



# NEW OUTLOOK

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY

*A spiritual home where religion and reason meet*

NOVEMBER 2016



## Kindred Spirit

*“Grace means suddenly you’re in a different universe from the one where you were stuck and there was absolutely no way for you to get there on your own.”*

**Anne Lamott**

I remember an awkward boy from high school. His name was Ricki. He had a younger brother, Robbie. The two lived down the road from my family. Ricki was my age, 16 years old. Robbie was a year younger.

One morning, I picked them up on my way to school so they didn’t have to ride the bus. It was a rare event, actually, when I had access to a car to drive. None of us liked to ride the bus.

I arrived at the scheduled time, 7:15 am. Rickie leaned out the front door and asked if I would come in while he and his brother gathered up their books. I eased inside the house and stood in the kitchen where the boys’ mother appeared with an empty coffee cup in her hand. I noticed that she was limping as she made her way to the coffee pot to refill her cup. She said, “You boys hurry up. I can’t help you since your father left me with this bum arm and useless leg.” She looked at me and said, “Do you know what that man did? He argued with me when we were on the way to town and he caused us to have a wreck. It damaged me for life. I divorced that son-of-a gun.”

Ricki stepped into the room and said, “Mom, please. We have to get to school.” Robbie hurried out the door. Ricki and I followed. We climbed into the car and began our 20-minute drive to school. Colorful trees lined the country road as I carefully navigated the winding lane.

My curiosity got the best of me. I asked the boys about their parents’ accident. Judging by the venom in their mother’s voice, I thought maybe the wreck had occurred six or seven months ago. Ricki said he and his brother were just toddlers in the car when the crash happened. IT OCCURRED TWELVE YEARS AGO. Ricki, Robbie and their father were fine. Their mother, however, had sustained injuries. Uncomfortable with a few moments of listening to the car heater steadily blow, Robbie quickly changed the subject.

After school that day, I pulled into Ricki and Robbie’s driveway to drop them off. As the gravel crunched and I eased closer to the front porch, the door opened and their mother appeared. She yelled, “You boys get in here. You’ve got chores to do. Since your father broke my body, I can’t do a thing. That monster ruined my life.”

Terrible things happen to good people. Unfortunate events leave any number of us with good reason to be bitter and stuck in a vicious cycle. The story we tell ourselves and others is like a tape that is played over and over again. How can we fix a damaged recording?

Realizing how harmful it is to maintain grudges is the first step. A willingness to WANT to change is the next. Writer Anne Lamott wrote about trying to get over anger she felt toward her mother when the woman was alive and after she was deceased. Anne said it took “long walks, beggy prayer and fretful meditation.” Little by little, with focused will-power, alternating perspectives, support from her faith community, her friends and her family, she grew out of the binding resentment of her past and moved into a new realm of hope and even appreciation.

Anne is grateful for hope. “When it’s not pinned wriggling onto shiny expectation, it sometimes floats forth and opens like one of those fluted Japanese blossoms, flimsy and spastic, bright and warm. This almost always seems to happen in community, with family, related by blood or chosen; at church for me; and at peace marches.” (From *Small Victories*)

With the ever-present opportunity for transformation, I wish you countless days of emerging gratitude.

## Believing in You    Katie Romano Griffin

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“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.”

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

The holiday season is gearing up. For some this is a time of great excitement, parties, family, and friends. For others it is a time of remembering lost loved ones or basic daily needs that are left unmet. Still others become swept away into the race to be, do and have what is “in,” as they attempt to fill a need for deeper meaning and purpose in life. At one time or another on my journey, I have experienced each of these scenarios and it was my daily practice of writing five things I am grateful for each night that saved me from falling into despair during some of the worst periods.

I remember one such holiday season when I was still a single parent. I had been downsized from my position at a non-profit organization two weeks after my father’s death. It was the height of the recession and the only jobs available to me were commission-only. I needed a steady salary in order to care for my children and pay my bills. I had a little bit of money in the bank, but knew it wouldn’t last long. I needed help, inspiration, a break—something—and I needed it fast.

I remember crying one night as I held my gratitude journal. I couldn’t think of anything to write. So that night, I wrote, “my breath.” Then I wrote about the boys. They were healthy. At least at that moment in time, we had a roof over our heads. It wasn’t much, but it was ours. I had a couple of days of food.... On and on I wrote about what we had, fighting the inner voice that told me I “should” have more. I “should” be able to provide more. I shut that voice down and let the gratitude flow and as my tears dried, hope blossomed. I woke the next morning with a wild idea about starting a business. Two weeks later, I had lunch with a friend and we ended up opening our marketing and public relations firm. It wasn’t always easy for us, two women in a male dominated field during a recession starting a business - but we did it. Both of our families survived not just the holiday season, but also the recession.

