

The Flaming Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue

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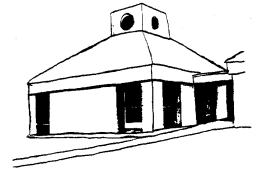
Valdosta, GA 31604

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... **October 2014**

Sun	Sept. 28	9:30 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Pat Miller, “How Ben Franklin Would Advise the Media on Controversial Speakers” Meet & Greet after the service
Sun	Oct. 5	9:30 AM 10:45 AM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, “Meeting in Rumi’s Field” Meet & Greet and then In the 2 nd Hour: “Living the Welcoming Congregation”
F	Oct. 10	6:30 PM	Pizza and a Movie
Sun	Oct. 12	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Zora Neale Hurston: Resistance and Transformation” Meet & Greet after the service
M	Oct. 13	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
W	Oct. 15		<i>Deadline November newsletter</i>
F	Oct. 17	6:30 PM	Potluck and Book Discussion
Sun	Oct. 19	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Brett Hackett, “Trolleys, Fiendish Plots, and Difficult Decisions . . .” Meet & Greet Coffee after the service <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i>
Sun	Oct. 26	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – Rev. Fred Howard, “Emerson and the ‘Spiritual But Not Religious’ Crowd” Meet & Greet and then In the 2 nd Hour: “Living the Welcoming Congregation”

October....

In October we will begin the UUA curriculum, “Living the Welcoming Congregation,” with the sessions held in the “Second Hour” after Rev. Fred Howard’s services on Oct. 5 and Oct. 26. Mark your calendars and plan to stay a little longer on those Sundays! There’s so much going on this month that I have run out of room on this front page....! See “Carol’s Comments” below!

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, Sept 28 – Dr. Pat Miller, “How Ben Franklin Would Advise the Media on Controversial Speakers”

Perhaps, just perhaps, Ben Franklin, faced with recent calls by some in the VSU and Valdosta community to dis-invite Ben Carson, would say, gently but firmly, go fly a kite. More likely, he would argue, as he did in “An Apology for Printers,” that we should trust the self-righting principle in the marketplace of ideas—an idea embodied in a small parable about a man, his son, and an ass (of the donkey variety). He would be in good company—John Milton’s in *Areopagitica* and John Stuart Mill’s in *On Liberty*. So, in the hype of contemporary advertising, come see the result of “Ben vs. Ben” where, no matter what your political stance, you may come away with a better understanding of the premises on which the first amendment is built and how today’s journalists should apply them. Dr. Pat Miller is a Professor of Journalism in the Dept. of English at Valdosta State University and serves as a faculty advisor to the independent student newspaper, *The Spectator*.

Sunday, Oct. 5 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Meeting in Rumi’s Field”

Have you ever felt that you were in sacred space? Most of the times I’ve felt that way were during times of solitude. But there have been those rare moments when it’s happened during a conversation with others. I’ve learned to cherish those moments because they are rare and, in my life at least, difficult if not impossible to re-create. I think each of us longs to be heard and understood and to feel like we’re in a safe place, a sacred space, in our relationships. But, for me at least, it still seems elusive despite doing years and years of spiritual practice and really working at being better at relating to others. Rumi, the 13th century poet and mystic, has a marvelous teaching regarding this sacred space. This morning I’ll share one of my experiences and how Rumi helped me to understand it.

Sunday, Oct. 12 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Zora Neale Hurston: Resistance and Transformation”

Zora Neale Hurston is perhaps the most prolific and celebrated North American black female writer and anthropologist in the first half of the twentieth century. We will highlight the paradoxical moral and religious qualities of life expressed in Hurston’s personal experience and literary endeavor. On the one hand, Hurston celebrates the unique cultural heritage and colorful creativity present in the black quest for human dignity and communal solidarity. On the other hand,

Hurston offers an implicit critique of latent sexist sensibilities present both in black religious expression and in the general milieu of the Harlem Renaissance.

Sunday, Oct. 19, Brett Hackett, “Trolleys, Fiendish Plots, and Difficult Decisions . . .”

Can it be that, sometimes, we should intend harm if the harm is required to do good? Is it ever permissible to kill in order to save lives? Is there a moral difference between doing harm and merely allowing harm? Ethics, a subfield of philosophy, asks these sorts of questions. I hope to clarify what distinguishes philosophical inquiry from, say, scientific inquiry, or mathematical inquiry by discussing some especially creative techniques that ethicists use to answer these questions. By imparting an understanding of these techniques, I hope to give a sense of how philosophers in general (not just ethicists) develop methods for improving the reliability of their otherwise uncertain investigations.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the plate this Sunday, not otherwise designated as pledges, will go to Habitat for Humanity. The Habitat for Humanity “Building on Faith” build is scheduled for November. This is an annual collaboration among churches to raise funds and build a Habitat house or two during a one-week blitz-build. More info to follow.

