these pictures.

