



NEW OUTLOOK

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY

A spiritual home where religion and reason meet

FEBRUARY 2016

Kindred Spirit



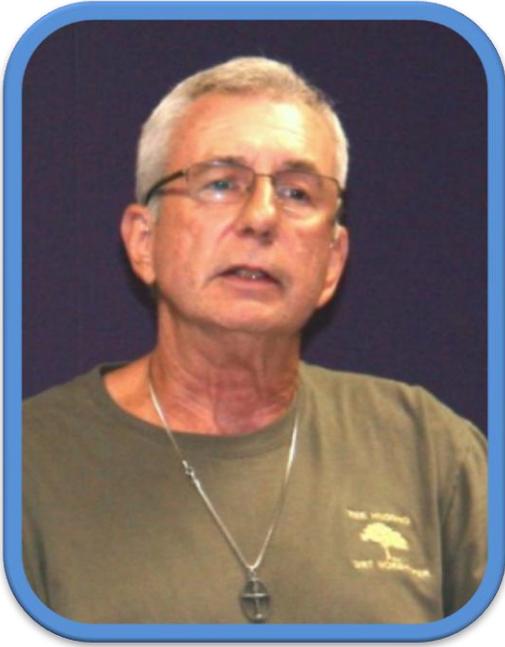
"We used to have a fellow in the crew who was called Snake Man. His real name was Walter Henderson, but no one knew it. He was a tree planter, a sprayer, a grove man. They called him Snake Man because he always caught snakes and scared the others. He couldn't stay away from snakes. One day, Snake Man picked up a little old ground rattler and waved it at the boys. It bit him in the thumb, and the foreman told him he had to go to the hospital. Snake Man said it was nothing and he wasn't going. They finally got him there, and his arm swelled up three times its size, and they thought he was going to die. He was in the hospital a week, and a few days after that he came back to work. When the other boys saw him, one of them called to him, 'Hey, Snake Man, how are you?' Snake Man stopped, and he looked at the whole bunch of them, and he said, 'My name is Walt.'" (John McPhee, Oranges, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967)

My younger adult years were consumed with traveling in life's fastest, ultra-confident lanes. I knew everything and I moved quickly in every direction. I made swift not well thought through decisions. My friendships were quick and sometimes shallow. I made little time for contemplating my actions, for taking slow walks on natural paths, and essentially for savoring beauty in its many manifestations. As I grow older, that style doesn't seem to be working for me. I don't want fast and overly confident.

I will have a birthday soon. A birthday provokes many thoughts. There are the "Really now, where have the years gone?" and the "Wait, what year was I born?" deliberations. (You can tell by these two ponderings that I am well past 50.) I do a mental scan of my body, "Yes, most of me is still in decent operating order with only a few minor adjustments along the way." Then, I get to this one, "What have I learned this year? After a few mistakes, did I gain new understanding?"



Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." No matter our differing ages and experiences, let's examine the life and times of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County together. How are we who we once were and how are we intentionally determining who we want to become? ---



Dear Ones

At the last meeting of the UUFCC Board on January 12th, your trustees unanimously voted to recommend to the congregation the purchase of the Peace Lutheran Church property, pending the negotiation of an affordable price and a satisfactory physical inspection. Of course, any offer is contingent upon the approval of at least 2/3 of participating members at a specially called congregational meeting.

In order to bring this motion to life, the Board also unanimously voted to form a negotiating team. Members are Doug Kennedy, Jack Osborne, MaryHolly Allison, Don Liermann, and Robert Taylor. On your behalf, I wish to extend gratitude to these exceptional leaders.

Yesterday afternoon, I received an email from the negotiating team announcing that an offer has been made. Now we wait for a response and invitations for you to explore the property that may soon be our new home.

I must confess, at times I'm overwhelmed by the magnitude and pace of our transition from dreams to reality. But when I calmly reflect on our efforts to grow, it becomes quite clear that this journey has been going on for years. In 2011, several months after I became a member of UUFCC, I joined a task force to recreate the Fellowship's mission and resulting vision. This effort was directed by Bob and Sue Taylor.

