



NEW OUTLOOK

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY

A spiritual home where religion and reason meet

NOVEMBER 2015

Kindred Spirit



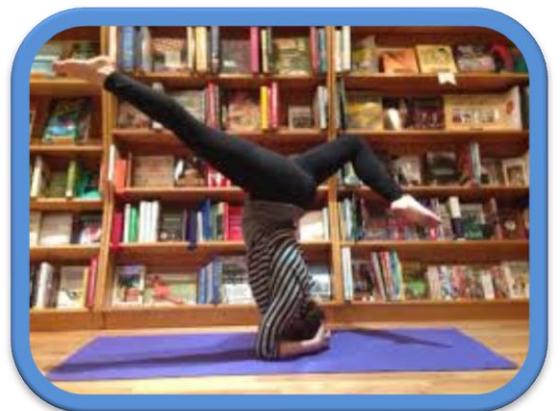
I love bookstores. I'm especially fond of those that sell used books. They're like playgrounds for the eyes, the mind and, yes, the body. While searching stacks of cookbooks, mysteries and self-helps, I twist my body in all sorts of ways. I think they should hold yoga classes in bookstores. Mountain pose is excellent in a narrow aisle. Lotus pose is perfect for looking under tables. Imagine arriving at the check-out counter and assuming the Warrior pose. I feel like a champion at a bookstore.

This week, I came across a book I thought might be helpful for writing a sermon. The title is "Living Successfully with Screwed Up People." In 1999, over 200,000 copies of this book sold. I'm not sure which caused me to pause more... the title of the book or the number of copies sold. I wonder if more or less copies would be sold today.

Although I find the topic slightly humorous, the author, Elizabeth Brown, has some valid advice. She defines inappropriate behavior. The list contains actions folks do that hurt other people.

According to Brown, these are actions we need to avoid:

- constantly correcting others
- putting others down for doing things differently than he or she would do them
- using jokes or critical remarks to ridicule someone
- correcting people publicly
- behaving as though one's ideals and beliefs are gospel
- acting as though one is innately superior to others
- justifying hurtful actions by saying, "That's just the way I am"
- disregarding the feelings of others



Wow. Looking at the list, I know I have been guilty of hurting others. How about you? If any of these behaviors ring true for you, forgive yourself. If you have witnessed this behavior in another, forgive that person. Every minute is an opportunity to remake a life.

May this moment provide a new, gentler existence for all of us.



Dear Members and Friends of UUFCC,

I begin my first letter to you as interim President of the Board of Trustees in a spirit of thanksgiving. I am so grateful for the dedication, energy, and talents of our immediate past president, Dr. MaryHolly Allison.

MaryHolly served on the Board of Trustees for a decade, as trustee, treasurer, and for four years as president. Her contributions are and will be reflected in every facet of our thriving Fellowship. It is a joy to build on such a solid foundation.

As I consider our challenges, I have a sustained sense of optimism. Our professional staff offers us so many strengths and resources. Our energetic, multi-talented minister, Rev. Amy Kindred, consistently calls us to growth in faith and service. Our highly skilled Office Administrator,

Chris McCoy, is a problem solving magician. Issues related to growth and the nurturance of new members are being addressed through procedures and activities developed by Diane Allen-Harkins. Diane's contributions will continue to expand under the leadership of our new, part-time Membership Coordinator, Joani Mountain. Finally, after years of solitary but consistent service in the area of children's religious education, Steve Pollard and Valerie Page are receiving support from our new part-time Life Span Religious Education Coordinator, Marty Wilmer. The music program developed over the past year under the direction of Brenda Morris amazed me. Brenda and Casey will be missed so much. But we are hunting for a new choir director/pianist and are committed to maintaining and expanding this vital aspect of our worship.