I share this story with you because a practice of gratitude enhances the good times. It can also create hope and sometimes even generate inspiration in dark times. My prayer for you this month is that gratitude grows in your heart and lights your way to still better days.



## Dear Ones,

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This is such a wonderful time of the year. The doors and windows are opened wide. The first flock of snow birds has returned. It is a joy to reunite with dear friends after months of separation. Welcome home! I look forward to hearing about your many adventures.

Despite the heat and humidity, we, the year-rounders, have had a busy summer. The minister's new office is one of the more obvious changes. I signed a contract with Rick Oltmann Construction this past week to install a window in this new study. Thanks to Don Liermann for securing the bids for the project.

The space expansion task force is also preparing plans for a kitchen update. We intend to begin on this project as soon as possible.

Despite our numerous efforts to maximize our existing space, we are going to be elbow to elbow this winter. To help us cope with overcrowding, hardy types are encouraged to park at the Mid County Public Library on Sunday mornings and carefully hike the half block to the Fellowship. Rev. Amy and our Music Director, Jim Boyle, will also offer Saturday afternoon services. We will continue to focus on long term space needs. With persistence, a lot of hard work, money, creativity, and faith we will face this challenge.

In the meantime, we are working for UUA sponsored "Green Sanctuary" status. Our children's religious education program is thriving. Last Sunday I taught, with the strong support of Phil Brown, 9 children! New adult religious education programs are also being created. The ZIKA HOPE project continues to reach out with clear lessons on how to reduce the spread of the Zika virus and support the efforts of Charlotte County's Mosquito Control Program.

Finally, many thanks to the Men's Group, under the leadership of Phil Brown. These gentlemen have been sponsoring fund raising dinners that generate the income to cover our intern's mileage. They are also hosting lots of fun, social gatherings and activities. Thanks guys and supportive spouses.

There are so many ways to get involved. Read those Updates carefully.

In faith and gratitude,  
Dennis Shaw, President  
UUFCC Board of Trustees

### THINK ENDOWMENT

With assets now approaching \$390,000, the UU Endowment has become a significant economic force, poised to help assure the growth and vitality of UUism in Charlotte County. Please consider making a contribution. A gift to the Endowment is the perfect way to honor a loved one or celebrate an important occasion. It's easy. Just write a check to the UU Endowment or talk to Chris, the UUFCC Office Administrator.

# 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

## Meditation and Buddhist Discussion Group

**Thursday nights, 5 - 6:15 pm**

Each evening, we begin with a discussion and end with a period of meditation. All are welcome to attend.

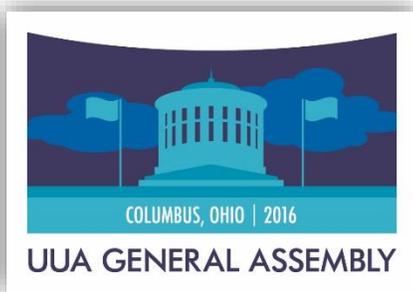
## Theme: A Grateful Journey

**Sunday, November 6 - "Precious Moments in a Common Life" - Rev. Amy Kindred**  
Jacqueline Woodson writes, "When we can't find my sister, we know she is under the kitchen table, a book in her hand, a glass of milk and a bowl of peanuts beside her..." Join us as we celebrate insignificant moments that bring us joy. *Our children will be an integral part of the service this morning.*

## Sunday, November 13 - "I Need You to Survive: Reflecting on UUA 2016 General Assembly"

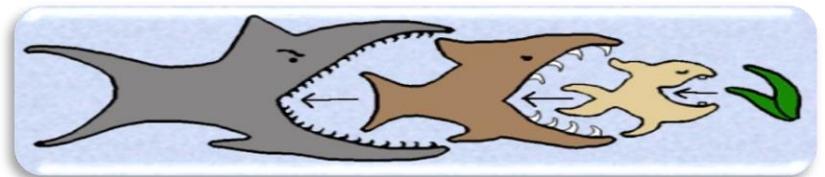
Rev. Amy Kindred, Caroline Keller, Ginger Abraham, Katie Romano Griffin, MaryHolly Allison and Sharon Whitehill

Every year, representatives from our many congregations, nationally and internationally affiliated, gather at the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly hosted by a different city each year. It's a fantastic opportunity for Unitarian Universalists to gather in order to learn, to share, to discuss and to vote on the various issues facing our denomination. Join us as UUFCC representatives speak on their experiences of 2016.



## Sunday, November 20 - "Gratitude for Every Link in the Food Chain" Rev. Amy Kindred

This morning, we explore memories and celebrate the gift of food.



