



The Flaming Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

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Doug Tanner – Treasurer	Susan Bailey - Director of R.E.
Dawn Renner – Director of Membership	Brett Bailey – Director of Building & Grounds
Carl Ide – Secretary	Carol Stiles – Newsletter Ed.

Please contact us by e-mail at uuvaldosta@yahoo.com or president@uuvaldosta.net.

What's going on... *January / Winter 2022!*

Sun	10:50 a.m.	Sunday morning services available virtually from UU Fellowship of Gainesville! On Sunday mornings, join Rev. Christe Lunsford and the musicians and layleaders of UUFG - go to YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/user/UUGainesville , starting at 10:50 am Sunday, and look for the live video stream.
		Join our email group list to receive the Zoom links, reminders, details, and other announcements and updates! See inside!
Sun	12:00 noon	Weekly - Zoom Coffee Hour!
Tues	8:00 p.m.	Weekly - Meditation Tuesdays! By Zoom
	8:00 p.m., 3 rd Wednesday	Soul Matters Sharing Circle by Zoom Next meeting - January 19, 8:00 p.m.
	8:00 p.m., 4 th Wednesday	Wednesday Evening Conversations: Next meeting – January 26, 8:00 p.m. by Zoom

Welcome to Winter, 2022!

Greetings and Happy New Year! Welcome to our now occasional newsletter! Please see inside for more information about how we are adapting to the global pandemic. Please join us as we continue Soul Matters small group theme gatherings, continue monthly Share-the-Plate, continue silent meditation on Tuesday evenings, and consider future ways of connecting with UUs here in South Georgia and elsewhere.

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.

Soul Matters Sharing Circle

3rd Wednesdays on Zoom!

Living with Intention

At the center of your being, you have the answer; you know who you are, and you know what you want.

-Lao Tzu

“This month maybe our most meaningful work is to make room. All around us there’s going to be tons of talk about creating goals and imagining who we might become. But living with intention seems to be more about creating a quiet space that allows us to connect with who we already are, a space that protects us from the pressure to accomplish and instead makes room to ask questions of integrity.”

Each month we will send out the Soul Matters Packet that includes a diverse collection of spiritual exercises, questions, and a variety of other resources. Building on the packet, our monthly Sharing Circle provides an opportunity for us to connect as a community as we explore life’s gifts and various callings from our UU faith. Over 145 UU congregations are exploring this unique spiritual practice centering deep listening, reflection, and introspection. Those interested in joining the Sharing Circle every third Wednesday are asked to complete one activity and to explore one question from the packet that interests you each month.

Upcoming themes & Wednesday Circle dates:

- Living with Intention – January 19th
- Widening the Circle – February 16th
- Renewing Faith – March 16th
- Awakening – April 20th
- Nurturing Beauty – May 18th
- Celebrating Blessings – June 15th

If you are interested in attending (via Zoom) please contact Brett Bailey at valdostasharingcircle@gmail.com for more details.

UUFG services

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville, Rev. Christe, and the UUFG Worship Team have made us all welcome since early in the pandemic – and we will continue our collaboration with them, even when we are able to return to in-person gatherings! UUFG has installed new equipment in their sanctuary that allows them to livestream and continue their networking with other UUs in the area. We are grateful for their welcome! We have been invited to participate in some of their Zoom gatherings, such as Popcorn and a Movie, and we have invited them to our Meditation Tuesdays.

If you are watching the UUFG services and you hear about a virtual event you would like to participate in, Carol Stiles can facilitate communication with the organizers from UUFG. Email her at uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

CUUPS-Date!

The UU Church of Valdosta CUUPS Chapter (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans) is thrilled to announce our upcoming year with our first 2022 ritual being for Imbolc in February! Details are forthcoming, but email us uuvaldosta@yahoo.com with any questions or to get connected with us. All interested in earth based spirituality are welcomed and encouraged to come along for ritual, community, and learning about the wide array of worldviews and practices that bring together the UU Principles and magic!

Share-the-Plate Fall 2021

In the fall, we supported the following organizations: October - Habitat for Humanity; November - Meeting Place II - a new organization that provides a 90 day program that offers short term essentials such as food, clothing, counseling and shelter to homeless women who desire to escape homelessness and/or high risk situations.

In addition, we made a contribution to Southside Recreation Center from Accepting Difference Project funds, in support of the Annual Community Harvest celebration dinner served by the organization.

Meditation Tuesdays!

We gather for silent meditation on Zoom, Tuesday evenings, 8:00 p.m. Here's the schedule:

Silent meditation – gather at 8:00 p.m., meditation will begin about 8:10, led by Matthew Mixon, for 30 minutes of silent meditation. Join us for 30-40 minutes of centering and gathering in community! We have UUs from North Georgia and from UUF Gainesville joining us, among occasional other guests. All are welcome!

