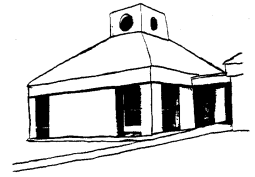


The Flaming Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2342
 Valdosta, GA 31604
<http://uuvaldosta.net>
 229-242-3714 e-mail: uuvaldosta@yahoo.com



Kimberly Tanner – President E-mail: president@uuvaldosta.net	Carol Stiles - Vice-President /Program Chair
Doug Tanner – Treasurer	Susan Bailey - Director of R.E.
Dawn Renner – Director of Membership	Chris Renfroe – 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... **May and June 2020**

Sun			Sunday morning services available virtually from other UU churches! See below!
Sun		12:00 noon	Zoom Coffee Hour! To join the Coffee Hour on any Sunday, please let Kimberly or Carol know so we can send you the link to join. (Or join our Yahoo group list – details inside!)
Wed	June 3	7:00 p.m.	Book discussion by Zoom!
Mon	June 8		Break Bread Delivery

May and June 2020

Greetings, members and friends in the community during these challenging times.... This issue includes a message from Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, making a special announcement about how UU congregations should proceed. At this point the recommendation is that all congregations should continue virtual gatherings and very small group activities – perhaps until May 2021. Please see Susan's message on pages 4 and 5 of this issue.

Locally, we have begun to gather virtually for coffee at noon on Sundays, after some of us join the UU Fellowship of Gainesville in their virtual service. Our thanks to Rev. Christe Lunsford, musician Dr. Thomas Royal, and a whole team of lay leaders who make their services beautiful! Rev. Christe and others have made us all welcome, mentioning our community by name in opening messages and in joys and concerns, and we are grateful for their welcome.

Simply visit UU Fellowship of Gainesville's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/uugainesville/, starting at 10:50 am Sunday, and look for the live video stream. As the service is streamed, you are encouraged to engage through the comments to let UU Fellowship of Gainesville and Rev. Lunsford know we are with them.

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.

Share-the-Plate for the summer!

South Georgia Partnership
to End Homelessness
and South George Migrant
Farmworkers' Clinic

Over the Memorial Day weekend, with a generous contribution from one of our members, we again purchased food items and prepared lunch bags for South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness. SGPEH distributes these lunch bags to clients that come in to the office and they are frequently in need of replenishing the supplies.

In June, we usually support the South Georgia Migrant Farmworker's Clinic in Lake Park, which holds pop-up clinics in conjunction with the Emory Physician's Assistant program. The UU board has designated a donation of \$100 from the Accepting Difference Project fund for the support of the Migrant Farmworker's Clinic in June.

Please consider adding a contribution, designated for "Share the Plate," when you send in your pledge to the church – please feel free to designate one of these two programs, if you wish. In July, we also usually support South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness, so contributions are welcome so we can plan ahead!

Although the photo below is from April, Brett Bailey and Carl Ide packed 48 lunch bags and delivered them on May 26. Kimberly Tanner did the shopping! Thanks to Brett, Carl, Kimberly, and the anonymous individual for the generous contribution that made it all possible!



(photo provided by Brett Bailey)

UUA Common Read Book Discussion Wednesday, June 3, 7:00 p.m. By Zoom!

Please contact Carol Stiles or Kimberly Tanner so that we can be sure to get the Zoom invitation to you! This will be our second discussion on the UUA Common Read. In addition, if you have ideas for another book discussion, let us know!

The selected book is [An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States](#) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (Beacon Press, 2015). There is also a new young people's version of the book available, which is actually the book recommended by UUA. More information on the common read is available here: <https://www.uua.org/books/read>

Connecting with UU Valdosta!

We send out our Zoom invitations through our Yahoo email list! If you are not on that list, please consider joining it, by contacting Carol Stiles at uvaldosta@yahoo.com. This list is a moderated and low-volume (few messages per month) group email list.

You can join Zoom conferencing for free via PC, laptop, tablet, or cell phone. You can join with video or just with audio if you prefer. If you do not have internet access at home, you can also access via phone call. (Phone numbers are included in the email announcement, but note that the phone numbers are not toll-free numbers).

If you have questions, please contact Carol or Kimberly or any board member!

Break Bread Together

Break Bread, which is a community program of First Presbyterian Church in Valdosta that delivers meals to low-income, homebound individuals, continues to operate during the pandemic (with new guidelines for safely delivering the meals). This is one of our Share-the-Plate organizations. Our thanks to David Rodgers who has been delivering meals on the 2nd Monday of each month (and 5th Monday, when there is one).

