



NEW OUTLOOK

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY

A spiritual home where religion and reason meet

FEBRUARY 2015

Kindred Spirit



*The back of hope
Is bent by separation,
The hands of longing
Tied by cruelty
But the lover never
despairs.
For a committed heart
Everything is possible.
– Rumi*

The theme for February's list of sermons is "Love Wins." It implies that regardless of the messiness of human endeavor, love will prevail. It does so because folks become committed to a vision. This month at UUFCC, there will be much talk about vision, mission and commitment. I hope you'll take the time to ask yourself, "What do I love about the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County? What do I receive from the community I care about? What do I give that makes me feel a sense of worth?" Be careful. Stay positive when you answer the three questions I've proposed.

For some, the inclination is to forget appreciations and jump to a list of things that aren't "right" about our beloved community. This propensity is the down side of perfectionism. The same tendency that prompts positive actions in order to make something better can also provoke a persistent knack for finding flaws. I wish it weren't true but it is.

For me, I notice that if I'm lacking in some area of my own life, I begin to find something wrong with other people. I guess it's easier to hold the magnifying glass up to others than it is to peer at myself. The only way to change my thought pattern is to ask myself, "Why am I steeped

in negativity right now? What am I lacking?" The answers aren't always apparent but they *will* surface if I take the time to pay attention. Meditation really helps the process of discernment. Often, I find I forget my need for the experience of beauty.

When I have surrounded myself with books and words (It's not a bad thing, mind you, but too much makes me cranky) and I have separated myself from encounters with nature - which prompts countless images for making visual art - I lose an inner sense of stability. Local publisher and writer, James Abraham reminds me, "Words and images come from the same creative source." I need to nurture my connection to a creative source in order to stay positive and hopeful.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is a powerhouse of creativity and possibility. Most days, happy or not, I am in a better mood when I leave the Fellowship. Kind and compassionate, our friends and members seem to love one another in the good times, the sad times and yes, even the mad times. We are a community of human beings who, like all folks, seek to find a healthy balance between ego and individual preference and the need to do what is best for the broader good of the fellowship. It's not easy and it is certainly not without chaos.

But it's all a hopeful process, this living into the dream of our future together. I am committed to it. How about you? Up for the challenge? With expressions of love through offerings of time, talent and treasure, everything *really* is possible. – *May it be so.*

Message from MaryHolly

Board President



Love Wins: Marriage Equality

Many years ago, my mother, June Barrett, would host a table and invite friends and family, and our UU minister to dinners sponsored by PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). This was a celebratory event, designed to inspire, advocate and educate folks about the need to support human rights for lesbians and gays, and to acknowledge the discrimination, pain and exclusion that most LGBT folks experienced. With my brother being a gay man, this was very important to her, and to me.



It was just a few months back that Rev Amy began talking about the possibility of the Florida law changing and her commitment to perform weddings for same sex couples - if the ban got lifted, she wanted to support any and all folks desiring to marry and celebrate their commitment. She was wondering if the Board and members of the congregation would stand with her. The answer was yes! She even offered a required pre-marriage counseling program so folks could actually get married the same day as licenses were issued-*IF IT GOT* approved in Florida and licenses were offered in Charlotte County.



So Tuesday, January 6th was a very important day. Licenses were issued. Couples wanted to demonstrate their love and commitment! Rev. Amy was at the Justice Center in Punta Gorda along with others from the congregation. She was able to perform four marriages that day (and several more since).



On the evening of January 6th, there was a wonderful celebration, sponsored by one of our partners, Equality Punta Gorda, at Opus restaurant. What a joyful event! Our congregation and minister were acknowledged for our support and commitment. I was so proud to be among the table of Unitarian Universalists who were standing with the LGBT community to say: We stand with you! We celebrate your joy! Love wins!



