



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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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... **November 2014**

Sun	Oct. 26	4:00 PM	"Beyond Safe Schools: Valdosta" Georgia Equality Advocacy Training
Sun	Nov. 2	9:30 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, "Wearing Masks and the Paradox of Self Discovery" Meet & Greet and then In the 2nd Hour: "Living the Welcoming Congregation"
Sat	Nov. 7		All About UU – see below – limited availability!
Sun	Nov. 9	9:30 AM 10:45 AM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, "The Triumph of Hope and Meaning in Jewish Traditions" Meet & Greet after the service
M	Nov. 10	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
F	Nov. 14	6:30 PM	Pizza and a Movie
S	Nov. 15		<i>Deadline November newsletter</i>
Sun	Nov. 16	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, "An Investment for Which We Can Be Thankful" Meet & Greet and then In the 2nd Hour: "Living the Welcoming Congregation"
F	Nov. 21	6:30 PM	Potluck and Book Discussion
Sun	Nov. 23	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Lars Leader, "UUSC and Guest at Your Table" Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
Sun	Nov. 30	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – "Thanksgiving Traditions, Then and Now" Potluck dinner after the service! Bring a dish to share!

November....

Fall is here! The weather is beautiful, and there are many events in which to participate! We will begin the month with a special Halloween event on Nov. 1, and near the end of the month, we will kick off the annual Guest at Your Table campaign for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. There's a special film for Pizza and a Movie night as part of the Welcoming Congregation program - stick the calendar above on your 'fridge, and come on out to the UU!

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, Nov. 2 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Wearing Masks and the Paradox of Self Discovery”

Wearing costumes and masks is fun. That’s a big part of what I love so much about Halloween. But is there more going on psychologically and spiritually when we don a mask? I would suggest that masks are an integral part of the process whereby we grow up emotionally and spiritually and get on constructively with our lives. Puzzled? Come join us this morning and hear some of my thoughts on this fascinating and complex subject.

Sunday, Nov. 9 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “The Triumph of Hope and Meaning in Jewish Traditions”

We will explore key events in the history of the Jewish people and highlight core religious teachings regarding God, creation, human beings, and their prophetic tradition. The Jewish people have found a way to maintain a passion for meaning in the midst of perpetual persecution and minority status. The Jewish story helps us discover how the joyous spirit of hope can triumph over the pessimistic spirit of despair regardless of religious affiliation or lack thereof.

Sunday, Nov. 16, Rev. Fred Howard, “An Investment for Which We Can Be Thankful”

As religious liberals, where is the best place for us to invest our time, talent, interest, energy, and money for the greatest return on our “investment?” Many organizations and agencies vie for the scarce and valuable resources we have to offer, but not everything that appears as an ostensibly “worthy” cause turns out to be a wise investment in the long run. I think this is a subject worthy of our contemplation and deeper consideration. This morning I’ll share some thoughts and anecdotes on the subject, and suggest one answer that has a really good track record over the long haul. It’s something I think we all can and should develop a better appreciation of and thankfulness for. A good thing to do at this time of year.

Sunday, Nov. 23 – Lars Leader, “UUSC and Guest at Your Table”

We will kick off the Guest at Your Table campaign today by handing out the contribution boxes and recognizing the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). This is an annual event celebrated by Unitarian Universalists all over the United States. UUSC sponsors social justice work around the globe supported by contributions. Although UUSC shares the values of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), it

does not receive funding from the UUA. Consider joining UUSC as part of your contribution this year. Many of our members are already UUSC members.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the plate this Sunday, not otherwise designated as pledges, will go to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Guest at Your Table campaign.

Sunday, Nov. 30 – Thanksgiving Traditions, Then and Now. We will discuss the celebration of Thanksgiving from its historical roots through to the current time including a time for you to share stories of your family traditions. This is the fifth Sunday service, so we will also hold a **potluck dinner at the church afterwards!** Bring a dish to share and some extra for guests! Re-purposed left-overs are welcome!

Special Halloween Gathering!

Saturday, Nov. 1, 7:00 – 10:30 p.m.

Games, snacks, music, fun! Wear a costume (“decades theme” suggested) or come as you are! This gathering will be held in lieu of both October games night and November Games Night (but see above for the special potluck gathering on the 5th Sunday!)

Invitation from Serenity Christian Church

All are invited to help Serenity Christian Church celebrate **five years** in Valdosta! A special gathering will be held on Nov. 2, 4:00 p.m. The church is located at 1619 N. Lee St.

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.

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.



