



The Flaming Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue

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Minister: Rev. Fred Howard

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Tom Phillips – President	Carol Stiles - Vice-President /Program Chair
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 contact us by e-mail at uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

What's going on... **January 2018**

Sun	Jan. 7	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, “What Can Dicken’s A Christmas Carol Teach Us Today?” Meet-n-Greet after the service
M	Jan. 8	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
Sun	Jan. 14	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. George Bennett, “HEAVEN” Meet & Greet after the service
Sun	Jan. 21	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, “Dr. King’s Economic Dream” Meet & Greet after the service
Sun	Jan. 28	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – TBD – watch for announcements! Meet & Greet after the service

January, 2018

Mark your calendars for February 10-11, 2018, we will have a special guest that weekend, UU speaker, Christopher D. Sims. To be sure that you receive all of the details - including a coffee house! – make sure that we can communicate with you! The Yahoo group list is a low volume (few messages per month), moderated e-mail list for announcements, reminders, etc. – contact Carol to be added to the list. Or join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UUValdosta/>

Questions? Ask Carol or Kimberly!

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, January 7 – Rev. Fred Howard, “What Can Dicken’s *A Christmas Carol* Teach Us Today?”

In part, Dickens wrote his famous novella *A Christmas Carol* as a screed against the economic injustices created by the Industrial Revolution. Today’s social and economic landscape is quite different – though the inequalities are more with us than ever. How well do the lessons of the story translate into the world we inhabit today? This morning I’ll share some thoughts on this question.

Sunday, January 14 - Rev. George Bennett, “HEAVEN”

Heaven is first of all now and therefore surely later. My friend Richard Rohr says, "If God loves and accepts us now in our broken state, why would the divine policy change after our death?" I believe the Original Blessing of God is the positive direction to our existence. We can trust the primary flow of life and eventually we will learn to calmly rest there. We can actually become a conduit of love. Ilia Delio says that "heaven is not a place of eternal rest or a long sleep-in, but a life of creativity and newness in love; one with God in the transformation of all things."

NOTE: Please bring your *Guest at Your Table* contributions! We will collect these today and send them to the UUSC!

Sunday, January 21 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Dr. King’s Economic Dream”

One of the first things that comes to mind when we hear Dr. King’s name is his “I Have a Dream” speech. As eloquent and inspiring as that speech was, it by no means does justice to the vast sweep of his vision and ministry. He saw the civil rights movement as inextricably tied to economic rights. His thinking on economic issues was remarkably prophetic. This morning I’ll elaborate.

Share the Plate Sunday: *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 28 – TBD! Watch your email and Facebook for announcements.

Guest at Your Table (GAYT 2017)

We will collect the Guest at your Table (GAYT) contributions at the service on **January 14th**. Please convert your cash contributions to a check made payable to UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee). If you will not be at the service on January 14th, please make arrangements with Lars Leader to deliver your contributions.

Mark Your Calendars!

The **new dates** for the visit by Christopher D. Sims will be **February 10-11, 2018**.

Christopher D. Sims, Fairhope, AL, guest speaker

Christopher Sims will be speaking about Black Lives Matter, his experiences in Charlottesville, VA, and the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Christopher D. Sims is a musical artist and poet, previously based in Rockford, IL, but recently relocated to Fairhope, AL. He is a community organizer and a human rights activist. He has been involved in the UU Young Adults for Climate Justice and the Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) leadership. He is on the advisory board for the Food Justice Ministry, which organized and implements the Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice Statement of Conscience, which was passed by the General Assembly in 2011. He was a member of the UUA Nominating Committee.

Watch for further info about a coffeehouse we will organize for Saturday, February 10!

Christopher first began reading poems in cafés and coffeehouses. A consummate writer, and fine coffee drinker, he's honed his gifts and talents as an open mic and slam poet across the nation in coffeehouses, cafés, and the like. Learn more about this aroma loving poet at

<http://www.soundcloud.com/UniverSouLove> .

Read his work at

<http://www.christophersims.wordpress.com> and

<https://www.facebook.com/UniverSouLove/>

Christopher’s visit is sponsored by the Betty Derrick Accepting Difference Project Fund.

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 volunteer list at the church or through Carol Stiles and the Worship Team.

Ministerial Musings

Rev Fred Howard

January 2018 Ministerial Musings



There are many different ideas out there about what makes for good leadership. An effective leader is often thought of as a person with certain skill sets, or someone with intelligence, courage, self-confidence, etc. But Edwin Friedman, author of *A Failure of Nerve*, says effective leadership is not about traits or skills but comes from the person that is clear about her or his own self goals and values apart from the pressure of others – a state he calls self-differentiation. The self-differentiated leader is one that understands where she or he ends and others begin. Friedman’s teachings were a part of what is called “systems theory.” It’s a revolutionary way to understand ourselves in relationship to the groups and organizations of which we’re a part.

According to our seventh principle we’re a part of the interdependent web of all existence. Nothing defines us better as human beings than our relationships – our relationships to nature, to other human beings, and to ourselves. The importance of functioning in a healthy way in those relationships can’t be overemphasized. The quality of our relationships very much determines the quality of our lives. Systems thinking offers us a way to do just that – function in healthier ways. And remarkably, when we begin to incorporate the theory into our lives, the systems we are a part of – our families, our workplaces, our congregations – often begin to function in healthier ways also. This is the essence of what Friedman calls leadership through self-differentiation.

