

The Flaming Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue

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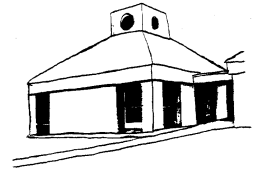
Valdosta, GA 31604

Minister: Rev. Fred Howard

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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... **March 2015**

Sun	Mar. 1	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - Rev. Fred Howard, "What Happened to UUs Political Presence in the United States?" Meet & Greet after the service
Fri	Mar. 6	6:30 PM	Potluck and Book Discussion —postponed – watch for announcement
Sun	Mar. 8	9:30 AM 10:45 AM	UU board meeting in the RE wing Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard – "How the Irish Became White" Meet & Greet after the service
M	Mar. 9	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
F	Mar. 13	6:30 PM	Pizza and a Movie
Sun	Mar. 15		<i>Deadline March newsletter</i>
Sun	Mar. 15	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, "Dorothy Day: Pilgrimage to Nonviolence and Peace" Meet & Greet after the service
Sun	Mar. 22	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Lawrence Rapier, "The Bahá'í Faith." Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
F	Mar. 27	6:30 PM	Firepit and Games Night!
Sun	Mar. 29	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – TBA

March....

Already?? Hard to believe, but here it is ... We have a full slate of Sunday services and Friday night activities – please 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, March 1 – Rev. Fred Howard, “What Happened to UUs Political Presence in the United States?”

At General Assembly last year, I attended a workshop called “Beyond Partisan Division – Reaching Out and In.” The GA program described the workshop thus: “Congregations promote and champion, sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, partisan bias. Many politically conservative Unitarian Universalists who love our theological diversity, and our anti-oppression outreach, struggle to find a hospitable welcome within our ranks. Our workshop explores a wider welcome.” It was truly one of the liveliest and most insightful events I’ve ever experienced as a UU. This morning I’ll share some of what I learned and experienced in the workshop and the implications these learnings have for our congregations.

Sunday, March 8 – Rev. Fred Howard, “How the Irish Became White”

As a white person born in our particular geographical location, our time, and in our social climate, I’ve been allowed the choice of whether or not to think much about race. Many if not most occupants of our planet, because of skin color, ethnicity, or social constructs, are not afforded that choice. Recently I read a book called “How the Irish Became White” by Noel Ignatiev, that brought the issue home to me in a startling way. Being part Irish myself, I found the story particularly interesting, informative, and convicting. This morning, both as a way to honor St. Patrick’s Day and to give Ignatiev a wider exposure, I thought I’d share some of his ideas and some personal reflections on this topic.

Sunday, Mar. 15 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Dorothy Day: Pilgrimage to Nonviolence and Peace”

Dorothy Day was a writer, an activist, and the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement in the 1930s that continues to follow the precepts of voluntary poverty, non-violence, hospitality, and intentional community. In the midst of human suffering and misery, Dorothy responded not only

with a personal form of hospitality but with a political form of resisting the institutional forces leading to poverty and war. We will trace the contributions of Dorothy Day to the broader American peace movement, including her understanding of Christian pacifism, conscientious objection to the draft, and her influence on the establishment of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Plowshare Movement.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the plate this Sunday, not otherwise designated as pledges, will be donated to Lowndes Area Crisis Care (LACC). LACC is organized by area churches to provide short-term financial help for those in emergency need. Individuals seeking assistance will be referred to LACC to help determine the best way to help during financial crises. Rev. Fred Howard is involved in this endeavor, which has opened an office at the Lowndes County Social Services Building, 601 N. Lee St. LACC is also seeking volunteers. Contact Fred to volunteer or for more information.

Sunday, Mar. 22 – Lawrence Rapier, “The Bahá’í Faith.”

Lawrence Rapier will present the history and essential themes of the Bahá’í Faith. Founded in the mid-19th century, the Bahá’í faith encompasses themes such as “the oneness of God and religion, the oneness of humanity and freedom from prejudice, the inherent nobility of the human being, and the centrality of justice to all human endeavours.” Lawrence has been a frequent participant in our services the last few months – join us in welcoming him to the pulpit!

Sunday, Mar. 29 – TBA. A change in plans has left this Sunday slot open for now – watch e-mail, Facebook, and the weekly order of service!

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. Please let David Rodgers know if you are available to deliver meals. It is helpful to have two people on the route.



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard, March 2015

I came across this story the other day and it's just too good not to pass on. It's called "Seventeen Camels."

A wealthy man died and left his seventeen camels to be divided among his three sons. One was to receive one ninth; one was to get one half; and the third son was to inherit one third of the camels. Seventeen camels, however, aren't evenly divisible by three. Hence the three sons argued long and loud about what to do. In desperation they agreed to let a certain wise man decide for them. He was known to be wise even though he was of very modest means. They found him seated in front of his tent with his own camel staked out back. After hearing the case, the wise man took his own camel and added it to the other seventeen camels. He then took one ninth of the eighteen, or two camels, and gave them to one of the sons. To another he gave one half, or nine camels. To the third he gave one third, or six camels. On top of it all, he still had his own camel left.