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard, October 2014

How many of you caught the debate among Ben Affleck, Bill Maher, and Sam Harris on Islam that aired on the evening of October 3? If you haven't seen a replay, I would urge you to watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vln9D81eO60>

It was something quite rare in the annals of television. An actual happening. Three people with staunch liberal credentials land squarely on opposite sides when it comes to an important issue: Is there a double standard in the liberal community when it comes to Islam? In other words, is it fair and balanced for those of us with liberal principles - freedom of speech, freedom to practice any religion you want without fear of violence, freedom to leave a religion, equality for women, equality for minorities including homosexuals – to speak out against intolerance in all other cultures and circumstances but then consider it politically incorrect to speak out against certain doctrines of Islam which can be interpreted as being intolerant on these issues? The media has had a field day with this heated debate as one might have guessed. But beyond the media frenzy, there are important questions for us to be asking ourselves here. These questions are highlighted in the following two thoughtful articles which come down on opposite sides:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/10/bill-maher-dangerous-critique-of-islam-ben-affleck/381266/>

http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/10/07/bill_maher_ben_affleck_and_islam_124201.html

Fareed Zakaria suggests that public intellectuals such as Bill Maher and Sam Harris have an obligation beyond their own self interest, which is to whip people up into a frenzy over this highly charged issue so as to boost their media rankings. They have a higher obligation to try to change the world for good. Most every religion has a legacy of violence. The real question for the world today is what can we do to get beyond that history? Zakaria suggests that calling Islam a “motherload of bad ideas” and comparing Islam to the mafia are counterproductive. For liberals, or anyone else for that matter, to incite the Islamic world by making such statements is not the way to go. Zakaria says, “That is not how Christianity moved from its centuries-long embrace of violence, crusades, inquisitions, witch-burning and intolerance to its modern state. On the contrary, intellectuals and theologians celebrated the elements of the religion that were tolerant, liberal and modern, and emphasized them, while giving devout Christians reasons to take

pride in their faith. A similar approach — reform coupled with respect — will work with Islam over time.”

I would invite each of us to educate ourselves, search our own souls, and consider carefully how we will respond when this issue is raised.

Grace and Peace,
Fred

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.

Notes from Religious Education

In RE we are busy learning about how the first three principles of UU can be practiced in daily life. Through group activities and games, we have explored several topics including diversity – how we are the same and different, how words can hurt and leave scars, and how to go think and be ourselves outside the gender stereotype box. We will soon turn our attention to learning about the variety of holidays that mark the next several months. We welcome visitors and helpers to RE.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Our best wishes to:

❖ Ed. Note!!! Please send news to Carol for the December newsletter!

Keep in your thoughts

❖ Keep in your thoughts other members and friends who are dealing with health issues of their own or of family members.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee Dee Tait chairs this committee. 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.

Habitat for Humanity

Building on Faith Week, Nov. 15-22

We will be serving lunch on Friday, Nov. 21 during this year's annual blitz build – watch for requests to volunteer to provide food and serve this meal! There will also be opportunities to work on the house as well!

Pizza and a Movie

Friday, Nov. 14, 6:30 p.m.

The film for UU Pizza and Movie Night is: *Chely Wright: Wish Me Away*. Please contribute \$5.00 to cover pizza and refreshments. The showing begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact David Rodgers or Fred Howard for more information.

Chely Wright: Wish Me Away is a documentary about country western singer Chely Wright, who grew up in a small town in Kansas and became a chart-topping country western star. Even when young, though, she struggled with a secret, and before the age of 10 began to pray three times a day: "Please, God, don't let me be gay."

After her success in country music, she eventually made a decision to come out in a very public way, to use her fame in a way that she could begin to make things better for others. The documentary tells this story, of the three years before she came out, as well as gives insight into her decades of struggle, including a near suicide attempt at the age of 36. As the DVD describes it, "the film reveals both the devastation of homophobia and the transformational power of living an authentic life."

Potluck and Book Discussion

Friday, Nov. 21, 6:30 p.m.

The book for November 21 is "Mutant Message Down Under" by Marlo Morgan, a book about Australian aboriginals. As explained by Amazon: "Mutant Message Down Under is the fictional account of an American woman's spiritual odyssey [with a nomadic tribe on a walkabout] through outback Australia. ... By traveling with this extraordinary community, Morgan becomes a witness to their essential way of being in a world based on the ancient wisdom and philosophy of a culture that is more than 50,000 years old."

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!

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.



Welcome
new members!

Nephtali Santiago
and
Tom Phillips

Thank You! Thank You!

For Meet & Greet: Amy Jackson, Mary Ellen Adams, and Dawn Renner.