I am convinced that we are approaching this monumental decision to relocate to a much larger facility because you and I have been living our mission and vision. So, no matter what occurs during the following months, we will continue, as this paraphrase of our mission mandates, *"to offer a caring and diverse religious community. We will be guided by reason and conscience, encouraging intellectual inquiry, fostering individual and and spiritual growth, and promoting social justice and environmental responsibility. Our vision is becoming reality. We are a "thriving, intergenerational, racially diverse, and Welcoming Congregation. We have an inspiring minister, committed lay leadership, uplifting music and art, and vibrant activities and programs that support our mission"*. Now is the time to focus on **"ENHANCED FACILITIES"**!

I will conclude this letter by sharing a mantra/song that Rev. Amy taught me. It calms and energizes me as I face the unknown.

"All shall be well, all shall be well. In the manner of things, all shall be well".

-attributed to Julian of Norwich

In faith,
Dennis Shaw
Interim President
Board of Trustee, UUFCC

Many Paths...

Sundays

9:15 a.m. Conversation Among Friends
9:30 a.m. – Choir Practice
10:30 a.m. – Worship Service
 Coffee Hour following Worship
 Potluck Lunch on first Sunday

Saturday Services

Our Saturday evening services have a little different slant than our Sunday mornings. For example, we have meditation periods twice interspersed with readings and music on Saturday evenings. **Conversation Among Friends will precede the service at 3:15.** On Sunday mornings, our service includes more traditional elements such as a sermon. Come on Saturday evening at 4:30 pm or Sunday morning at 10:30 am. Either way, we work hard to engage the listener and to provide a strong dose of hope when it seems absent.

Meditation and Buddhist Discussion Group

February - Thursday evenings from 5 to 6:15 pm.

We continue with a discussion of Thich Nhat Hanh's book, *No Mud, No Lotus*, and end with 25 minutes of silent meditation. All are welcome to attend.

February Theme: Absence of Violence

Saturday, Feb. 6 – Rev. Amy Kindred
“Absence of Violence: Is Peace Too Boring?”

Interspersed with readings, music and meditations, we'll explore what the world might look like if all weapons were destroyed. What would we need to live more peacefully?

Sunday, February 7 – Rev. Amy Kindred
“Absence of Violence: Is Peace Too Boring?”

What happens when a wizard banishes all weapons? Join us as we picture a peace-filled world.

Saturday, February 13
“A Rumi Kind of Love”

World-renowned classic Persian poet, Rumi, wrote, “Happy is the moment when Love wrapped in the cloud of divine grace rains pearls upon the desert.” With readings, music and meditations we'll explore the powerful effect of love's generosity.

Sunday, February 14 – Rev. Amy Kindred
“A Rumi Kind of Love”

World-renowned classic Persian poet, Rumi, wrote, “Happy is the moment when Love wrapped in the cloud of divine grace rains pearls upon the desert.” When did a gesture of love change your life? On this Valentine's Day, we celebrate the many manifestations of love.

Saturday, February 20 and Sunday February 21 – Rev. Amy Kindred
“Love's Messy Persistence”

Derived from stories of myth and truth, we'll explore how the human need to conquer violence is ever –present and ever-persistent.

Saturday, February 27 -Stay tuned for an update soon!

Sunday, February 28 – Rev. Dennis McCarty – “A Kinder, Gentler Atheism”

From Universalist minister, Abner Kneeland, who was imprisoned for atheism 170 years ago, to the "new atheists" of today, the relationship between atheists and theists has often been contentious. But does it need to be? Rev. McCarty will explore nuances in Unitarian Universalist, humanist, atheist, and spiritualist thought, and seek a common richness all can share.

Recently retired, Rev. Dennis McCarty is Minister Emeritus at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbus, Indiana. He is now a full time blogger, writer, and singer-songwriter-- and proponent of a religious outlook he calls, "Gentle Atheism."