Matthew Mixon's bio:

Matthew started practicing meditation in 2011 and facilitating meditation groups 2014. Matthew has studied with Sri Lankan monks of the Theravada tradition and Vietnamese monks of the Mahayana Zen tradition. Professionally, Matthew has trained and worked in environments facilitating weekly meditation groups, day long Meditation retreats, Mindfulness based Group and Individual Support within Behavioral Health assisting people overcoming challenges with mental health, developmental conditions, drug & alcohol recovery, and grief support. Matthew is a dedicated practitioner of meditation and has made a personal commitment to be available to assist all those interested in beginning and furthering their path of self-discovery and freedom from suffering.

Wednesday evening Conversation Series

This monthly gathering has focused on anti-racism efforts – if you are interested, please let Carol Stiles or Kimberly Tanner know. In August, Kimberly Tanner gave us an overview of UUA General Assembly, held virtually in June 2021. In September, we watched the annual **Ware Lecture** from this year's GA, featuring Stacey Abrams and Desmond Meade. In October, we watched a webinar from New England Region of UUA, "Reparations: A Congregational Opportunity to Engage Repair." We are open for suggestions and ideas for future gatherings by Zoom! We usually meet on the fourth Wednesday at 8:00 p.m., join our email list for announcements!

Share the Plate for January

In January, we will be collecting for The Haven, a local non-profit agency that provides emergency temporary shelter and services to victims of family violence and sexual assault. In addition to cash contributions, we will collect clothing and small household items for those served by The Haven. Please contact Kimberly Tanner, president@uuvaldosta.net, to make arrangements to meet for drop-off or pickup of items.

Share the Plate for December and January

December and January are the months when we participate in the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Guest at Your Table campaign. You can watch the UUSC Guest at Your Table 2021-2022 message here, presented by Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, President and CEO of UUSC: <https://vimeo.com/595273385/d24de54ab2>

And, you can read and watch videos of the four "guests" in Guest at Your Table, four people connected to UUSC partner organizations. This year, the four stories are about partners working in Nicaragua, Fiji, Burma (Myanmar) and Missouri. <https://www.uusc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Introductions-to-Partner-Videos-GAYT-2021-22.pdf>

You may contribute through our PayPal link, by mailing a check to our P.O. box (details on the last page of this newsletter), or you may join UUSC (\$40) and make your contribution directly. <https://www.uusc.org/ways-to-give/membership/>

UU Valdosta email list!

To receive our weekly announcements and Zoom links, please make sure you are part of our UU Valdosta email list, hosted through our website on DreamHost. The group email list is low volume and moderated.

You can request subscription at this link: <http://lists.uuvaldosta.net/listinfo.cgi/uuvaldosta-uuvaldosta.net> or you may contact Carol Stiles (uuvaldosta@yahoo.com) or Kimberly Tanner (president@uuvaldosta.net) to be added to the list or with any questions!

Board of Directors Meeting News

October - December, 2021

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

- Exchange Club bench at the corner of Bemiss and Northside has been replaced. The benches serve to advertise our presence in the Valdosta community (the other is on Norman Drive, across from the mall).
- Discussed Share-the-Plate and other community contributions.
- Discussed two requests to use the building and grounds in January.
- Next Meeting: Jan. 9, 2022, by Zoom, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Coffee Hour at noon by Zoom

We meet by Zoom at noon on Sundays after the UUFG Virtual Service. If you have a joy or concern you would like us to share during our Sunday noon coffee hours, please contact Kimberly Tanner or Carol Stiles. We will share your joy or concern, even if you are not able to participate in the Zoom call.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts...

- ❖ Families who have recently experienced COVID-19.
- ❖ Members who are experiencing other health concerns.
- ❖ Members and friends who have lost loved ones.
- ❖ ...those who may be experiencing increased stress due to loss of jobs or the need to physically distance or concern about family members who may be ill... or all of the above.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee

Members of this committee include Dee Tait, Kimberly Tanner, David Rodgers, Carol Stiles, Patti Bell. If you are able to help when assistance is needed please contact Kimberly Tanner.

Return to in-person gatherings?

The UU Valdosta board is closely following Covid-19 risk levels (CovidActNow.org) in the Valdosta area and will determine when it is appropriate to begin services and other gatherings in-person. Our decisions are guided by science and data and the following principles:

- **Inclusivity and justice:** We will not exclude people and will take special care that equity and anti-oppression are centered in our decision making.
- **Safety:** We will do our utmost to keep our people and the community safe. We will not contribute to community spread.
- **Community matters:** We value our community and being together. As soon as it is safe to gather in an inclusive way, we will.
- **Pro-science:** We support vaccination for those who are able as a scientific, reasonable, and loving decision. You protect yourself and others. We believe that vaccines are effective and trust the scientists who have worked on them. We accept the evidence that wearing masks has greatly reduced the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.

As this newsletter is being prepared, case-rates are increasing in the local area due to the Omicron variant, which has put Lowndes County back into the "Severe" risk level, the highest level of risk: <https://covidactnow.org/> In addition, the vaccination rate in Lowndes County remains very low, at about 37%. Please make plans to stay safe while out in the community!