For providing music at services: Rhett Watson, Nephtali Santiago, Valerie Webster

For lay-leading services: Valerie Webster, Tom Aiello, Cliff Adams

For assisting with RE: Kimberly Tanner, Teagan Dunn, Emma Bailey, Lars Leader

For speaking at Sunday Services in October: Brett Hackett

For sweeping sidewalks: Richard Schofill

For delivering Break Bread meals in October: David Rodgers

For coordinating the Caring Committee: Dee Tait

For chairing the Worship Team: Valerie Webster

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Worship Team Chair: Valerie Webster,

Newsletter Editor: Carol Stiles, uuvaldosta@yahoo.com

October 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

“All About Unitarian Universalism” Small Group Experience

Kimberly Tanner and Fred Howard will be facilitating an All About UU small group at the church on Saturday, November 7 from 9 am to 12 pm with lunch provided. This is an opportunity for newcomers, as well as those who are considering becoming members, to learn more about our faith tradition, join in a dialogue on liberal faith and values, and ask questions. It's also a great opportunity to meet others who are new to our congregation and for all of us to get to know one another better through mutual sharing of our stories and conversations about where we are on our faith journey.

There will be both an informational as well as a personal sharing component to this time together and our time will be centered around three general themes:

- What brought you to Unitarian Universalism?
- What is Unitarian Universalism?
- Where do I want to go on my faith journey, and how might this church be a part of that journey?

If you are interested in being a part of this experience, please contact Kimberly or Fred after a service or via email fredhoward3622@gmail.com and let them know. The group will be limited to eight people, so commit early. Come and be a part of the fun as we learn together and build community!

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News Oct. 5, 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:

- Welcoming congregation curriculum
- Safe Schools Advocacy Training workshops, to be held on Oct. 26 and 27, with Georgia Equality
- Habitat for Humanity Building on Faith, Nov. 15-22
- Next Meeting: Sunday, Oct 6, 9:30 AM.

A letter from Amanda Crossley:

UU Valdosta,

I have been thinking a lot about the time that I have spent here in Valdosta and what it has meant to me over the past four years. When I got here on the heels of huge life changes I did not know who I was or what I wanted to do with my life but over time I found myself again with the help of many different people including this congregation.

It is a difficult place to start from when everything you knew about yourself has been wiped clean and you must start over. When I first walked through the doors of the church four years ago I was not even sure that I had the will to try. The task seemed very overwhelming. But this loving community invited me in and made it okay that I didn't know any of those things.

Right away I felt genuine warmth and empathy from many people. I never once felt that my struggles, tears or small steps towards finding myself were out of place or uncelebrated, in fact it was quite the opposite. I was able to draw strength and hope from the encouragement I found there. Over time I was able to lay down the hurts that once seemed so daunting and start building something new.

I have loved laughing and exploring the path to this new era in my life with you. Though I will miss you all greatly I could never forget what this community has meant to me. I thought for a long time that I would never want to sing, meditate, practice yoga or dream again. So many of these things were helped/ healed by you.

I have been blessed to move for my work to the branch office in Tallahassee and will relocate at the end of October. I am excited for the change and curious about where my journey will go from here. Thank you all for always giving me a safe place to say what was in my heart and mind. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, dreams, meals, talents and lives with me. The greatest gift we can give each other is a safe place to be and be heard.

I hope that UU Valdosta continues to grow and bless the people that find their way to your doors as I have been blessed.

Namaste,
Amanda L Crossley

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

SOS Valdosta hosts International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day 2014 Saturday, November 22, 1:00pm - 4:00pm

- *Presentations by local mental health professionals
- *Testimonials by survivors of suicide loss
- *Screening of *The Journey*, a powerful documentary from AFSP about a diverse group of survivors of suicide loss who are finding their way back to a life rich in meaning - and even joy.
- * Refreshments provided

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

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

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.

Carol's Comments: By the time you read this, we will likely be on the verge of hosting "**Beyond Safe Schools: Valdosta,**" presented by Georgia Equality field organizer, Em Elliott. The workshops are scheduled for Oct. 26, 4:00 p.m. at UU and then at Christ the King Episcopal Church, on Oct. 27, 7:30 p.m. These are the same workshop, so choose the time and date that works for you! All are invited to learn about ways to keep our young people safe, especially, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals in our community. The workshops will cover ways to prevent bullying, to prevent self-harm and suicide, as well as learn some basic community organizing and advocacy skills. The workshops are sponsored, in part, by our Accepting Difference Project Fund and are part of our Welcoming Congregation efforts to build connections in South Georgia! Also as part of the Welcoming Congregation program, we will screen the documentary, *Chely Wright: Wish Me Away* for Pizza and a Movie, on Nov. 21. We hope you will Join us for as many of these events as you can!

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.