The Promise of a Bright Future

Robert Taylor



As I write this, a week before *New Outlook* is released, your Negotiating Team is about to make an offer for the purchase of the Peace Lutheran Church property at 21500 Gibraltar Drive, in the heart of Port Charlotte. If we can negotiate an affordable price, the Board will recommend its purchase to the congregation. It takes the approval of a two thirds majority of our members present at a duly called meeting. In the days ahead, everyone will have the opportunity to visit the property, to stroll the grounds, to meander among the rooms, to sit in the sanctuary with its soaring ceiling, and to imagine how we can make the space our own.

While we've been talking a lot about buildings and money, it's easy to forget the reason why it's all necessary. We are a loving community, a thriving congregation, and we have outgrown our space. The conversation is really about who we are, what we do, and what we stand for. We have something very special and we know there are others out there who are looking for what we offer.

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?

During this year's Giving Campaign, which launches on February 6-7, you are being asked to financially support all the programs you hold dear. Along with your time and talent, your pledge supports the minister, staff, and buildings that provide the environment that permits your dreams to flourish. If each of us gives what we can, we can build on our success, make our mission manifest, and fulfill the promise of our bright future.

Editor's note - Late, breaking news: As of January 30, Bob Taylor announced that the first offer had been made for the purchase of Peace Lutheran Church and was not accepted. The negotiating team will be meeting to discuss the next step. Be sure to follow the Weekly Updates for more news as it happens.

The UU Endowment of Charlotte County (UUECC)-A Time of Opportunity



We were recently reminded that the Endowment was established in 1991 by two pillars of our UU community, Robert Hansman and Harold Rapp. It was created as an autonomous affiliate of UUFCC and the UUA. As stated in the UUECC bylaws, *its purpose is to use the yield on its investments, while preserving the corpus, to assure the financial future of the Fellowship and further the principles and practices of Unitarian Universalism.*

The Endowment has served the Fellowship in many ways: supporting the Operating budget for the past several years; the Growth Initiative, including the hiring of our UU architect and the Stewardship Consultant; Memorial services for deceased members in need. And, thanks to the bequests and gifts of many, and the wise investment at the UUA Common Fund in Boston, the Endowment has grown in the past 5 years from less than \$100,000. to approximately \$360,000.

Recently, the Endowment trustees agreed that an excellent "investment" would be to support the efforts toward acquiring the additional space needed by our growing ministry- and efforts to promote UU. Thus, as the UUFCC membership considers acquiring a new facility such as Peace Lutheran, the Endowment could loan UUFCC money- serving as a bridge loan (i.e. until our current building is sold) or supporting renovations to the building to make it "more UU". This would be consistent with investing in the growth of Unitarian Universalism.

Feedback from members indicates that having the Endowment as a potential resource is a valuable asset for our community. It makes acquiring a larger space more possible. However, many have cautioned that it is not wise to use all of the funds in the Endowment. It is for the future. Future earnings will continue to be important to support potential deficits in the operating budget as operating costs will significantly increase, and unexpected major repairs may be needed. Thus, creating a Capital Fund is an important component to the future of UUFCC, as well.

Contributions to the Endowment continue and we are grateful to the following:

Robert Hansman/Delight TePaske – In Memory of Bonnie Willis
Joan Sarchese – In Memory of Wayne Green

Making a bequest in your will is another meaningful way to support your UU values and create your legacy for the future. For information or questions contact your Endowment trustees: MaryHolly Allison, Robert Hansman, Robert Taylor.

Reflections

We continue to see new children attending our Religious Education classes. Frequently they are visitors, and they are always welcome. And we are looking forward to growing our Child Care group.

The Elementary group did the following lessons in January, with a focus on the monthly theme of "Science Says!"



Jan 10: Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and endings. We discussed old habits we would like to eliminate or change and made "Janus books" to list new things we would like to begin in each month. Jennifer Rose had the great idea to leave the books at the UUFCC so students could refer to them over the year.

Jan 17: We completed the "Our Six Sources" poster to complement the "Rainbow Principles" poster. We emphasized Principle Four and the role Science plays as one of the six sources in answering the question "Where did we (everything) come from?"