Another reason for my gratitude stems from the number of you who are willing to assume leadership roles. During this period of board vacancies, the Nominating Committee discovered that there are numerous folks who would run for the board in April. Doug Kennedy is assisting our brilliant treasurer, Bob Taylor. A Facilities Options Steering Committee facilitated by Bob Taylor suddenly took form and evidence of their work is on the sanctuary walls. Check it out and attend the town meeting on November 1st. Thank you Mary Wolff, Gustavo Reynoso, Regina Renner, and Frank Wilmer. Of course their work is being built upon the significant contributions of our previous Long Term Planning Committee under the direction of Linda Levin. Bless Cheryl Lee for agreeing to serve as a trustee and Joseph Fenty for taking my place as secretary.

Don't forget to vote on the "Black Lives Matter" banner on Dec. 6th and I'm speaking on my UU journey on Nov. 15th during the service. Surely, you won't want to miss that ;-)

Dear Ones, let us never take one another or what we can create together for granted.

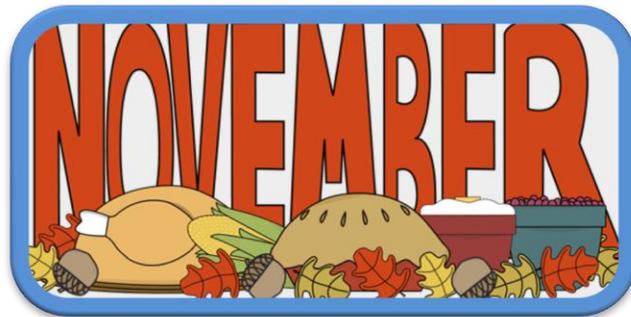
In faith,
Dennis Shaw

SAVE THE DATE!!!
Saturday, January 30th

UUFCC special dinner for Stewardship Kick-off
and a
BIG FAT Greek Auction

SUNDAYS

9:15 a.m. Conversation among Friends
9:30 a.m. – Choir Practice
10:30 a.m. – Worship Service
Coffee Hour following Worship



Theme: "Reverence"

November 1

In Praise of Plants

Rev. Amy Kindred



Traditional Native Peoples of the Americas value plants. They are important components of art, music, ceremony and symbolism. Join us as we express reverence for plant life.

November 8

Three Days Before Diwali

Rev. Amy Kindred

*In darkness, light exists, do not gaze with darkened vision.
In light, darkness exists, do not gaze with bright vision.
Light and darkness create an opposition,
but depend on each other....(Sekito Zenji)*



Today, just three days before the Hindu holiday known as Diwali, we celebrate light with movement and song.

November 15

Bread of Life

Rev. Amy Kindred



Do you know the origin of the word "companion?" It is derived from *com* meaning "together" and *panis* meaning "bread." Therefore, a companion is someone who shares your bread. Bread has a rich and fascinating history. Join us as we revere a staple of human life.

November 22

We Gather Together: Stories Behind the Hymns

Rev. Amy Kindred

Part of the power of a Sunday service is the incorporation of hymns. We don't mind if you sing like a songbird or squawk like a duck, we have reverence for the many voices and the varied stories behind the music. (*Today, we'll pass out "Guest at Your Table" boxes.*)



November 28

The Belief in Becoming

Howard Goldson

UUFCC friend and currently featured artist will share his ideas about the heresy of a world in which ultimate meaning is denied.

RE-flections

I would like to thank all of the RE Teachers and Child Care Providers for their help. We have Malik and Ashley working with our youngest children. Steve and Valerie Pollard teach our Elementary group. The Middle School/High School teachers are: Phil Brown, Jennifer Rose, Chrissy McCoy, and Gene Maresca. I am thrilled to have such a wonderful group working with our children.

The theme for October was "Ancestors Alive." The Elementary class learned some UU history, starting with Michael Servetus. They created a tree with the names of some of the ancestors to reflect our roots. The MS/HS group discussed Susan B. Anthony and UNICEF Day.

Looking ahead to November, the theme is Gratitude. The students will be distributing Guest at Your Table boxes during the service on November 22. Plans are in the works for students to participate in a play and a bell choir for Christmas. More information will be coming.

