

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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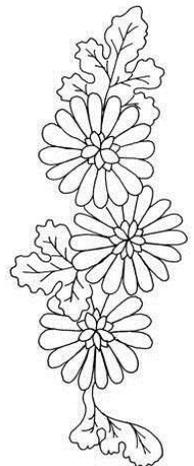


Please note that although individual personal contact information has been removed from this online newsletter, you can obtain more information on any event or ask questions by sending an e-mail to uuvaldosta@yahoo.com.

What's going on... **May 2014**

Sun	Apr. 27	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Bennie Calloway, III, "A Guide to Religious Weight Loss" Meet & Greet after the service
Sun	May 4	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, "Why I Self Identify as a Christian" Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
W	May 7	6:00 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church
F	May 9	6:30 PM	Pizza and a Movie!
Sun	May 11	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, "Buddhist Eight Fold Path: Action, Livelihood, Effort" Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	May 12	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
Th	May 15		<i>Deadline June newsletter</i>
F	May 16	6:30 PM	Potluck and Book Discussion
Sun	May 18	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, "Imagine" <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> Meet & Greet after the service
F	May 23	6:30 PM	Games Night!
Sun	May 25	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Doug Tanner, "Living with a Wild God: A Nonbeliever's Search for the Truth about Everything" Meet & Greet Coffee after the service

May ... Spring is here - we hope! Easter Sunday brought cool rainy weather, but much energy and excitement in our UU service, which included the Flower Communion and a New Member Celebration. This wonderful day followed by a week, the annual congregational meeting, in which the congregation elected the slate of officers and approved the budget for 2014-2015. Lots of excitement in the air for next year too. Join us for "Wonderful Worship" workshops, May 4, 11, and 18 after the service, and volunteer your talents as part of our new worship team or find your niche in our many other activities. It's going to be a great year at the UU Church of Valdosta, and really, spring has sprung!



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, April 27 – Dr. Bennie E. Calloway III. “A guide to Religious Weight Loss”

You can lose religion and improve your spiritual health and keep the weight off and maintain a lean spirit. Dr. Calloway is a graduate of Valdosta State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Speech Communications and also has a Master of Ministry & Doctorate of Religious Education from Andersonville Theological Seminary. He has served as a minister for 22 years and is President of Kingdom Truth Ministries & Blogger of The Calloway Commentary (drbenniecalloway.blogspot.com). He is married for 19 years to Tanyala with two daughters Hannah and Kayla.

Sunday, May 4 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Why I Self Identify as a Christian”

Okay, this won't exactly be my coming out sermon since most of you knew this anyway, but at least it'll be the first time I've let anyone in on the emotional process behind my decision to reclaim the faith tradition in which I was raised. Like most Unitarian Universalists, I delight in religious diversity and draw wisdom from many of the world's great religious traditions. Often I find myself preferring the approach of other traditions, as their way of teaching seems to get at truth a little more closely. But in one respect no other tradition offers what Christianity can – at least in the emotional and spiritual processes that comprise my own limited understanding. This morning I'll attempt to explain.

Sunday, May 11 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Buddhist Eight Fold Path: Action, Livelihood, Effort”

We will continue our exploration of the eight-fold path or middle path of Buddhism by discussing appropriate action, livelihood, and effort. The path begins wherever you are and is intended as a guide to help us move in the direction of wisdom, compassion, and meditation. Buddhism is an experiential teaching so the path is always focused on present moment practice, not abstract theory.

Sunday, May 18 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Imagine”

This morning the children and youth of our congregation will be lay leading the service. As May is the month of graduation, Unitarian congregations often have the youth do this at this time of year as a part of bridging ceremonies – “bridging” being a term for those big steps on the journey such as the ones from childhood into youth and from youth into young adulthood. What better way to recognize the potential of our next generation than by having them lead us in worship!

Sermon: Since there is more to the spiritual realm than meets the eye (ear, nose, tongue, or fingertips too for that matter), we must make use of our imagination to grasp whatever it is that religions and spiritual traditions have to offer us. While this might seem self evident, in actuality the imagination is much maligned in many religious traditions. But I'm not

buying into the arguments of those who would despise the sacred imagination. The imagination would seem to me crucial for us to better come to grips with the mystery that is faith. So my sermon this morning will focus on the role that our imagination plays in that process.

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 the Valdosta Area Ministerial Association (VAMA) 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 new endeavor, see him to volunteer or for more information.*

Sunday, May 25 - Doug Tanner, "Living with a Wild God: A Nonbeliever's Search for the Truth about Everything"

In this discussion, I will explore and reflect on the latest book by Dr. Barbara Ehrenreich. The Hachette Book Group says of "Living with a Wild God"; "Barbara Ehrenreich is one of the most important thinkers of our time. Educated as a scientist, she is an author, journalist, activist, and advocate for social justice. In LIVING WITH A WILD GOD, she recounts her quest-beginning in childhood-to find "the Truth" about the universe and everything else: What's really going on? Why are we here? In middle age, she rediscovered the journal she had kept during her tumultuous adolescence, which records an event so strange, so cataclysmic, that she had never, in all the intervening years, written or spoken about it to anyone. It was the kind of event that people call a "mystical experience"-and, to a steadfast atheist and rationalist, nothing less than shattering."