Cute. Sort of reminds me of a similar point made in the "Stone Soup" story, where the stranger comes into town and offers to make stone soup for the hungry villagers, starting with only a stone. Then each person in the village adds what they can and soon there is a hearty soup capable of feeding all.

In the coming weeks, our church will be putting together a budget for next year. The nominating committee will be looking for people to serve in various capacities for the 2015-2016 church year. As each of us take inventory of our time, talent, and resources in deciding what we have to contribute to our community, hold these two wisdom stories in your hearts and minds, realizing that what each of us has might not seem to be very much to us, but when given to the community can work a simple wonder. I've seen it happen again and again over the past few years, and I look forward to watching the little miracle unfold again. Be a part of it. Please give generously of your time, talent, and resources. Together we are so much more than the sum of our individual selves. Together we can better live out and manifest our values in the world.

Grace and Peace,
Fred

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.

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.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts...

- ❖ Members and friends who are dealing with health issues of their own or of family members.

Nominating Committee

The following individuals will serve on the Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of candidates to stand for election for 2015-2016: Dee Tait (chair), Betty Derrick, and Dawn Renner.

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News Feb. 8, 2015

Highlights of the UU Board meeting:

- Selected April 19th for the annual congregational meeting.
- approved a ½ page ad for \$50 for the Little Actors Theatre playbill
- discussed details of Patrick Richardson's proposed Eagle Scout project to place two concrete benches around the fire pit.
- Next Meeting: April 5, 9:30 a.m.

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.

Potluck and Book Discussion

Friday, March 6, 6:30 p.m.

Postponed! Watch for announcement....

The book for March is *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery. 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! Contact: Tom Aiello

Pizza and a Movie

Friday, Mar. 13, 6:30 p.m.

Our feature for March will be “Calvary,” starring Brendan Gleeson as Father James, an Irish Catholic priest who receives a death threat while listening to an unknown parishioner in the confessional. His would be killer gives Father James a week to live. Over that week, the priest becomes a sort of scapegoat for everyone that has a grievance with the church in this small Irish village where the film is set. His life becomes a sort of metaphorical recapitulation of holy week and the emotional tumult Jesus endured on his way to Calvary. Suspense builds as it becomes apparent that any number of deeply disturbed characters could potentially be his killer. Film critic Lauren Ely said of Calvary, "Is it possible for a film to capture the horror of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church while at the same time presenting a case for the necessity of the institutional priesthood? Against all odds, this is exactly what Irish director John Michael McDonagh's Calvary manages to do." The film is a deep meditation on faith, sin, virtue, sacrifice, forgiveness, and the significance of death.

A \$5 donation is suggested toward Pizza and drinks. Look forward to seeing you there! Contact Fred Howard or David Rodgers.

Games Night and Fire Pit

Friday, March 27

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.

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.

Rainbow Mixer!

The UU Church of Valdosta held its Sixth Annual Rainbow Mixer on Saturday, Feb. 7. Over 50 people enjoyed music, dancing, conversation, light refreshments and door prizes donated by several area restaurants. During the evening Rev. Fred Howard conducted a special commitment ceremony to celebrate the continued progress the “freedom to marry” campaign has made over the past year. This was a quiet moment of reflection for couples to celebrate their commitment to each other and for all present to recognize our continued commitment to all people in loving relationships to marry. The event was co-sponsored by South Georgia Pride who made arrangements for decorations and door prizes. This was the UU Valdosta congregation's sixth year of recognizing National Standing on the Side of Love Day with a gathering. Our thanks to all who contributed food and decorations and who helped set up and clean up afterwards! In the photo below, UU Valdosta President Carol Stiles shows off her yellow Standing on the Side of Love T-shirt!



Standing on the Side of Love is a UUA-sponsored social justice and public advocacy campaign:
<http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/about/>

Universalist Convocation 2015

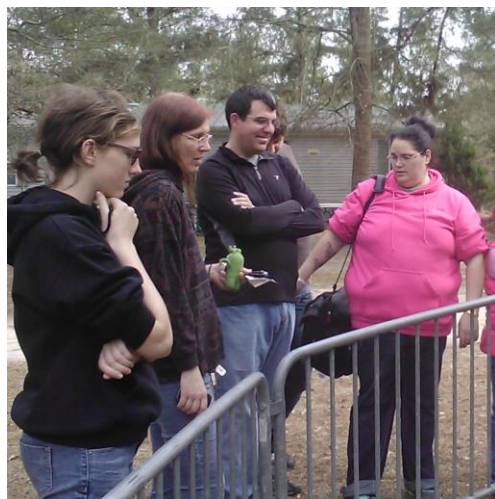
An invitation from Buckman Bridge UU Church, Jacksonville