Proud to be a UU, standing on the side of love!
MaryHolly Allison



FEBRUARY WORSHIP SERVICES

Saturdays

3:15 – Conversation Among Friends
4:30 – Worship Service
Happy Hour following Worship

Sundays

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

Saturday, Jan. 31 – No service

The Climate Action Team is sponsoring a movie Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret followed by a meatless potluck meal. Come at 4:30 for the movie, and/or join us just after 6:00 for our monthly vegetarian potluck. There'll be good food to eat and lots to talk about!

Sunday, Feb. 1

Leonard Cohen: Renaissance Man Rev. Amy Kindred

Leonard Cohen has been creating compositions of love and living since the '60s. We can learn a great deal from Cohen. His passion and interest for music and literature is profound.

Saturday, Feb. 7

Love Letters Rev. Amy Kindred

All things "love-worthy" are celebrated in this service. Do you have a favorite story of love to share? A Rumi poem or two will set the stage for our service that celebrates amore'.

Sunday, Feb. 8

Love Letter to UUFCC Rev. Amy Kindred

What's there to love about our place in the woods? Why do YOU love our community of folks intent on making the world a better place? We'll begin with "Dearly Beloved, Home of our Hopes and Dreams, let me count the ways I love thee." *Pledge Drive Kick-Off day.*

Saturday, Feb. 14

Zora Neal Hurston: Genius of the South Rev. Amy Kindred

Exploring the life and literature of Zora Neal Hurston, we'll celebrate a Floridian of great proclaim.

Sunday, Feb. 15

Zora Neal Hurston: Genius of the South Rev. Amy Kindred

Born in January, 1891, in Alabama, Zora Neal Huston moved to Eatonville, Florida when she was a toddler. It has been said Hurston, our "Genius of the South," was never indoctrinated in inferiority. This is a story of what it means when all are respected equally and what happens when a village really does raise a child.

Saturday, Feb. 21

Mother Earth vs. The World's People Jack Harkins, Chris McCoy

Please join us for this participatory experience (you get to be the jury!) as Mother Earth pleads her case before the International Court of Last Resort. It's perhaps the most important trial in the history of civilization. It'll be followed by our monthly vegetarian potluck, just after 6:00pm.

Sunday, Feb. 22

Loving Some Body: Your Own Chrissy McCoy

Loving yourself can be tough. How can we affirm our own inherent worth and dignity when we feel trapped in bodies less than perfect... or not even fully functional?

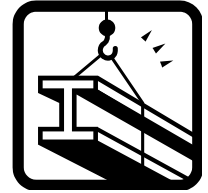
Saturday, Feb. 28 Ted Talk – My Stroke of Insight led by Kay Azar

How well do you know yourself? Come learn how Jill Bolte Taylor, a neuroanatomist, came to understand herself better after having a stroke.



Building Our Future Together

Bob Taylor, Stewardship Chair



What is it about our Fellowship that's important to you? Do you find the worship services inspiring or the conversations among friends thought provoking? Do you bask in the warmth of a caring and loving community? Are you actively engaged in social justice or community outreach? Do you sing in the choir or serve on the arts committee? Just what is it about this place that brings you back again and again?

Whatever it is you value; your time and talent energize our programs, and your financial gifts create and support the staff, facilities, and services that make it all possible. With your support, we have become a vibrant and thriving congregation, as evidenced by our rich array of programs and activities. But with our success has come the realization that we need more space to fulfill our mission. We are now actively exploring our options. Do we expand on our present site, purchase another facility, or build on a new site? And what can we afford and how do we optimize our existing facilities until more space is available?

During this year's Giving Campaign, which launches on Sunday, February 8, you will be asked to financially support all the programs you hold dear. In addition, this year's proposed operating budget includes an allowance for "Future Debt." As a congregation, we need to prove to ourselves that we can afford the kind of buildings and programs we need. If each of us pledges what we can, we can build on our success and fulfill the promise of our bright future.

New To UU Orientation Breakfast



The Membership Committee and Rev. Amy Kindred will host a New to UU Orientation Breakfast on Saturday morning March 14, 2015 from 8:30 to 11:00 am. All newcomers and visitors interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and UUFCC are invited to join us for a delicious breakfast and meet and greet gathering.