All had a fabulous time at the First Annual Halloween/Octoberfest. The event was well attended by all age groups; we had about 30 in attendance including about a dozen children. We enjoyed a cookout, several crafts, decorated cookies, watched *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*, looked **at the moon through a telescope**, and **made S'mores on a campfire**. Thanks to Sue Taylor for helping the kids make glowing eyes to hide in the bushes. Oh, and the marshmallow catapult was a smashing success! A big thank you to the Men's Group for their help with the party. It was their idea, and they set up the grill, fire pit, catapult, and telescope.



Faithfully,
Marty Wilmer, Lifespan Development Coordinator

UUFCC GROWTH OPTIONS

Robert Taylor, Treasurer

Five growth options are posted on the sanctuary wall and we are in the thick of discussing which approach best meets the program needs and financial capabilities of our growing congregation. Do we expand on our present site, buy another building, or build on a new site? There ain't no easy answer. A special Steering Committee has been appointed—including Mary Wolff, Frank Wilmer, Regina Renner and Gustavo Reynoso—to guide us through the discussions. The only thing we know for sure is that we need to make the best use of the space we have for at least a year or two, until a better, long term solution can be found.

We've run some numbers and it's not just an illusion, we really are a vibrant, growing congregation and nobody wants to put the brakes on a winning program. So, how much bigger can we expect to become?

- Over these last five years our roster of members and friends has grown from 124 to 154, about 4% per year.
- In five years, if the trend continues, we can expect to have a congregation of 190—not counting vacationers who attend a Sunday service or two while they're in town.
- Can we plan on that kind of growth to continue into the future? Will our growth level off?
- How big a sanctuary will we need—not just in the next couple of years, but ten, fifteen years out? How big a kitchen and fellowship hall? How many classrooms and offices?



Our best estimate is that we need a total of about 10,000 square feet to meet our needs, that's about twice what we have now. And then there's parking.

What we can afford?

- Our financial balance sheet is strong, with adequate reserves and a growing endowment.
- We've had a steady growth in pledge income with more people pledging, but we remain overly dependent on budget subsidies from the endowment and the generosity of a few aging benefactors.
- Yes, Charlotte County continues to be a retirement haven, but the well-to-do settle in Sarasota and Naples. Those who settle here are a more modest bunch, many on fixed income.

We need to be careful how much financial load we're willing and able to carry.

The capital needed to finance the option we choose will draw from three major sources: the endowment, gifts, and loans.

- The Endowment has assets of over \$350,000 which might be leveraged to help get the ball rolling.
- We'll need two to three times that amount, or more, to finance any of our options.
- What can we realistically expect in capital donations from our members and friends?
- How much debt can we carry and not overburden the operating budget with loan payments?
- Can we expand in phases as we raise the necessary financing?

As your treasurer, I will work with the Stewardship Committee and Board of Trustees to pull together more definitive numbers to better inform our decision making. Please lend your voice as we explore our options. Let your imaginations soar, but stay grounded in what we really need and what we can afford.

Notes from the Social Justice Committee

Black Lives Matter

The most stirring development at UUFCC this fall has been the focus on the Black Lives Matter movement and our participation in it. Meetings have been held. Draft documents have been drawn up relating to UU principles and witnessing, informative and educational outreach, safety concerns, liability issues, policies and procedures, and there have been lots of emails. Our members and friends are certainly coming up with ideas, sharing thoughts, and discussing views. Even a few passersby have voiced their opinions. The BLM banner on our front lawn has drawn a lot of attention. We also have BLM buttons available for individual action.



Once again our attention has been drawn to our principles. UUs have a long tradition of standing up and being counted. We all know that principles do not mean so much if there is no activity to put them into action. Deciding on how to do that on an individual and group basis is always a challenge. But act we must. As is so often repeated, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Putting up the banner is but one step in what certainly will be a long process.