Universalist Convocations gather Unitarian Universalists together to learn about, celebrate, and draw from the heritage of Universalist faith and experience. We explore how this heritage informs Unitarian Universalism today and helps to light its way toward the future. Speakers will include Rev. Andrea Greenwood and Rev. Mark Harris, co-authors of *An Introduction to the Unitarian and Universalist Traditions*, which may be the best single-volume history on the subject. Another speaker is Rev. Jack Ford, who has a monthly speaking engagement at BBUUC each month and serves as a supply minister for UU congregations in Palatka and St Augustine. In 2014, Rev. Ford was the recipient of the Clarence R. Skinner Award for the best sermon in the Florida District. (Note: Rev. Jack Ford has a connection to UU Valdosta – he completed his internship here and was ordained in 2001 in our church!)

The Universalist Convocation will be held May 29-31, 2015, Jacksonville, FL. Registration and more information: <http://www.bbuuc.org/uc2015/>

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Worship Team Chair: Carol Stiles, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com
 Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles
 December 15: Deadline for the November 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



Enjoying the tour of Tiger Stripes Cat Sanctuary!
Feb. 21, 2015

Thank You! Thank You!

For food for the Rainbow Mixer: Sue Bailey (organizer) and everyone who contributed!

For decorations and door prizes for the Rainbow Mixer: South Georgia Pride board members and volunteers, and several local restaurants that donated gift certificates!

For cleaning the carpets prior to the Rainbow Mixer: Doug and Kimberly Tanner

For providing music at services: Rhett Watson, Nephtali Santiago

For lay-leading services: Betty Derrick, Cliff Adams, Carol Stiles, Doug Tanner

For Meet & Greet: Dawn Renner, Mary Ellen Adams, Doug Tanner, Carol Stiles

For assisting with RE: Kim Richardson, Mary Ellen Adams, Kimberly Tanner

For sweeping sidewalks: Richard Schofill, who often makes a trip early Sunday a.m. to finish this task!

For delivering Break Bread meals: David Rodgers

For coordinating the Caring Committee: Dee Tait

For photos for the newsletter: Ray Perez, Carol Stiles

For folding and mailing the newsletter: Betty Derrick (and last month, the lunch group that helped!)

Treasurer's Report for Jan., 2014

Outstanding Debt	\$	0.00
Receipts		
Plate	\$	62.25
Pledge		600.00
Rent		100.00
Share the Plate (Haven)		203.00
Total Receipts	\$	965.25

Disbursements		
Minister Expense	\$	700.00
Pest Control/Termite		35.00
Speakers' Fees/Interpreter		225.00
Repairs/Maintenance		881.90
Newsletter		
Donations (Haven/LACC)		403.00
UUA Dues		
Insurance		
Utilities		311.70
Advertising		
Others		0.00
Total disbursements	\$	2,556.60
Net receipt		\$-1,591.35

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

Taoist Tai Chi – Beginners 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

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.

PFLAG Meeting – 4th Tuesday each month, 7:00PM
PFLAG is now meeting at Christ the King Episcopal Church in downtown Valdosta. The web page for PFLAG Valdosta: <http://community.pflag.org/Valdosta>

VALDOSTA

VALDOSTA SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP

This peer-to-peer support group began **meeting at another location in December:** Hilton Garden Inn, 1702 Gornto Rd. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month. 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:

It is already that time of year...when we start planning for next year! Your UU Board has set the annual congregational meeting for April 19th and established a nominating committee for election of officers. Treasurer Rosie Asbury has distributed the annual call-for-pledges letters so that we can plan a budget to place on the agenda for the annual meeting. If you are relatively new and would like to consider membership in the church, please speak to Rev. Fred Howard or Kimberly Tanner or myself.

We recently reported our official membership number to the UUA so as to become certified to provide delegates to the annual General Assembly and to determine our fair share contribution to the UUA and the district / region of which we are a part. The great news is that - wait for it - we reported **37 members!** That is a new high for us, we think, at least in the last decade or more – thank you, all! Along with that, let me mention that as a congregation, rather than paying a per person membership to the UUA, we contribute via the Generously Investing For Tomorrow (GIFT) program, a covenantal process unifying Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and district/regional funding. In Fiscal Year 2016, congregations are asked to contribute 7% of reported operating expenses from the previous year. The Southern Region of the UUA has piloted this new program and it has been very successful!

It takes the time and talent of all individuals to make this church what it is and what it has yet to become. If you are approached by the nominating committee, please consider serving. We also have many ways to share your time in conjunction with our Sunday services (see Carol Stiles, Worship Committee Chair) and other activities (interested in social justice? please see me!).

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.