You will meet available board members, our minister Reverend Amy Kindred and others interested in learning about UU history and principles. If you would like to participate please RSVP to the office by phone or email.

All who attend the breakfast/orientation will be eligible to sign the next Membership Open Book Signing on Sunday April 5, 2015. Please bring all your questions or concerns. We look forward to getting to know you better.

Diane Allen-Harkins, dallenharkins@gmail.com, Membership coordinator



Peace Initiative Speakers Series

Hasan Hammami, born and educated in the Middle East, social activist, community philanthropist, will speak at the Fellowship on Sunday, Feb. 1st, 12:15 PM. This is the second in a series of the Social Justice Committee's "Peace Initiative Speakers Series." His talk, "Terrorism and Islam, Its Genesis, Issues and Direction in Islamic Societies and the West" is free and open to the public.



Hammami left Jaffa when he was 15, attended college in Lebanon and completed advanced degrees at the University of Nottingham, England and the Sloane School of Management at MIT in Massachusetts.

In addition to working with Habitat for Humanity on building "Abrahamic Houses," Hammami has spoken and worked to promote positive relationships between all groups of people and religions. He is currently a member of the Board of Charlotte Community Foundation, the largest philanthropy in Charlotte County.

CONTACT US - OFFICE HOURS – Monday through Thursday 9 am – 1 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. and, Thurs,
afternoon. It's best to call for an
appointment

Chris McCoy, Office Assistant
office@uufcc.org

MaryHolly Allison, President@uufcc.org

Diane Allen-Harkins, Membership
Coordinator, dallenharkins@gmail.com

Ginger Abraham, Newsletter Editor,
newsletter@uufcc.org
Article Deadline: 20th of the month

Myrna Charry, Communications Chair,
mcharry@earthlink.net

CALLING ALL BOOK LOVERS

Come check us out. We have a book club for you! We gather on the last Wednesday of each month to discuss a book chosen by the group. The main criteria is excellent writing, whether fiction or non-fiction. But almost always there are themes that relate directly to our UU values.

For example, in January we discussed "Peony in Love" by Lisa See. It describes life and beliefs in 17th C. China in exquisite detail, with particular emphasis on what we would call a Feminist Movement lead by a group of woman poets.

Our next two books are considered classics in the literature of war and peace. "All Quiet on the Western Front" has been called the greatest novel about World War I. "Guns of August" describes the diplomatic and other events leading up to World War I. Both provide powerful agreements for the futility of war.

Books for future meetings are:

February – All Quiet on the Western Front by Eric Maria Remarque

March – Guns of August by Barbara Tuchman

Contact: Mary Wolff – 629-0669 or
hmwolff9@hotmail.com



Climate Action News



At the end of January the Climate Action Team sponsored a movie and meal. The documentary “Cowspiracy” was shown, which connects the dots on how our American penchant for eating meat contributes to climate change, as well as how most of the major environmental groups (Sierra Club, 350.org, Green sanctuary, etc) refuse to break silence on this crucial fact. This event was followed by our monthly meatless potluck meal.

In February, we're sponsoring an encore presentation of the play "Mother Earth vs. World's People" at the Saturday service on February 21. We expect our returning cast of 10 Climate Action Players to perform, and we have a couple of openings for new folks, as well. Please contact Jack Harkins or Chris McCoy if you are interested. Again it will be followed by our monthly vegetarian potluck sometime after 6:00pm. All are welcome!

We were also excited to learn that a local Chapter of Citizen's Climate Lobby (CCL) has been established here in Port Charlotte. Four of us from the Fellowship attended their second meeting in January. The February meeting is scheduled for 6:00 pm on February 10th, at the home of Coty Kellar. For more info on CCL go to their website ([www'citizensclimatelobby.org](http://www.citizensclimatelobby.org)).

Upcoming events: There'll be an interfaith climate conference in Orlando on March 6th and 7th, for anyone who's interested. Also, there are plans in the works to have an exciting Earth Day event here at the Fellowship on Saturday, April 18th. Stay tuned for more details!