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



Greetings, UU members and friends:

We have a new way for you to support UU Valdosta! We now have a PayPal account! Click 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**

Even though we may not meet in large numbers at the church for some time, we are very cognizant of the need to continue to pay our bills – utilities, insurance, etc. – for our beautiful sanctuary and grounds, known as the “church-in-the-woods.” We are grateful for your continuing financial support of Unitarian Universalism here in South Georgia! Please also see our budget for 2020-2021, approved at our annual congregational meeting, on p. 6 of this newsletter.

Again, if you would like to designate part of your contribution to Share-the-Plate for South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness or South Georgia Migrant Farmworker’s clinic this 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!

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 see a member of the committee

Board of Directors Meeting News

May 10, 2020, 9:30 a.m. by Zoom

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

- Discussed possibly having our own speaker (by Zoom) one or two Sundays a month later this year.
- Discussed Share the Plate for May and June
- Kimberly signed up the church for a professional Zoom account through the UUA.
- Next Meeting: June 7, 2020

Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday, April 26,

We successfully held our first electronic / virtual annual congregation meeting on Sunday, April 26!

Please welcome the Board of Directors, who will take office July 1 and serve for 2020-2021:

President	Kimberly Tanner
Vice President	Carol Stiles
Secretary	Carl Ide
Religious Education	Susan Bailey
Treasurer	Doug Tanner
Membership	Dawn Renner
Building & Grounds	Brett Bailey

Our thanks to Chris Renfroe for serving as Chair of Building & Grounds this year!





Special Announcement

Unitarian Universalist Association

From: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray,
President, UUA

Dear UU Congregations

As states around the country begin to loosen guidelines and take actions to reopen, even as COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to climb, we have received many questions from congregations about returning to in-person gatherings.

Over the past several weeks, the UUA has consulted with multiple public health officials in order to update the guidance we provided on March 12 recommending congregations stop gathering in person.

Based on advice from experts, we continue to recommend that congregations not gather in person. We also recommend that congregations begin planning for virtual operations for the next year (through May 2021).

Take a moment to breathe. I know this is significant.

While there is much public conversation about “reopening,” the reality is public health officials consistently predict a long trajectory for this pandemic. A majority of our congregational members, leaders, and staff members are in high-risk categories. Our care for the well-being and safety of our members and staff must be a priority in this pandemic.

Additionally, religious gatherings are considered highly contagious events. The acts of singing, the familiarity of people across households, the multigenerational community of children, youth, adults, and seniors—the things that make our congregations so special—also create more risk for spreading the virus.

This pandemic teaches us that our actions directly impact the health and well-being of our neighbors.

Given that so much uncertainty and risk remain, anticipating a year of virtual operations allows for more creative long-term planning, while still being flexible if conditions change significantly. We recognize that with time, and depending on the specific conditions and recommendations of local public health officials, small in-person groups of people and limited staff activities onsite may become possible while wearing masks, observing social distancing guidelines, and following diligent cleaning practices.

In making our recommendations, we are guided by science and our deepest held values. This pandemic teaches us that our actions directly impact the health and well-being of our neighbors and so it is imperative that we make choices that keep our congregations and larger community safer. As COVID-19 disproportionately impacts people with disabilities, Black people, Indigenous communities, Latinx people, the elderly, and essential workers, a majority of whom are women and women of color, religious communities have a moral responsibility to do all we can to reduce risks for those already at such high risk.

Public health officials are clear. There will need to be multiple weeks of reduction in infections, adequate testing, sufficient personal protective equipment available, contact tracing programs, and perhaps a vaccine before it will be safe for many of our congregations to fully gather in person again.

All this said, **our ministries are essential services.** I am moved by

congregations who are increasing their services and generosity to the larger community during this pandemic. I am inspired by those who are keeping their “virtual” doors open. Many congregations have committed to keeping their services widely accessible and available to new people and visitors, while also creating more opportunities for virtual small groups to tend to the social, spiritual, emotional, and material needs of their members.

We hope that a vaccine or an effective treatment will be found soon to change this timeline. In the meantime, being able to plan the longer horizon of virtual services offers an opportunity to be creative in planning for life-giving, essential ministry across physical distance.

Our detailed [UUA Guidelines on Gathering In Person as COVID-19 Subsidies](#) include specific questions for congregations to ask to determine risk assessment and readiness plans before beginning any moves to gather in person. We will continue to update them as more information becomes available. As always, we encourage you to reach out to [UUA regional staff](#) if you need support in your planning.