February's theme is "Absence of Violence." This is very fitting for the month containing Valentine's Day.

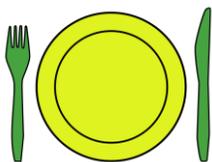
Looking ahead, we are starting to think about plans for Easter. If you have ideas or would like to help, let me know. We could probably use a few Easter bunnies!

Faithfully,
Marty Wilmer
Lifespan Development Coordinator

Help Wanted

Dine Around Dinners

Joan Bollinger has been coordinating these dinners for several years. She would like to pass this opportunity on to someone new next year. If you might be willing to take this on, either by yourself, or with another person, please speak to Joan or Marty Wilmer. We have all the directions and information typed up and ready for you.



Religious Education

Our Middle School/High School group could use another teacher. We have not had many students in this age group attending RE lately, yet we are always prepared. I plan the lessons and share them with the teachers ahead of time. If you enjoy working with this age group in a small group, please let me know. Marty Wilmer, Lifespan Development Coordinator

Membership News



In Unitarian Universalism, you can bring your whole self: your full identity, your questioning mind, your expansive heart.

Together, we create a force more powerful than one person or one belief system. As Unitarian Universalists, we do not have to check our personal background and beliefs at the door: we join together on a journey that honors everywhere we've been before. (excerpt from What We Believe at uua.org.)

A New to UU Breakfast will be held on Saturday, February 13th at 9am at the Fellowship. If you are interested in meeting other new people, current members, and learn about being a UU, please mark your calendar and let me know you plan to attend. Reverend Amy can always be counted on to answer your UU questions and slip in UU history in an interesting way.

If you are interested in becoming a member, mark your calendars for **New Member Recognition** Sunday on February 21st. It will be an opportunity to sign the membership book, covenant with the Fellowship and let the community celebrate your decision.

If you are a snowbird and a member of another church/fellowship outside of Florida, you can also become a UUFCC member.

Please contact me if you are interested in "dual citizenship", attending the breakfast, or becoming a member.

Joani Mountain
Membership Coordinator
joanimountain@gmail.com

Ubuntu Sacred Song Gathering

Sing uplifting songs from all around the world in glorious harmony. No experience is necessary; just a desire to sing. All are welcome. Come, sing, be joyful, and experience the sacred through song. There's usually a lot of laughter, too. Suggested donation: \$5

We will be gathering on the first Saturday of each month through June at 2:30 at the Fellowship. The next gathering will be on February 6. Come, sing and enjoy!

If you want a taste of Ubuntu singing or want to take the experience home with you, Tom Tyre has CDs of his Ubuntu group in North Carolina available for sale for \$10. This is a fundraiser to help women coming out of the prison system.

You're Invited to a Baby Shower

There's another son for Stephanie Callen and Mike Schiller and a little brother for Max on the way.

Please join us after the Saturday Service on Feb. 6 at 6 pm to celebrate the impending arrival of a new little UU.

Hope to see you there!





Peace Initiative

The second Peace Initiative speaker will be Dr. Saeed Shahzad, local neurologist and representative of the Charlotte County Islamic community. His talk is titled "A Different Look at Islam" and will include some basic facts about Islam, views on terrorism, and suggestions for how diverse communities can live together cooperatively and caring for and about one another. Questions and answers will follow his talk that will begin at 12:15 on Feb. 7th in our sanctuary.

In addition, on that Sunday, the Islamic community has been invited to share our potluck. They will bring typical main dishes and desserts to our table and we will feast together. It is an opportunity to get to know new people, people who today are frequently the object of attack and hatred.

We Unitarian Universalists want to live our creed by contradicting notions that we know are stereotypical and hurtful. We want to be purveyors of love, peace and justice.

Florida Spring Gathering



**Southern
Region**

Please plan to join us for the Florida Spring Gathering **March 12, 2016**, at the **Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater** for fun, networking, cooperative learning, and covenant!