## Sunday, November 27

The sermon is presented by the Reverend Margaret Beard, Unitarian Universalist ordained clergy and former minister of UUFCC.

# Lifespan Development

Marty Wilmer, Coordinator

On November 26, Katie Romano Griffin, our Intern Minister, will hold a Comparative Religions class on Saturday, November 19. See box below for more information about this.

We will collect your **Guest at Your Table** boxes on Sunday, November 20.

On December 18, we will have our Carol Sing and Children's Play. However, this year we will need a few adults to perform as well. To participate in the play, Rev. Amy and I request the participants commit to two play practices. Each will be held after the service, on December 4 (after the potluck) and December 11 (lunch will be provided). So, **save these dates!**

We welcome Victoria Harnden to our Child Care program. She has completed the Red Cross babysitting course and is enrolled in the Early Childhood program at Charlotte Technical College.

We wish Malik Walker our best wishes as he heads to Full Sail University in Winter Park. Malik has served our congregation for over a year in our Child Care program. We will honor Malik during coffee hour on November 13.

We are looking for some adult volunteers to provide child care for some or all of the Meditation group. Our policy is that we need two adults present when working with children. The Meditation Group meets on Thursday evenings, and we would need you to be available from 5 to 6 PM. If you are willing to help on one Thursday, or several, please let Marty Wilmer know.

[UUFCCLifespan@gmail.com](mailto:UUFCCLifespan@gmail.com)

## Many Thanks go to These UUFCC Shining Stars:



- Dennis Shaw, for Guiding the RE class through Zika information
- MaryLou Proudfoot Kennedy, for being the Guide for RE on October 23, as the children explored the lesson, We Are All One
- Phil Brown, Jennifer Rose, and Hannah Fenty, who served as Team Leaders this month
- Tom Deuley, who added an amplifier to the computer so that we could hear songs, etc. better in the RE Classroom.

## Comparative Religions

Join the congregation's Intern Minister, Katie Romano Griffin from 9 am-1 pm on Saturday, November 26th for a comparative religious experience.

As Unitarian Universalists we draw from many sources for inspiration, yet rarely are the sources we reference our own to claim.

How can we cultivate "Holy Envy," a state of appreciating the wisdom of other traditions to deepen our own faith experience without misappropriating the traditions of others? How can we negotiate tensions we feel with other faiths to deepen our own?

# REFlections - Religious Education for Children at UUFCC

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In November, we have a variety of activities planned:

- November 6 - Many of our children will be assisting with the service this morning
- November 13 - World Travelers unit - we will be guided to the Galapagos by Ken Brennen
- November 20 - Moral Tales unit, "Conscience - Hearing the Inner Voice"; collect Guest at Your Table boxes
- November 27 (Thanksgiving weekend) - no RE classes



Looking ahead -

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It is always our goal to ensure the safety of our children. Recently, our Board at UUFCC approved a new policy requiring all who work with our children to affirm they are not on any registry of sexual offenders. We hope no one is offended if they are asked to sign the form. If you have any questions, please see me or a member of the Board.

## Membership Connections

Joani Mountain

**A New to UU Breakfast has been scheduled for Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the Fellowship.**



Our website, [uufcc.org](http://uufcc.org), has a lot of information, but there is nothing like meeting other people at a **New to UU Breakfast** to learn more about what this fellowship has to offer. It's a relaxed setting to meet other new people, current members and friends, and our minister, Reverend Amy. And the food is always good! Attendance at a breakfast is encouraged before signing the book and becoming a member.

If you are interested in attending the breakfast as a newcomer or a welcoming member or friend, please contact me at [joanimountain@gmail.com](mailto:joanimountain@gmail.com).

**The next New Member Recognition Sunday and membership book signing has been scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup>.**

As of this writing, the Fellowship has 121 members and 33 friends.

Thanks to all who welcome the newcomer, hand them a hymnal, invite them to coffee hour and share yourselves. You are the Welcoming Face of UUFCC!

## Our Minister, the Rev. Amy Kindred, to take a 4 Month Sabbatical Next Summer, 2017

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At the May 17 board meeting, Rev. Amy announced that she will take a sabbatical from June 1 - October 1, 2017. Unitarian Universalist ministers are offered the opportunity to take a sabbatical after the fourth year in a sustained, full-time ministry setting. Rev. Amy is entering her fifth year at UUFCC and her ninth year of Unitarian Universalist ministry. This is her first sabbatical.

A sabbatical from ministry involves time for renewal. Ministry is a vocation of service to the needs of others. It offers very little time for deepening a minister's own journey of personal spiritual growth.