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting of the membership of UU Valdosta was held on Sunday, April 13, with a great turnout! The congregation voted to approve the budget proposed by the UU board for 2014-2014 and the following officers were elected to lead the congregation next year:

President - Carol Stiles
Vice President - Doug Tanner
Secretary - Tom Aiello
RE - Sue Bailey
Treasurer - Rosie. Asbury
Membership - Kimberly Tanner
Bldg & Grounds - Jim. Ingram

Thanks to all who attended and participated in the meeting and to the above newly elected officers!

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.



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard April 2014

I'm excited about our upcoming Wonderful Worship Workshop! The workshop will be held in three sessions the first three Sundays in May during the second hour after meet and greet. It's not required that you attend all three sessions as they will be structured so that you can participate even if you miss one. But please come to all if you can. These are especially for those who are interested in learning more about the dynamics of worship and in furthering your own participation either as a leader or as a congregant.

We will be exploring worship in its many dimensions as we learn from each other. It will be participatory as we will get everyone involved, not only in "talking about" what we want in our worship experiences, but actually putting together a service or two for the summer. It would be extremely helpful if some of you could bring an idea, theme, or topic that you would like to see incorporated into a service. We will select from suggested topics and see what we can develop as a way of learning experientially. Perhaps you have an interest in presenting a sermon yourself. I'll take you through the process I use in sermon development and, if you have an idea you'd like to develop into a sermon yourself, we'll work with you in how to make it more interesting, engaging, and motivating.

Even if you don't feel called to get up in front of a group of people on Sunday morning you can still participate and we will be enriched by your presence and your ideas. This is for anyone who wants to contribute more meaningfully to the process of "shaping worth" in our life together in community. That's where the word worship comes from; worship is "worth shaping." It's my hope and dream that these times together will serve to accomplish that for our community.

See you there!

Fred

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.

ARC horse-riding day!

The ARC ride for adults with disabilities will be held May 10th @ 10:00 Hamilton Country Arena Jasper, Florida. For more information or to volunteer contact Cliff and Mary Ellen Adams.

Announcing new Worship Team!

We are pleased to announce the formation of a Worship Team that will serve as the centerpiece for organizing and carrying out our Sunday services! Valerie Webster has volunteered to chair this team – we encourage you to participate in the Wonderful Worship Workshops (see Fred's column), but if you are unable to do so, don't worry! There are many ways to be involved in our services and/or our other activities – just contact Valerie Webster or Carol Stiles.

The purpose of the Worship Team is to give more deliberate and intentional direction to the planning of each Sunday service through the coordination of a pool of volunteers. Volunteers will be asked to identify their area(s) of expertise or interest then the chair, Valerie Webster, will group the volunteers to work on various aspects. No one person will be in charge of a huge task; we will share and spread the work so that all can engage with energy as often as their schedules permit.

Some of the areas of worship include lay-leading, providing or coordinating music, assisting with religious education for children, greeting visitors, preparing for meet-n-greet, preparing the sanctuary for the service, and getting the sanctuary ready for the next group to use our beautiful facility.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts

- ❖ Our members and friends who have recently lost loved ones or who are experiencing health concerns.

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.

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.

Wonderful Worship Workshop

There will be a workshop on "Wonderful Worship" on three successive Sundays in May (May 4, 11, 18) during the second hour – after meet and greet. We'll be using several resources, including the book "The Worship Workshop" by Marcia McFee, as well as some of the material I've used previously in the sermon writing workshops I've offered. Copies of all materials to be used will be provided.

This workshop will be for new lay leaders, the members of the worship team, and for anyone who wants to get more involved in worship - in whatever capacity you might want to participate. We'll be exploring all dimensions of worship for all ages. Please sign up in advance on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

I hope to see you there!

Fred

Spring – and ongoing! - Clean Up

Our annual spring cleaning event at the church Saturday, April 12, was a great success! Many hands do make quick work – thanks to all who participated. Our ongoing thanks to the KTD Buddhist Reading and Meditation group who clean the sanctuary the first Tuesday of each month, and to Eva from the Tai Chi group who makes sure our plants are healthy and happy! If you can spare a few minutes each week prior to the service to help clean the RE room and restrooms in the RE building, please let Carol know!

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

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.



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.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER CAROL STILES

Wow, lots going on this month, again! We are creating ways to invite more people to be involved in our services and other activities, through the organization of a Worship Team, which Valerie Webster has volunteered to chair. Please expect a call or e-mail from her, or visit with her after a service, if you already have interests that you would like to express.