Our morning Keynote on Covenant will be presented by Connie Goodbread, Congregational Life Staff, and Margie Manning, Elder. Lunch will be served before an afternoon of topical workshops. Our closing worship will send us on our way feeling connected and revitalized! We will offer a portion of the Unitarian Universalist film series "Long, Strange Trip" as an optional evening activity. Please feel free to stay over Saturday night and join us for worship on Sunday morning!

Workshops:

- Cluster Development with Natalie Briscoe
- Social Justice/Witness/Black Lives Matter with Rev. Carlton Elliott Smith
- Stewardship with Rev. Kenneth G. Hurto
- Intro: Leadership as Spiritual Practice with Maggie Lovins

Youth (age 12 and over) are welcome to join any workshop which interests them, as all are intentionally open to all ages, abilities, and learning styles in the spirit of whole family church.

Child-care is available on the registration form for those 12 and younger.

Registration:

- Regular registration (ends 21 February): \$50 for adults, and \$10 for youth (17 and under)
- Late registration (begins 22 February): \$75 for adults
- Firm registration deadline: 07 March

More info: <http://www.uasouthernregion.org/floridaspring2016.htm>

Register: <http://fd8.formdesk.com/UUASR/Florida2016>; discounted registration until 21 February!

Meatless Meal February 26th at 5:30

Do you want support to eat healthier and ideas for guilt-free company dishes to serve those out-of-town guests? Join us for delicious food, and great fellowship.

The monthly meatless meal, hosted by the Climate Action Team, will be held Friday February 26th at 5:30. Participants should bring a vegetarian or vegan dish to share. Copies of the recipe for your dish are appreciated. A video related to plant based eating will be shown after the meal. We hope to see you there.

Nicaragua Update

Lorrie Douglas promised to send the link to the newsletter for the video to follow-up on her presentation. Here it is on youtube: <https://youtu.be/Llu4hzsHDWw>. It can also be found on the website at www.NicaraguaProject.org

There is a group going to Nicaragua for the project's Grand Opening from approx. Feb 13th to the 20th. Some people have expressed an interest in having a delegation from our fellowship. If you would like more information about the trip, the project, or the artwork, please contact Lorrie at [734-846-0448](tel:734-846-0448) or Lorrie@NicaraguaProject.org.

UU Justice Florida Annual Legislative Day, Tallahassee, FL.

Monday-Tuesday, Feb. 8-9

All invited. Dinner and hotel Monday night provided free to UUs by UU Justice Florida to encourage statewide participation. Training by members of the Leon County League of Women Voters, Keynote speaker on climate/environmental bills, ACLU speaker on Justice for All/Black Lives matter bills. Outstanding opportunity for UUs statewide to see our Florida legislature in action. Carpooling makes it doable and fun. Join us! Register here: <http://www.uujusticefl.org/BookingRetrieve.aspx?ID=63600>

SECOND ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP CAMPING WEEKEND

Friday thru Sunday, February 19th-21st

You are invited to the second annual Fellowship Camping weekend!

WHEN: Friday February 19th, 4pm to Sunday February 21st

WHERE: Tentatively set for Oscar Scherer State Park group campsite (location may change pending reservation availability)

WHO: All families and fellowship invited

Activities: Stay for the weekend or come out to play for the day! A potluck supper will be held on Friday night with a bonfire and is being coordinated by Regina Renner. If we camp at Oscar Scherer Park, we can attend the Drum Circle Saturday night at Nokomis Beach. We can take a bike ride Sunday on the Legacy trail which is connected to Oscar Scherer State Park. There are also some beautiful hiking and birding opportunities! We hope to see you there!

Art on the Wall



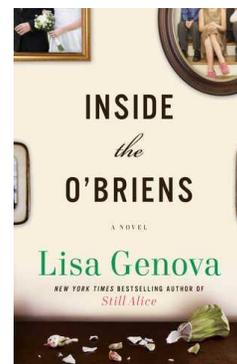
The Peace River Painters (formerly VAC Plein Air Artists) will exhibit their exciting, colorful, and imaginative artwork on our Art Wall from January 30th to February 28th. This group of artists join together to paint what they see -- in the open air and from nature.

