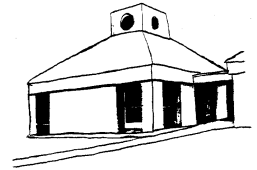


The Flaming Chalice

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



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... **January 2015**

Sun	Jan. 4	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Return GAYT boxes and donations! Service – Rev. Fred Howard – “Be Mindful, Young Padawan” Meet & Greet after the service Welcoming Congregation session
F	Jan. 9	6:30 PM	Pizza and a Movie!
Sun	Jan. 11	9:30 AM 10:45 AM	UU board meeting in the RE wing Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Human Dignity and Catholic Social Teachings” Meet & Greet after the service
M	Jan. 12	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
Th	Jan. 15		Deadline February newsletter
F	Jan. 16	6:30 PM	Potluck and book discussion!
Sun	Jan. 18	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, “King: The Man and His Metaphors” Meet & Greet after the service Welcoming Congregation session
F	Jan. 23	6:30 PM	Firepit and Games Night!
Sun	Jan. 25	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – TBA – watch for announcements Meet & Greet Coffee after the service

January....

We return to our normal programming! Friday night events are back and the Welcoming Congregations sessions also return. See the calendar above and inside for details! Join us when you can!

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, Jan. 4 – Time to return your UUSC Guest at Your Table boxes today!

Rev. Fred Howard – “Be Mindful, Young Padawan”

New Year’s is a time of reassessment. Where we have been and where we want to go both individually and collectively. The custom of making New Year’s resolutions has been linked to many religious traditions. The ancient Romans began each year by making promises to the god Janus, for whom the month of January is named. At watchnight services on New Year’s Eve, many Christians prepare for the New Year ahead by praying and making resolutions. But Buddhism may have the best teachings to facilitate our actually keeping those personal “extreme makeovers.” This morning I will elaborate.

Sunday, Jan. 11 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Human Dignity and Catholic Social Teachings”

We will introduce modern Catholic social teachings as they articulate a normative theory relating the social vision of the Christian faith to the concrete social, political, economic, and cultural conditions of the twenty-first century. Catholic social teaching centers around one core principle: The dignity and welfare of human beings is always prior to the claims of social or economic institutions. These core teaching forms the radical hub of what has come to be known as liberation theology in its many forms around the world.

Sunday, Jan. 18 -- Rev. Fred Howard, “King: The Man and His Metaphors”

We can learn many things from a study of Martin Luther King Jr.’s life. We can also learn a lot about the mysterious inherent power contained in language by examining his use of words. King was a master orator, and possessed a remarkable ability to harness the power of the English language. Though we may never be able to stir people to action the way he did, but we can learn much from King in this area. Even a brief study of his use of words can assist us in improving our writing and everyday speech to make them more forceful and persuasive. This morning I’ll share

some of the things King’s writings and speeches have taught me.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: 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, Jan. 25 – TBA

Please watch the Sunday order of service, our Yahoo e-mail list and Facebook for announcements of our speaker for this Sunday.

Welcoming Congregation sessions will return in January!

1st and 3rd Sundays, after meet-n-greet. Child care available. Join us for these ongoing sessions to be intentional about welcoming everyone to our community!

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.

Yahoo E-mail List:

If you are not yet on our Yahoo e-mail list, please contact Carol Stiles (uuvaldosta@yahoo.com) for joining the list. It is a low-volume, moderated list for announcements and reminders of UU and related community events.

Like us on Facebook for reminders of events and other information as well. Kimberly Tanner is our Facebook page facilitator, as well as a co-moderator of the Yahoo list.



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard, December 2014

I'm thrilled that my book is finally published! The title is "Transforming Faith – Stories of Change from a Lifelong Spiritual Seeker" and was just made available on Amazon.com. There is a Kindle version available also. Copies are available in the foyer of the church. All proceeds from church sales go directly to UU Valdosta.

The title pretty much describes it. It's a sort of spiritual autobiography, with personal experiences and stories I've accumulated along life's path. Each of the twenty seven chapters shows a small change in my thinking and emotional processing that eventually brought me to a more universalist faith stance. While some stories are personal, others are taken from popular culture, and yet others from ancient wisdom teachings. In the book I've attempted to tackle several difficult and sensitive issues around spirituality and religion while maintaining a measure of tact and respect for all faith traditions.

My editor found it "an interesting and engaging mix of intellectual arguments, literary storytelling, and humorous anecdotes." She also commented that it "works on the whole for many reasons, but one of the most defining is the likability of the kind of faith it describes. This faith takes elements of intellectualism and common sense, but it also draws from tradition and ritual. However, even if readers don't agree with your personal, particular stances, there is the sense throughout the work that religion is a deeply personal construct. That is a liberating idea—that people can choose elements of many different structures in order to make a religion that actually offers the opportunity to grow, develop, mature, and positively challenge one's mind and principles."

In the book I also attempt to give an honest and accurate accounting of the intellectual and emotional process that took me from literal Christianity to a more progressive faith stance. As such, I hope it might be a useful tool for Unitarian Universalists to use in helping family members and friends in more conservative churches gain a better understanding of who we are and what brings people to our faith. I think the book can serve as a guide to explain these changes of heart and mind in a way that is less threatening to those of a more conservative mindset. Of course, another option is simply offer the book to them. Some of the ideas it contains might be a helpful place to begin a constructive conversation.

I hope it's useful to you on your own spiritual journey. Happy Reading!

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

- ❖ Congratulations to Dr. Tom Aiello on the publication of his new book, *Jim Crow's Last Stand*, published by LSU Press.
- ❖ Congratulations to Rev. Fred Howard on the publication of his book! *Transforming Faith – Stories of Change from a Lifelong Spiritual Seeker*, available in the foyer, with donations going to the church.
- ❖ Please send news to Carol for the February 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.