Sunday, Oct. 26 – Rev. Fred Howard, “Emerson and the ‘Spiritual But Not Religious’ Crowd”

People who claim to be “spiritual but not religious” now constitute nearly one-fifth of the American population according to a recent article in Huffington Post. What people who so identify mean by that phrase varies widely, but there is at least one common thread – these folks seem to have a suspicion of or an outright disdain for religious institutions. As I did research on this segment of our population, I was fascinated by how often they seem to quote Emerson. Would Emerson appreciate being appropriated by this group? And does this group really get Emerson anyway? These are interesting questions that helped me put my own ambivalent feelings about that phrase “spiritual but not religious” into perspective. This morning I’ll elaborate further.

<p>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.</p>



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Rev. Fred Howard, October 2014

Occasionally I'm asked where I get my sermon ideas. And it's difficult to explain because there's no pattern to the ideas that I use. Some of the ideas come from life experiences, some come from a particular subject that I'm interested in, and some come from headlines in the newspaper or on the internet. I always strive to pick things that are relevant to people's lives and to the cultural climate of our times.

It's rarely productive for me to deliberately set out to write a sermon on a particular subject. When I've tried to do that, the result is invariably wooden and boring. And being boring is the one unforgivable sin for a preacher. So I stay attuned for what is of most interest to people.

What has been productive for me is to remain vigilant to life. Its always best to focus on our greatest human needs. Life is suffering and there are always people in our midst who are hurting or lonely. A good sermon always offers words of hope and encouragement. Karen Blixen said, "All sorrows can be borne if you put them in a story." How true. I suppose that's a big part of the reason I've developed the sermon style I use. I connect best with the congregation when I tell a story or share a personal experience. When I'm engaged in doing one of those things there is a tangible change in the attention paid to the point I'm making.

Last spring I did a survey during the Wonderful Worship Workshop of what people most wanted out of worship, and the results indicated that you were overwhelmingly in favor of subjects that focus on life's lessons and that you much favored presentations that included stories and personal experiences. That sort of jibes with my perceptions from the pulpit. Whether or not someone is with me when I'm speaking, they always seem to tune in when I begin to share something personal.

We remember best by means of stories. Remembering. When we "re-member," we are calling forth the memories that bind us together. Recalling and telling our stories is the means by which we claim our membership in our family and community. It's in the sharing of stories that we gain our sense of belonging. And isn't that what we're really in church for? Finding a place to belong? May it be so.

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.

Religious Education Registration

New this year! If you were unable to attend the opening RE Kickoff for the year, please see Sue Bailey or Carol Stiles for a form to register your children for the Religious Education class. The form contains important information that will help all participants enjoy the many varied topics and projects that Sue Bailey (RE Director) provides for our youth! In addition, we will be able to regularly schedule volunteers to help with RE – a large pool of volunteers means that we can take turns helping, and no one person has to do it every Sunday!

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Our best wishes to:

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

Keep in your thoughts

- ❖ The family and friends of Terry Nist, who passed away on Aug. 27, from complications of surgery.
- ❖ 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 has returned as chair of 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.

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

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. It is helpful to have two people on the route.

Lowndes Area Crisis Care

Preparing to Open

The UU board has pledged and contributed \$100 per month to support Lowndes Area Crisis Care (LACC) – a new organization that will help with emergency financial needs of individuals in Valdosta (this is a function that used to be fulfilled through a program administered by LAMP). Please see the following announcement and request for volunteers from Rev. Richard Hart, LACC President, and pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church. You may also wish to visit with Rev. Fred Howard who has been very involved in this new endeavor. Consider volunteering!

From Richard Hart: “At long last we are nearing the opening of a vital organization of the congregations of our area to respond in a cooperative way to the emergency financial needs of our fellow citizens. Lowndes Area Crisis Care, called LACC for short, will be located at the Leila-Ellis Building on Lee Street. It will be run solely by volunteers. We need more helpers to insure the success of this ministry.

A Volunteer Training Session is scheduled for Saturday, September 27, 2014 at First Presbyterian Church from 10:00 am until noon. The address is 313 N. Patterson Street. Park in the back lot on Ashley Street, across from the new County Judicial Complex building.

Come find out what it is all about and considering giving some time to serve our neighbors in need. We anticipate some Saturday operating hours for the organization, so those who work a work a usual schedule could assist on a Saturday occasionally.”

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.

Pizza and a Movie Friday, Oct. 10, 6:30 p.m.