Eco tip of the month: At FPL's website there's an online pamphlet called "Home Energy Basics." It has a wealth of information and graphics. One suggestion during the cooler months: heat your house at 68 degrees or cooler during the day, and 65 degrees or cooler at night or when you're away from home!

Endowment Q&A

Q: How did our Endowment get started?

A: In 1991, two non-member but friendly supporters of UUFCC, Robert Hansman and Harold Rapp, saw the need and the opportunity to establish the *Unitarian Universalist Endowment of Charlotte County*. To launch the Endowment Fund, Hansman gave a check for \$500 and he and Rapp became the *de facto* trustees. Initially, the fund was managed by the Fellowship under Rapp's direction using the then titled *UUA General Investment Fund*. The Endowment's existence was identified in the UUFCC Bylaws as “an autonomous organization with its own set of bylaws which assure that the value of the investment in the Fund is preserved in perpetuity.” Endowment Trustees regularly report at UUFCC Annual Meetings.

Gradually, at first, the Endowment grew – mostly from memorial gifts honoring departed UUs. An honor-board, mounted in the Fellowship sanctuary, celebrates gifts of \$500 or more. By late 2010 the fund totaled over \$100,000, a threshold that enabled the Fund to begin to draw from its earnings, while preserving its corpus, to provide meaningful financial support to the Fellowship. In the last couple of years, thanks to a number of generous bequests, the Fund's assets have grown to over \$370,000.



COME ONE, COME ALL!

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL INFORMATION MEETING

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2015

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

This I Believe – Feb. 22 at Noon

Please join us to discuss your thoughts about this article.

“What Wealth does to your Soul” excerpted from The New Republic article by Michael Lewis

- “But no matter how much they have, they never have enough. They’re still worried. About what they don’t have. They’re always empty...”
- The drivers in the cheap cars all respected the pedestrians’ right of way. The drivers in the expensive cars ignored the pedestrians 46.2 percent of the time...in Manhattan they found the drivers of expensive cars were far more likely to double-park...
- The richer the person, the more likely he was to reach in and take candy from a jar clearly marked as being there for children...
- People with incomes below 25 grand gave away on average, 4.2 percent of their income, while those earning more than 150 grand a year give away 2.7 percent...
- If you show rich and poor people pictures of kids with cancer, the poor people’s brains exhibit much more activity equated with empathy than the rich people’s. (What does this say about politicians most of whom are now wealthy?)
- So is it that people who have a proclivity to getting rich are entitled and less empathetic? Or is it that the problem is caused by the inequity? Does the inequity trigger a chemical, neurobiological change in the brain? (It would appear so.) It causes them to be less likely to care about anyone but themselves or to experience the moral sentiments needed to be a decent citizen.
- The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that money, above a certain modest sum, does not have the power to buy happiness, and yet even very rich people continue to believe that it does. All of them said they needed two to three times more than they had to feel happier...While spending money upon oneself does nothing for happiness, spending it on others increases happiness...
- As you move up the ladder you are more likely to violate the rules of the road, to lie, to cheat, to take candy from kids, to shoplift, and be tightfisted in giving to others...
- There is growing awareness that the yawning gap between the rich and the poor is no longer a matter of simple justice but also the enemy of cultural economic success and human happiness. It’s not just bad for the poor. It’s also bad for the rich. It’s funny, when you think about it, how many rich people don’t know this.”



Black History Month

MOVIES

Honoring the month of February as Black History month, the Blanchard House Museum of Charlotte County and the Mid-County Regional Library present the Black History Film Series. The **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County** and the Blanchard House Museum will provide a bi-racial team that facilitates discussion after the screening of each film. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Free films start at 5:30 pm at the Mid-County Regional Library at 2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd (corner of Forrest Nelson and Tamiami Trail) just up the street from UUFCC.

Monday, February 2 – *The Hurricane*

This is the true story of Rubin “Hurricane” Carter, a championship boxer who is wrongfully convicted of murder. A group of Canadian Citizens fight for Carter’s innocence. Film stars Denzel Washington in the title role.