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Worship Team Chair: Valerie Webster,
Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com
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
e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles
Facebook: Kimberly Tanner
Local Publicity: Dee Tait

Friday evening events return!

Pizza and a Movie

Friday, January 9, 6:30 p.m.

Our feature this month is “Philomena.” Philomena is a stubborn, kindhearted Irish Catholic on a fifty year old search for her son who was forcibly taken away from her as a teenager while at a convent for unwed mothers. Martin Sixsmith is a talented but out of work journalist who reluctantly agrees to help Philomena in her quest. These two characters become the unlikeliest of buddies as they try to unravel the mystery of Philomena’s long lost son. The movie is a tragedy and a comedy all rolled into one. Philomena and Martin both learn from and develop a caring and respect for one another as they go about this search. They also learn a lot about themselves. The movie explores the power and limits of forgiveness. There are also probes multiple subthemes including the tragic flaws in the in the church attitudes toward unmarried sex, the subtleties of societal homophobia, and the US government’s cowardly reluctance to deal with the AIDS crisis in the 1980’s. Philomena stars Judi Dench and Steve Coogan. It was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Picture. Rated PG 13.

A \$5 donation toward pizza and beverages is suggested. David and I hope to see you there!



**A great turnout for caroling and
fun at Wild Adventures!**
Dec. 14, 2014

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!

When you pick up the book, here’s what’s in store: An extended self-analysis of a desire Janet Mock is willing to do almost anything to achieve. That desire is simple—to redefine “realness” for transgender women. It follows “Charles” from his early childhood, through transformation (physical, emotional, and intellectual) and after transformation until her emergence as Janet Mock. The autobiography is replete with social analysis as a means of locating her experience in larger terms. Readers come to understand *this* story as an exemplar of many. It encourages readers—especially those not particularly drawn to stilettos—to suspend judgment as she relentlessly pursues the need to be her “real” self. She does not ask, as does the central character in “The Hours,” “What does it mean to say you’re sorry when you had no choice.”

Janet Mock also had no choice. And in this book, she simply shows you what drove her to follow the path to be her real self.

Thank You! Thank You!

For providing music at services: Rhett Watson, Nephtali Santiago, Tamara Hardesty

For lay-leading services: Doug Tanner, Betty Derrick

For serving as UUSC representative and coordinating the GAYT annual campaign: Lars Leader

For Meet & Greet: Doug Tanner, Dawn Renner

For assisting with RE: Kimberly Tanner, Ray Perez, Teagan Dunn

For sweeping sidewalks: Richard Schofill

For delivering Break Bread meals in December:
David Rodgers

For coordinating the Caring Committee: Dee Tait

For photos for the newsletter: Kimberly Tanner, Ray Perez

For helping decorate the church: Doug Tanner, and all those who helped!

**Games Night and Fire Pit
Friday, January 23, 2014
6:30 p.m. – until ?**

If weather permits, we'll begin the evening around a nice fire in the firepit, then move indoors for games later on. All are welcome! Bring a snack to share and your choice of beverages. If you have a game suitable for several to many players and people of all ages, bring it along. Contact: Susan Bailey.

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.

Treasurer's Report for Nov., 2014

Operating Receipts and Disbursements

Receipts	
Plate	\$247.68
Pledge	5660.00
Rent	100.00
Share the Plate	64.00
Total Receipts	6,071.58
Disbursements	
Minister Expense	\$1,674.53
Pest Control/Termite Bond	35.00
Speakers' Fees & Expenses	200.00
Repairs & Maintenance	0.00
Newsletter (postage)	160.00
Donations (GAYT)	64.00
Utilities	273.22
Total disbursements	2,421.73
Net Receipt	\$3,649.95



Carrying the sign identifying our group at Wild Adventures, Dec. 14, 2014

**UU Church of Valdosta
Board of Directors Meeting News
Dec. 7, 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:

- Rainbow Mixer will be expanded and is scheduled for Feb. 7.
- Lights in foyer were repaired, but light on sign appears to be working only intermittently, will be checked.
- Next Meeting: Jan. 11, 6:30 p.m.



UU's at Wild Adventures Dec. 14, 2014

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 – 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.

S·O·S 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:

After a brief hiatus for the holidays, Welcoming Congregation sessions return in January, on the first and third Sunday, when Rev. Fred Howard is in the pulpit. We have at least one special guest facilitator lined up, possibly one for each of the two Sundays! Be sure to join us – we will meet after the service and after a brief meet-n-greet.

On another social justice note, in January, we will wrap up our Guest at Your Table campaign; all boxes or envelopes with donations should be returned during the service on Jan. 4, or directly to Lars Leader, our UUSC representative. In the meantime, we have received a letter and certificate from UUSC which congratulates us on achieving "Beacon" level of support for UUSC; this means that we are in the range of 75-99% membership in UUSC! Thank you for participating in GAYT and in UUSC! Consider becoming a member of UUSC (\$40 per year) if you are new to the congregation!

And, we are planning an expanded Rainbow Mixer, for Feb. 7. This annual Standing on the Side of Love event brings people together to celebrate love and commitment to justice for all. This year, we will particularly focus on the "commitment" aspect: commitment to each other as couples and families, commitment to the community, and commitment to the idea of marriage equality for all. Raynae Jones, one of our members, and Executive Director of South Georgia Pride, along with other SGP board members, will be working on this event with us again this year. Please see Raynae, Kimberly Tanner, or myself if you wish to be involved in the planning of this event!

In community,
Carol

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.