I continue to hold you, your community, and all of our people in my heart and in my prayers. I know adjusting to this new reality is heartbreaking. I also believe congregations who continue to lean into their mission and life-saving ministry will find ways to thrive in this time. Ministry is so deeply needed. As is moral leadership rooted in community care and in science. May we keep offering this to our communities.

Yours in love and gratitude,
Susan

A Note from Carol Stiles, Vice-President and Program Chair

Greetings! Just a brief note to let you know that the UU Valdosta board is in general agreement with the recommendations made by Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, President, and the leadership of the Unitarian Universalist Association, in the special message in this issue of “The Flaming Chalice.” We believe that it is too soon to begin having regular church services on Sunday mornings – and that it may be some time, unless conditions change dramatically – before we can do so.

Before we would schedule even small gatherings in our facility, we would need to consider, as noted in the message: “recommendations of local public health officials” and the capacity to observe recommended guidelines of “wearing masks, observing social distancing guidelines, and following diligent cleaning practices.”

Therefore, we are expanding our virtual interactions for this summer. Plan to join us by Zoom for coffee at noon on Sundays! Consider joining us – by Zoom – for the online book discussion on Wednesday, June 3, 7:00 p.m.!

Do you have skills in online media presentations? Willing to help us out with the technical aspects of virtual presentations should we want to invite local speakers to interact with us virtually? Ideas for interactions on FaceBook? An example is the online Flower Communion organized by Dawn Renner... (thanks, Dawn!).

Let’s get creative! And let us hear from you!

In community,
Carol

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts...

- ❖ Our members, friends, and family members experiencing health concerns.
- ❖ ...and 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.

Thank You! Thank You!

For organizing the virtual Flower Communion on

Facebook: Dawn Renner

For organizing lunch preparation for SGPEH:

Kimberly Tanner, Carl Ide and Brett Bailey

For checking in with our various members:

Kimberly Tanner and Dee Tait

Annual Budget 2020-2021

Approved at the annual
congregational meeting, April 26.

Plate	\$4,000.00
Pledge	\$14,000.00
Rent	\$1,300.00
Donations (printing/website)	\$1,100.00
Share the Plate	\$1,200.00
Total Receipts	\$21,600.00

Expenses

Pianist	\$4,500.00
Building Insurance	\$790.00
Speakers' Fees & Resources	\$3,000.00
Repairs & Maintenance	\$1,000.00
Newsletter	\$500.00
Donations	\$1,200.00
Pest Control & Termite	\$1,737.00
Postage	\$250.00
Supplies	\$150.00
RE Program	\$1,050.00
Membership Program	\$50.00
UUA Dues	\$1,554.00
UU Conference Attendance	\$1,000.00
Utilities	\$3,600.00
Advertising	\$1,000.00
Others	\$250.00
	\$21,631.00

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles

Newsletter deadline is the 20th of the previous month!

If you prefer receiving the newsletter by e-mail, please contact the editor.

Worship Team Chair: Carol Stiles,

uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

Website Manager: Carol Stiles

e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles or Kimberly Tanner

Facebook: Kimberly Tanner, president@uuvaldosta.net

Local Publicity: Dee Tait

From: "UU the Vote 2020"

UU the Vote is a non-partisan faith initiative to engage our neighbors, educate our communities, mobilize voters, and rally around key ballot initiatives. All through 2020 the UUA is supporting congregations and UU organizations in activating thousands of Unitarian Universalists to mobilize for electoral justice at the local, state and national levels.

Directly or indirectly, the issues so many of us care most deeply about—climate change, LGBTQ rights, immigration, racial justice and more—will be on the ballot in 2020.

As progressive people of faith we can seize the opportunity that the current electoral cycle offers us to fight for our values, counter voter suppression, expand democracy, and engage in spiritually grounded, values-based issue conversations with other voters in our own communities.

In this political moment, UUs are called to join forces with all people who want to organize our communities and our nation to #VoteLove and #DefeatHate. Let's UU the Vote in 2020.

More information:

<https://www.uua.org/justice/vote2020>

At the Church-in-the-Woods... (spiritually, for now....)

Buddhist meditation

Please check with Carol, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com, if you are interested in meeting for meditation in the future!

Oaken Circle CUUPS

Oaken Circle is a chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS). Watch for future Oaken Circle CUUPS Events! Contact CUUPS at valdostaokencircle@gmail.com and ask to join their Facebook page.

Taoist Tai Chi

Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin. You can e-mail the group at georgia@taoist.org.