The film for UU Pizza and Movie Night is: *Elizabeth* (Rated R). 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.

Elizabeth is a 1998 biographical written by Michael Hirst, directed by Shekhar Kapur, and starring Cate Blanchett in the title role of Queen Elizabeth I of England. In this film, half-sister Mary imprisons Elizabeth I despite the royalty of her parents, King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, to protect her royal ambitions. Confronted by captors authorized by Mary, she confounds her tormentors by pointing out “...the small question of religion” on which they base their agenda. When she is liberated from prison, Elizabeth (Kate Blanchet) must discover the true intentions of her court toward her, threats posed by France and Spain on the battlefield, and the manipulations of the Church or still suffer an ignominious death. Successive triumphs over global competitors and attempts by male chauvinists in the English ruling-class to reign in her inspired femininity enable her to seize lasting recognition for the accomplishments of her rule to firmly establish her reign in English history.

Film review by David L. Rodgers

Potluck and Book Discussion Friday, Oct. 17, 6:30 p.m.

The book for October 17 is *Ghost Month*, by Ed Lin, a mystery that is set in Taiwan. A young woman, Julia, is found dead, and her parents ask her former boyfriend to investigate. As Amazon.com describes “Reluctantly, he agrees, for Julia's sake. But nothing can prepare him for what he learns, or how it will change his life.”

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!

Games Night

Special Note! Games Night will return at the end of November. In lieu of Games Night, we are planning a **special Halloween gathering on Saturday, Nov. 1**. Watch for details and see Sue Bailey if you want to help plan the gathering!

“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 Aug. 3, 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
- Obtaining slightly used chairs from a donor
- Thank you letters received from VSU for a contribution to the Mary Turner Project, and from AAUW for a contribution to the Sister-to-Sister Summit
- Next Meeting: Sunday, Oct 6, 9:30 AM.

Scenes from the Interfaith Pride Service



Carol Stiles, left and Michael Stoltzfus, far right, at the 5th Annual Interfaith Pride Service, Sunday, Sep. 21, 2014. Mike Stoltzfus emphasized in his message a need to build community: “We gather here today to celebrate diverse expressions of love, hope and community; to envision a society that will embrace everyone, including but not limited to those of distinctive sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect and dignity for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. The journey towards creating communities of support for distinctive religious and sexual expressions without fear or hostility is challenging. But we know that we can transform the way we think, act, and live. We can overcome the artificial divisions that divide us by building communities of support and hospitality.”

The collection from the service will go to support Safe Schools Advocacy Training workshops in Valdosta through our Accepting Difference Project. The workshops will be facilitated by Em Elliott of Georgia Equality Project, later this year.



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.

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>

Thank You! Thank You!

For helping with the Interfaith Pride Service: Michael Stoltzfus (speaker), Rhett Watson, Nephtali Santiago (music), Carol Stiles (layleader), and all who brought refreshments, set up, and cleaned up afterward.

For Meet & Greet: Betty Derrick; everyone who brought lunch on Sept 7 for the RE gathering; Ashley and Daniyel Mills, who brought lunch on Sept. 21!

For the table at the Pride Festival: Kimberly and Doug Tanner, and others who helped, included Ashley and Daniyel Mills and family.

For coordinating the Caring Committee: Dee Tait

For providing music at services: Rhett Watson, Nephtali Santiago

For lay-leading services: Valerie Webster, Tom Aiello, Doug Tanner, Carol Stiles

For assisting with RE: Teagan Dunn, Emma Bailey, Tanya Thomason, and Carol Stiles (yes, if I can do it, so can you!)

For speaking at Sunday Services in September:

Dr. Pat Miller

For greeting visitors: Luke T., Kimberly Tanner, Carol Stiles

For sweeping sidewalks: Richard Schofill

For taking photos at the Interfaith Pride Service:

Tom Phillips

For delivering Break Bread meals in September:

David Rodgers

Carol's Comments: "Living the Welcoming Congregation" is a UUA curriculum that we will begin in October, meeting in the second hour, after Rev. Fred Howard's service (Oct. 5 and 26). These interactive sessions will be facilitated by a team, including Carol Stiles, Kimberly Tanner, Fred Howard and some special guests! The Welcoming Congregation program is a voluntary program for congregations to deepen their commitment to inclusive practices, ensuring that all people are welcomed through our doors. The first five sessions involve Assessment, Discernment, and Analysis – in other words: discovering what we know, discovering what we do not know, and exploring what we will do to expand our outreach in the community. Child care will be available so that all may participate. Please do let me know if you plan to participate so that we can make these arrangements – please contact me about this or with any questions you may have!

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.