A free Opening Reception, open to all, is planned for Friday, February 5, from 4-6 PM. For more information: 941-204-6042

Wanted: Readers Who Enjoy Talking About Books

Our Book Club meets at 1:30pm on the last Monday of each month. We exchange thoughts about the book which the group has chosen for the month. The books we have read over several years seem amazingly diverse and, for the most part, we thought that they had literary merit and important themes. So--join us for stimulating discussion and even some laughs.

Our book for this month is **Inside the O'Briens** by Lisa Genova. In this novel, Joe O'Brien and his family cope with Joe's devastating diagnosis at age 44 of Huntington's disease.



The book for March is **Pathfinder** by James Fenimore Cooper. Here we return to a classic American historical novel about the adventures of Natty Bumppo (here called "Pathfinder") before and during the war waged by the British/Colonial forces in the Great Lakes area.

Mary Wolff (hmwolff9@hotmail.com or 629-0669)

Jazz for the Contemplative Heart/Mind- The Orenda Duo



The Orenda Duo is made up of Jenny Wilson (piano/voice) and Nathan Wilson (upright bass.) They will be performing at UUFCC on Wednesday Feb. 10, 2016 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm, Jenny and Nathan will share selections from their new releases, "The World Is Turning Gold" -a collection of original contemporary jazz compositions, and "Both Sides Now" - a compilation of songs by singer/songwriters Laura Nyro, James Taylor, Jimmy Webb, Carole King, and Joni Mitchell and two pieces from West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein. Jenny Wilson is a composer/pianist and artist originally from Queens, New York and now resides in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Her husband, bassist Nathan Wilson, is a recording engineer and performance artist with the Squonk Opera in Pittsburgh, PA. They visit Florida every winter to perform and enjoy the sunshine state with friends and family. CD's and art work will be available. The suggested donation is \$5.00.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Wed. Feb. 3, 10, 17 (Mon. 22) – Choir Practice 6:00 pm

Thurs. Feb 4, 11, 18, 25– Meditation 5:15 pm

Sat. Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27 – Recorder Group 2 pm

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| Feb. 2 NAMI Group 6 pm | Feb. 14 Social Justice Committee 12 pm
Transgender Presentation – Que Burgess 1 pm |
| 3 Gulf Coast Acoustic Guitar Society 7 pm | |
| 5 Artist Reception 4 pm (see p. 10) | 16 Local UU Ministers Gathering
Board Meeting 6 :30 pm
Sierra Club 7 pm |
| 6 Ubuntu Singing 2:30 pm (see p. 7)
Baby Shower for Stephanie Callen 6 pm | 17 Worship Committee 3:30 pm |
| 7 Peace Initiative Speaker 12:15 pm
(see p. 8) | 18 Ciizens Climate Lobby 6 pm |
| 9 NAMI Group 6 pm | 19 Peer Writing Group 1:30 pm |
| 10 Caring and Hospitality 10 am
Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 2 pm
Orenda Duo Concert 4 pm (see p. 10) | 20 Rick Thum, Steve Seifert & Chris Collins
Concert |
| 11 Executive Board Meeting 10:30 am

Social Justice Discussion on Class
4:30 pm | 21 Mystical Experiences |
| 12 Karaoke Night 5:30 pm
Café Serendipity 7 pm | 24 Book Group 1:30 pm (see p. 10)
Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 2 pm
Healing Oasis 6 pm |
| 13 New to UU Breakfast 8:30 am | 26 Meatless Meal (see p. 9) |
| | 28 Art on the Wall Takedown 1 pm |

CONTACT US - OFFICE HOURS Monday through Thursday 8 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 Administrator, office@uufcc.org

Dennis Shaw, Board President, President@uufcc.org

Joani Mountain, Membership Coordinator, joanimountain@gmail.com

Marty Wilmer, Lifespan Development Coordinator, marti.wilmer@gmail.com

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

Myrna Charry, Communications Chair, mcharry@earthlink.net