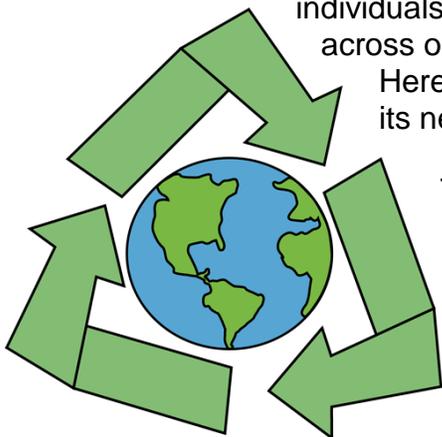
A related issue is the petition to have the Florida constitution amended to restore voting rights to former felons who have completed their sentences and are living crime-free lives. There is a concern to have sufficient signed petitions gathered before the end of this year to present the proposed amendment before the court. If you are a registered Florida voter, please find copies of the petition in the fellowship hall and sign one.

Racial Justice Committee

After a summer vacation, the Racial Justice Committee has resumed action. Myrna Charry has accepted the position of chair and meetings have begun. The first topic is on how to engage in constructive and positive dialogue with persons who are outspoken critics of social actions such as the Black Lives Matter movement or are just ambivalent. Training has started. Come help our RJC be a vital force in our congregation and our community. (article on next page)

Earth Day 2016

Bill Howat has taken on the challenge of organizing our Earth Day activities in 2016. We had our largest event last Spring with the participation of a large number of groups, organizations and individuals. Art work was on display, musicians performed, booths were lined up across our back parking lot, vegetables were on sale, and vegetarian goodies too. Here is another opportunity to come and help focus on our home planet and its needs.



Taking part in focusing our attention on matters affecting our lives and future on this earth has been our Climate Action Team headed by Jack Harkins. Each month on the fourth or last Saturday a meatless pot luck meal is shared by volunteers and a video on climate change issues is shown. Steps have been taken to reach out to our legislators to encourage them to take positive action.

Legislative Action

We have strengthened our relationship with UU Justice Florida in addressing issues such as prison reform. Our candlelight vigil in front of the Charlotte Correctional Institution has been shared with 44 UU congregations statewide. Justice Florida works with other organizations to bring about positive legislative action.

In a related matter, we have been monitoring the case of Jerome Evans locally. Court hearings have been attended. He and his family have been guests recently at our UUFCC. Mandatory sentencing laws are threatening years in prison for a harmless error by a former felon who has been living a positive life in our community for many years.

Feeding the Homeless

Under the guidance of Herb Levin, volunteers, including many of our youth, have stepped forward to package lunches once a month to feed 60 persons on a Saturday in conjunction with the Homeless Coalition. Also, volunteers have gone to the Homeless Coalition to serve meals. Sign-up sheets may be found in the fellowship hall. Contributions are needed to fund these efforts. A basket for this purpose is in the fellowship hall.

SJC Meetings

Meetings of the Social justice Committee are held on the second Sunday of each month. All are invited. Meetings of the Racial justice Committee, Climate Action Team, Earth Day and other SJC affiliates are held as needed.

RACIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETS



The Racial Justice Committee met on Monday, October 19th with ten people in attendance. People shared why they were there, what their concerns are and what they want to accomplish. Some expressed thoughts about the Black Lives Matter sign and movement. Other thoughts that were shared included that racism is a scourge that hurts everyone, stories about experiences with racism and fear for the safety of their children and personal desires to eliminate racism.

"The Listening Project" (groups of UUsers appear in public carrying signs inviting people to talk about racism) was introduced as a means of interacting with the community and extending a hand to neighbors who might want to vent. There was a demonstration of how this technique works followed by a discussion of how and when to begin training. Ideas about safety and legality were exchanged and will be investigated further.

Another idea put forth was to gather the names of those who have been emailing the Fellowship regarding the Black Lives Matter sign and perhaps reaching out to these people to listen to their objections and/or ideas. The objective is to neutralize people, gain their respect, and possible transform their thinking.

The Black Lives Matter Curriculum from the Portland Oregon UU church was another avenue the group explored to gain further insight into this movement and generally into ways to combat and heal from racism.