The meaning of the concept of "sabbatical" is rooted in the Hebrew word *sabbat*. In the Bible, *sabbat* encompasses three related practices. The first is based on the Genesis creation story when God rests on the seventh day. In the tradition of old, all people are to rest and reflect on the Sabbath. Jesus is said to have retreated to the wilderness for forty days in the course of his ministry in order to pray and to meditate. It was understood that this was how he would gain strength to continue his ministry. The second practice related to a sabbatical is found in Leviticus where the ground is to "lie fallow" every seventh year in order to produce better yield in the future. A minister may simply rest as part of the sabbatical journey. The third related point in sabbatical discussion is found in Jewish history. The idea of the Jubilee year, occurring after five years, is a time for study and celebration. Travel in order to foster different experiences and to allow time to learn something new is often associated with a minister's sabbatical. In all activities, the idea is that time is provided for renewal of one's commitment to ministry.

After the announcement in May, a sabbatical team was created. The team meets once a month to intentionally prepare for the minister's time away. Members of the task group include: Ginger Abraham (Worship Associates), Chris McCoy (Administrative), Dennis Shaw (Board Rep.) and Joani Mountain (Membership Coordinator). Marty Wilmer (Lifespan Religious Education Coordinator) will join the team for meetings early in the spring.

A sabbatical is also good for the congregation. It is a time for the congregation to experience renewal, to try new things and to fully realize how their part in "shared ministry" is extremely valuable.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to talk with the minister or sabbatical team members.

### POVERTY SIMULATION EVENT - Tuesday, November 8th @ 9 am

All friends and members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Port Charlotte are invited to participate in a Poverty Simulation event to be held at:

The Homeless Coalition, Inc.  
1476 Kenesaw St. Port Charlotte FL. 33948

The event, staged specifically for us, will run from 9 am until 11:30. Please arrive at 8:45 am. Learn more about the challenges of many folks in Charlotte County. It's a hands-on exploration that will change you! We need 26 people to commit.

## LIBRARY UPDATE

Debbie Conrad and I have been busy cataloging and organizing the UUFCC Library. Please be patient during our efforts. I'm hoping to have the entire job done by the end of the year at which point there will be both an online catalog and a "classic" card catalog available for your use. Books that are already cataloged may be checked out in the meantime by writing your name and date on the card in the book pocket and leaving it in the card box labeled "checked out." Thanks for your patience during this process.

Mary Jane Williams

## WEEKLY EVENTS

Tues., Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 – Bridge Group 2:00 pm  
Wed. Nov. 2, 9, 16. (Mon. 28) – Choir Practice 6:00 pm  
Thurs. Nov. 3, 10, 17 – Meditation 5:15 pm

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| <p><b>Nov. 2</b> Gulf Coast Acoustic Guitar Society 7 pm</p> <p><b>8</b> NAMI Group 6 pm</p> <p><b>9</b> Caring and Hospitality 10 am<br/>Worship Associates 3:30 pm</p> <p><b>10</b> Discussion on Class 4:30 pm</p> <p><b>11</b> Karaoke Night 5:30 pm<br/>Café Serendipity 7 pm</p> <p><b>12</b> New to UU Breakfast 9 am<br/>Chalice Circles 2 pm</p> | <p><b>13</b> Social Justice Committee 12 pm</p> <p><b>15</b> UUFCC Board Meeting 7 pm<br/>Sierra Club 7 pm</p> <p><b>18</b> Peer Writer's Group 1:30 pm</p> <p><b>26</b> Comparative Religion Class 9 am<br/>Chalice Circles 2 pm<br/>Meatless Meal 5:30 pm</p> <p><b>30</b> Art on the Wall Takedown 10 am</p> |
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### 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](http://www.uufcc.org), [www.facebook.com/uufcc](http://www.facebook.com/uufcc)

**Rev. Amy Kindred**, [minister@uufcc.org](mailto:minister@uufcc.org) 941.916.0957

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

**Katie Romano Griffin**, [katiejromano@gmail.com](mailto:katiejromano@gmail.com)

Intern minister's hours: Most Mondays. It's best to call the office for an appointment.

**Chris McCoy**, Office Administrator, [office@uufcc.org](mailto:office@uufcc.org)

**Dennis Shaw**, Board President, [President@uufcc.org](mailto:President@uufcc.org)

**Joani Mountain**, Membership Coordinator, [joanimountain@gmail.com](mailto:joanimountain@gmail.com)

**Marty Wilmer**, Lifespan Development Coordinator, [UUFCCLifespan@gmail.com](mailto:UUFCCLifespan@gmail.com)

**Ginger Abraham**, Newsletter Editor, [newsletter@uufcc.org](mailto:newsletter@uufcc.org) **Article Deadline:** 20th of the month

**Myrna Charry**, Communications Chair, [mcharry@earthlink.net](mailto:mcharry@earthlink.net)