Beginning mid-January I plan to offer a ten week course in systems thinking using the book *Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions* by Roberta Gilbert. I hope that some of the leadership of our congregation will take advantage of this class offering. But you don’t necessarily have to be a leader to benefit. Anyone interested in improving the quality of her or his relationships may find this paradigm of inestimable value. As the class size will be limited, please contact me if you have interest.

Grace and Peace,
Fred

Rev. Fred Howard is our part-time minister. He can be contacted by email (preferable) at fredhoward3622@gmail.com. He is available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

Coffee House for Standing on the Side of Love!

We are planning a coffeehouse for February 10, either at UU Valdosta or another location, featuring Christopher D. Sims! If you are willing to help with organizing the coffee house, please see Carol as soon as possible.

As noted above, Christopher will be the guest speaker at the service on Sunday, February 11.

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.

Worship Team

Each Sunday, there will be a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the sanctuary for sign up for the upcoming services. You can also send an e-mail to Carol Stiles and she will put you on the list for that task.

A Thank You!

From John Rogers, South Health District:

Thank you all for the donation of toys for our Coretta's Christmas toy drive. We really appreciate these gifts and they will ensure a great Christmas for our family's children. Again, thank you all so much!

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts...

- ❖ Our members and friends experiencing health concerns.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee

Members of this committee include Dee Tait, David Rodgers, Kimberly Tanner, and Carol Stiles. If you are able to help when assistance is needed please see a member of the committee.

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles
Newsletter deadline is the 15th of the previous month!

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

Worship Team Chair: Carol Stiles
Website Manager: Carol Stiles
e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles or Kimberly Tanner
Facebook: Kimberly Tanner
Local Publicity: Dee Tait

Games Night

Games Night is on hiatus until February. Please check with Kimberly Tanner for more information.

Sangha Tuesdays

The KTD Buddhist reading and meditation group is meeting this fall on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m.

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News December 6, 2017, 6:00 p.m.

Among other items reported elsewhere in this newsletter, highlights of the UU Board meeting:

- Board began list of items to be replaced in the building as part of updating the facility.
- Discussed potential speaker scheduled for weekend of Jan. 27-28 [now changed to Feb. 10-11], Christopher D. Sims, social justice activist and UU speaker from Fairhope, AL.
- Next Meeting: TBA.

Thank You! Thank You!

For lay-leading services: Crystal Rapier, Doug Tanner, Carol Stiles

For speaking at Sunday Services: Patrick Richardson, Joyce Rapier, Carol Stiles

For providing music at services: Stephen O'Kane, Daniel Peveto, Nephtali Santiago

For Meet & Greet: Carol Stiles and others! Thanks to all who brought soup for the potluck!

For leading RE: Sue Bailey

For assisting with RE and nursery: Doug Tanner, Dawn Renner, Teagan Dunn

For taking out trash and recycling: Dee Tait, Lawrence Rapier, Lars Leader, and others.

For delivering Break Bread meals: David Rodgers

For photos for newsletter: Carol Stiles, Katie Meyer, Jenae Durham, Kimberly Tanner

For leading the Caring Committee: Dee Tait

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

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin. You can e-mail the group at georgia@taoist.org

Oaken Circle CUUPS Chapter

Oaken Circle, a chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, meets each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m., with an officers' meeting on the first Wednesday of the month.

You can contact the group by e-mail at: valdostaoakencircle@gmail.com or on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/oakencircle/>

Announcing Southern Region Co-Leads (from UUA Pres. Susan Frederick-Gray):

I have some exciting news to share with you! As of January 1, we have appointed Natalie Briscoe and Connie Goodbread to serve as Co-Leads of the Southern Region. As Co-Leads, they will share the duties of the regional staff lead, responsible for overseeing the Southern Region staff team, events and programs, and upholding the UUA's relationships with congregations in the region. Connie and Natalie will be acting co-leads through June 2019, in order to give staff and regional leaders the space and opportunity to set a new path forward.



Natalie Briscoe



Connie Goodbread

With the retirement of Rev. Kenn Hurto, the search for a new regional staff lead over the past year has been difficult. On behalf of the UUA, let me apologize for the disruption this has caused. The appointment of co-leads is a strategic investment in greater executive leadership capacity to help reignite UU connections in the South.

Natalie and Connie are familiar faces to many of you. You have emailed them, called them, and you've seen them at workshops, regional assemblies and leadership schools. They bring extensive experience as regional and congregational staff members, complimentary skill sets, and strong relationships across the region. They are the right people to help UU congregations in the South take the energy they have to the next level, advancing the prophetic call for justice and the healing power of hope in a nation in desperate need of both.

The Southern Region has been a leader in the UUA in so many ways, from challenging our embrace of Thomas Jefferson's slaveholding legacy to exploring a new form of covenantal stewardship through the GIFT program. Having Co-Leads is another historic first! I cannot wait to see what potential is unlocked by this new leadership approach.

Let me express my gratitude to Rev. Hurto for his service. I believe the Southern Region is poised to build on the multi-year process of regionalization to model Unitarian Universalism's potential to become a truly interwoven movement of liberation and love.

Please join me in welcoming Connie and Natalie as the new Co-Leads of the Southern Region!

In faith,
Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray
President, Unitarian Universalist Association

Photos of the winter holidays at UU Valdosta!



Joyce Rapier speaks about the principles of Kwanzaa at the UU service on Dec. 24.

(photo by Carol Stiles)





Scenes from “The Absolutely No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant” on Dec. 10

(photos by Kimberly Tanner)



Beautiful candle light from the CUUPS Winter Solstice celebration (Yule log photos by Jenaé Durham, left, and Katie Meyer, below).



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.