Monday, February 9 – *Do the Right Thing*

A hot summer day in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, temperatures and tempers intertwine with bigotry – exploding into neighborhood violence. Written and directed by Spike Lee.

Monday, February 23 – *The House I Live In*

This documentary offers a searing look inside America’s criminal justice system, revealing a deeply flawed system that targets the poor and minority communities.

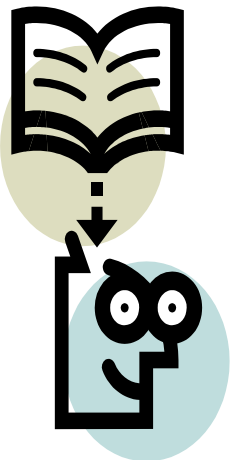
Monday, March 2 – *Incarceration Nation*

A documentary, shown on *Bill Moyers & Company*, that examines how the War on Drugs and tough sentencing policies have greatly increased the United States prison population.

What is the state of race relations in our nation?

In conjunction with the Library Film series on race, a newly-formed book discussion group is being formed that is dedicated to the question above. As we read and discuss the books listed below, we will focus on the interconnectedness and humanity of all people.

These readings/discussion meetings are listed below and are co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County, The Bernice A. Russell Community Development Corp and The Blanchard House Museum. Events will be held at the CDC headquarters, 329 E. Virginia, Suite #113, Punta Gorda.



Discussions/Meetings/ Book Titles/Dates:

- Monday, Jan. 26, 1-3 PM, *Americanah*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Prize-winning story of a Nigerian woman in the USA.
- Monday, Feb. 16, 1-3 PM, *You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*, by Howard Zinn. Autobiographical account of Zinn's participation in the Civil Rights struggle
- Monday, Mar. 9, 1-3 PM, *Four Spirits*, by Sena Jeter Naslund. A novel weaving a tapestry of social transformation set in Selma Ala., the author's hometown.

All are welcome to these free events. For more information contact: Sharon Whitehill, 941-764-6600



Events at UUFCC

WEEKLY EVENTS

WEDNESDAYS – FEBRUARY 4, 11, 18, 25 – Tough Times Support Group 5:00 pm

THURSDAYS – FEBRUARY 5, 12, 19, 26 – Meditation 5:15 pm

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|---------------|---|----------------|---|
| Feb. 2 | Racial Justice Committee 3:30 pm | Feb. 17 | Local UU Ministers' Gathering 10:30 am |
| 3 | N.A.M.I.* | | Racial Justice Committee 1:00 pm |
| 4 | Choir Rehearsal 6:00 pm | | UUFCC Board Meeting 3:00 pm |
| 7 | Recorder Group 2:30 pm | | Climate Action Team 5:30 pm |
| 8 | Special Congregational Information Meeting 12:00 pm | | Sierra Club 7:00 pm |
| 10 | N.A.M.I.* | 18 | Choir Rehearsal 6:00 pm |
| 11 | Caring and Hospitality Committee 10:00 am
Worship Committee 3:30 pm
Choir Rehearsal 6:00 pm | 19 | Peace River Audubon Society 6:00 pm |
| 12 | UUFCC Executive Board Meeting 9:30 am | 20 | Art on the Wall Committee 4:00 pm |
| 13 | Karaoke 5:00 pm
Café Serendipity 7:00 pm | 21 | Climate Action Team – Meatless Meal 6:00 pm |
| 14 | Recorder Group 2:30 pm
Celebration of Life for Beloved Member Sarah Dick 3:00 pm | 23 | Choir Rehearsal 6:00 pm |
| 15 | Mystical Experience Group 12:00 pm | 24 | Readers' Theater 10:30 am |
| | | 25 | Book Group 1:30 pm
Healing Oasis 6:00 pm |
| | | 27 | Art on the Wall Committee 10:00 am |
| | | 28 | Recorder Group 2:30 pm |

* The National Alliance of the Mentally Ill - Simultaneous meetings of those who define themselves as having a mental illness and those who are interested family and friends will be held for education, support and advocacy. All are welcome!