And know that you are not alone! Board members and long-time members are here to answer questions, make suggestions, give some background and just to discuss – just contact anyone on the board, listed at the top of the newsletter or in the weekly program.

My thanks to all who helped spiff up the sanctuary and the RE building during the spring cleanup. We still need to do a little more organizing in the RE building, but it all looks much better!

Enjoy the spring weather – the hot summer will be here before we know it!

In community,
Carol

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.



FLOWER COMMUNION 2014

Let's Have Some Fun!!

Pizza and a Movie

Friday, May 9

Please note that this movie was not shown in April as I had to order it and it didn't arrive in time. I apologize for the inconvenience. We'll be viewing it this month.

Our feature for May will be "My Left Foot" starring Daniel Day Lewis. This is the story of Christy Brown, an exceptionally gifted writer and painter born with severe cerebral palsy. The movie derives its pathos and drama from the tension between Brown's gifts and his physical limitations, his artistic merits and his cantankerous personality. As Roger Ebert comments, "The story of Christy Brown is one of the great stories of human courage and determination. He belongs on the same list with Helen Keller, and yet it is hard to imagine Christy being good company for the saintly Miss Keller, since he was not a saint himself but a ribald, boozing, wickedly gifted Irishman who simply happened to be handicapped." A story of great human interest and a wonderful character study. Please join us on Friday evening, April 11. A \$5 contribution is suggested toward pizza and drinks. Hope to see you there.

Fred

Potluck and Book Discussion

Friday, May 16 6:30PM

The book for this month is *The Roundhouse* by Louise Erdrich. This discussion was postponed from April to allow those who are already reading the book to participate on a different date. Tom Aiello has agreed to coordinate the book group. We thank Betty Derrick for the several years she has coordinated the book discussions!

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, with the members of the group discussing the next choice.

Games Night

Friday, May 23 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.



New member ceremony, April 20, 2014

Thank You! Thank You!

First of all, a request – please send thank you's to Carol for the newsletter!

For delivering Break Bread meals in April: Rosie Asbury, David Rodgers

For spring cleaning clean-up! Doug Tanner, Kimberly Tanner, Carol Stiles, Sue Bailey, Emma Bailey, Rose Baker, Rosie Asbury, Bill Webster, Richard Schofield.

For providing music at services: Tamara Hardesty, Rhett Watson, Bill Webster

To Recent Volunteers for various tasks: Richard Schofield, McKenzie Neel, Devon Neel, Valerie Webster, Tom Aiello, Sue Bailey, Lars Leader, Kimberly Tanner, Doug Tanner, Rosie Asbury, Rose Baker, Dawn Renner, Teagan Dunn,

For sending photos for the newsletter: Kimberly Tanner

For volunteering to coordinate the book group: Tom Aiello



RE kids before the Easter egg hunt!

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

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday: Beginner's 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

PFLAG Meeting – 4th Tuesday each month, 7:00PM
Contact: Doug Tanner. The web page for PFLAG Valdosta:
<http://community.pflag.org/Valdosta>

Treasurer's Report – Rosie Asbury March, 2014

Outstanding Debt

Air Conditioner Loan \$ 250.00 plus interest

Receipts

Plate	\$ 142.50
Pledge	1,520.00
Rent	100.00
Share the Plate(LAMP)	<u>40.00</u>

Total Receipts \$1,802.00

Disbursements

Minister Expense	\$ 700.00
Pest Control/Termite	35.00
Speakers' Fees	200.00
Repairs/Maintenance	
Newsletter	
Donations(LAMP)	40.00
Utilities	371.33
Advertising	
Others	

Total disbursements \$ 1,346.33

Net receipt \$ 456.17

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News April 2, 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:

- approved the proposed budget to be presented at the annual congregational meeting.
- Discussed upcoming requests to use / rent our facility.
- UUA General Assembly is the last week of June in Providence, RI. Fred Howard will attend.
- Next meeting, Wednesday, June 4, 6:00 p.m.

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

May 15: Deadline for the June 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

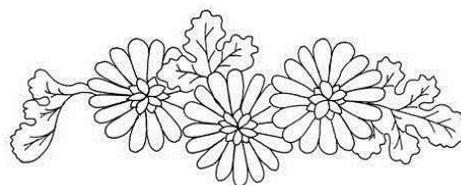
e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles

Facebook: Kimberly Tanner

Local Publicity: Dee Tait

UU Activities and Announcements

- Florida District Annual Assembly, Apr 25 – 27, 2014, Vero Beach Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- Come Grow a Faith Community (led by Rev. Kenn Hurto) Saturday, May 10, 2014, UU Fellowship of Bay County, Panama City, FL
- UUA General Assembly, Jun 25 – 29, 2014, Providence, RI.



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.