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 16th at 5:30. For more information, Myrna Charry mcharry@earthlink.net.



Best wishes to the New Membership Support Coordinator Joani Mountain.

Congratulations and best wishes to Joani Mountain as she begins her new job as the Membership Support Coordinator. I know she will do a great job. She is organized, knowledgeable, thoughtful and an all round kind and welcoming person. Let's all give her the support she needs to do this most important job. And let's be sure to tell her how grateful we are that she has stepped up with her time, talent and good energy.

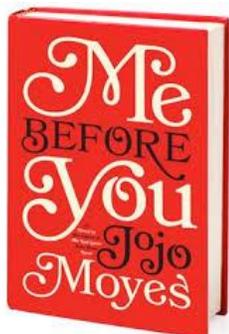
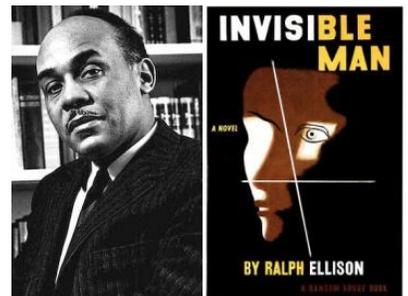
Gratefully,
Diane Allen-Harkins

ATTENTION ALL BOOK LOVERS

Do we have a club for you? The answer is emphatically yes! We hope to choose well written books but, beyond that, strive for variety of format, style, subject, old and new, and even length! Our discussions look seriously at various aspects of each book but are never dull (I swear). So come try us out!

We meet the last Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm. The exception is a combined November/December meeting in early December. By the time you read this, we will have discussed Henry James' classic novel about abusive parenting at our October meeting.

Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, December 9th** when we will be talking about "**Invisible Man**" by **Ralph Ellison**. This is a novel published in 1952 which describes the exploitation of "Negroes" by many "benevolent" White groups before the Civil Rights Era. It has been called The Greatest American Novel of the 20th Century. I suspect there will be some dissent (perhaps vigorous) at our meeting.



The book for our January 27th meeting is "Me Before You" by Jojo Moyes. This a powerful love story of two people who properly listen to each other.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Wed., Nov. 4, 11, 18, 25 – Cakes for the Queen of Heaven Discussion Group 2:00 pm

Thurs., Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26 – Meditation 5:15 pm

- Nov. 3** NAMI Group 6:00 pm
4 Gulf Coast Acoustic Guitar Society 7:00 pm
9 Citizen's Climate Lobby 6:30 pm
10 NAMI Group 6:00 pm
11 Caring and Hospitality 10:00 am
Worship Committee 3:30 pm
12 Executive Board 9:30 am
SJC Discussion on Class 4:30 pm
13 Karaoke Night 5:30 pm
Café Serendipity 7:00 pm
Nov.14 UUFCC Leadership Retreat 10:00 am
17 UUFCC Board Meeting 3:30 pm
Sierra Club 7:00 pm

- Nov. 18** Healing Oasis 6:00 pm
20 Peer Writing Group 1:30 pm
25 Book Group 1:30 pm
28 Chalice Circles

Support the Charlotte County Pride
Fundraiser

Talk About a Murder
(with our own Patrick Eaton)

Saturday, November 14 7:00 pm
Cultural Center

CONTACT US - OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday

9 am – 2 pm

1532 Forrest Nelson Blvd, Port Charlotte, FL 33952 941.627.4303

www.uufcc.org, www.facebook.com/uufcc

Rev. Amy Kindred, minister@uufcc.org 941.916.0957

Minister's hours: Tues. morning and Thurs, afternoon. It's best to call for an appointment.

Chris McCoy, Office Assistant , office@uufcc.org

Dennis Shaw, President@uufcc.org

Joani Mountain, Membership Coordinator, joanimountain@gmail.com

Ginger Abraham, Newsletter Editor, newsletter@uufcc.org

Article Deadline: 20th of the month

Myrna Charry, Communications Chair, mcharry@earthlink.net