Unitarian Universalist Association Disaster Relief Fund Message from UUA

We're holding family, friends and loved ones, and everyone who has been affected by the terrible storms that swept across the U.S. last weekend, in our hearts and prayers. Through our Disaster Relief Fund, Unitarian Universalists can help each other during this heartbreaking time. Your generous donations to the Disaster Relief Fund are greatly appreciated and will help us continue to provide this care and support.

<https://www.uua.org/giving/areas-support/funds/disaster-response>

The UUA Disaster Relief Fund was started after several hurricanes struck the U.S. a few years ago. The fund provides grants for congregations to assist with recovery in their community, after natural disasters.

Thank You! Thank You!

For cleaning the sanctuary and RE building this fall: Carol Stiles, Mark Mears, Kimberly Tanner, Dawn Renner

For outdoor work at our sanctuary: Brett Bailey, Carl Ide, and Mark Mears

For cutting up a tree that fell near the labyrinth: Doug Tanner, Mark Mears, Brett Bailey, Kimberly Tanner

For hauling off items discarded from the RE building: Cliff Adams

For checking the AC in the RE building when it stopped working: Bruce Bailey (Brett's father)

For welcoming us to UUFG Virtual Services: Rev. Christe Lunsford and Worship Team

For organizing Soul Matters Sharing Circle: Brett Bailey

For facilitating Meditation Tuesdays: Matthew Mixon, Carol Stiles, Dawn Renner

For facilitating Sunday Coffee Hours: Kimberly Tanner and Carol Stiles

For checking in with our various members: Kimberly Tanner and Dee Tait

For attention to details as chair of Buildings and Grounds: Brett Bailey

UU Valdosta appreciates your continued financial support... thank you!



Greetings, UU members and friends:

We are grateful for your continuing financial support of Unitarian Universalism here in South Georgia! To make your donations to Share-the-Plate or to send your pledge, you may do so via check or through PayPal, by clicking on the PayPal icon:



On the contribution page, there is a check box for designating the contribution.

We also are grateful to those who have set up regular monthly payments for their pledges. You are also welcome to contribute by mail, here is our **U.S. mail address:**

**UU Church of Valdosta
P.O. Box 2342
Valdosta, GA 31604**

Again, if you would like to designate part of your contribution to **Share-the-Plate for the month**, please make a specific note of that in the check memo or include a note with instructions – our treasurer, Doug Tanner, would love to hear from you!



Special thank you for our new firewood storage rack and some bird houses! Built by Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Wiregrass Service Area

30 Days of Love Returns! From Side With Love:

30 Days of Love is our annual celebration that runs approximately from Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January through Valentine's Day in February. It is an opportunity to collectively nurture our spirits, deepen our understanding, and take action on our values for collective liberation.

In 2022, 30 Days of Love will focus on Side With Love's four intersectional justice priorities, with opportunities each week for communities and people of all ages to ground, grow, and act together for justice. More online here: <https://sidewithlove.org/30daysoflove>

Each week, we will share a 'playlist' or 'menu' of activities for individuals to interact with, connected with our weekly theme. Each week will include activities in the categories of Read, Watch, Act, Listen, and Worship.

- Week One: January 17 - 23 – Reproductive, Gender, & LGBTQIA+ Justice
- Week Two: January 24 - 30 – Democracy & Voting Rights
- Week Three: January 31 - February 6 – Decriminalization & Racial Justice
- Week Four: February 7 - 14 – Climate Justice

Message from Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, President, UUA

Happy New Year!

The New Year can feel like a great gift of time, the expanse of the year opening before us. But in reality, the true gift is each moment. The past two years have been a reminder that life is fragile and fleeting and every moment we are given is precious.

May we welcome this New Year by embodying a deep care for ourselves and those around us, recognizing always a reverence for life and each moment.

#HappyNewYear

#Welcome2022

Another new book by Rev. Dr. Anna Mitchell Hall!

*Life After: Finding strength and spirit
in unexpected change*

More information:

<https://www.canemillpress.com/home/life-after>

From the press release:

Change is inevitable. Make it transformational.

Life After is a guide for facing life change without fear, embracing changes and transitions, and finding spiritual wisdom in unexpected and even unwelcome change. *Life After* is perfect for anyone facing change in their lives or faith. Using research from brain science and transformative learning, *Life After* offers an approach to life change that goes beyond mere persistence and towards true transformation. *Life After* includes strategies and spiritual practices to help make change a transformational experience. This practical guide is designed for anyone and everyone who wants to learn how to use times of change to grow in spirit and faith.

Anna Mitchell Hall, one of our regular speakers prior to the pandemic, is an ordained Baptist minister who has coordinated programs and conducted research in churches, nonprofits, and universities. In her work as Director of Research and Development for the Convergence, she draws on the latest research from across the fields of religious practice, organizational development, and adult learning to inform product development and implementation that supports the needs of pastors and churches. She holds a Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology, Emory University, a Master of Public Administration from Valdosta State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia, where her research focused on congregations experiencing a change in pastors.

Anna was recently interviewed by a book blog called Pretty-Hot.com, you can find that interview here: <https://pretty-hot.com/anna-hall/>

Congratulations, Anna – and thank you!