

UNI-VERSE

Chair persons Bill Coburn & Ruth Deussen

December 2009



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Marion County., Florida, Inc.

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Forum 9:30 Sunday Services 10:30

December 6th

10:30 Speaker: Hal Sands—"Human Sacrifice: From Ancient Cultures to Modern Christianity." It will be suggested that the mainstream interpretation of the Crucifixion blurs the boundary between love and hate and raises the question of how it affects our behavior.

9:30 Forum: Sue Michaelson will present "CO2 and the Environment"

Building and Grounds Duty Person: Open: Griffith Close: Chady

Coffee & Hospitality: Fran Marciano & Carole Clarke

Service Leader: Dick Chady

December 13th

10:30 Speaker: Rev. Meredith Garmon-- Biotheology 2: Theodicy
Theodicy attempts to justify the behavior of God and address the problem of evil. If we understand ourselves in evolutionary terms, what is evil, and how does understanding it help grow our spirits?

9:30 Forum: Rev. Meredith Garmon – Topic TBA

Building and Grounds Duty Person: Open: Donato Close: Mitchell

Coffee & Hospitality: Wendy Griffith & Barbara Thomas

Service Leader: Doug Worthington

December 20th

10:30 Speaker: No Speaker. **Holiday Party** - Members and friends will entertain and amuse, after which we will share a potluck meal.

9:30 Forum: No Forum. **Holiday Party.**

Building and Grounds Duty Person: Open: Deckman Close: Zannelli

Coffee & Hospitality: Hope Deckman & Fran Marciano

December 27th

10:30 Speaker: Mindy Simmons "Consider the Source" When things go badly in our lives who or what do we blame? In turn, when things go well in our lives who or what do we credit? Many people easily "thank God" for their good luck and blame "the devil" for the bad. As UU's where do we put the blame and/or credit? With the good and the not so good, let us all consider the source.

9:30 Forum: George Erickson will present "A Matter of Degrees: Global Warming is REAL"

Building and Grounds Duty Person: Open: Hord Close: Hord

Coffee & Hospitality: Mary Hord & Susan Ashley

Service Leader: Joyce Mills

The Wit and Wisdom of Aldous Huxley – Celia Friedenthal

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.

Happy Birthday

Mary Ann Donato**	12/08
Hope Deckman*	12/12
Oakley Kelch	12/19
Celia Friedenthal*	12/20
James O'Hara*	12/22
Barbara Thomas*	12/25
Mike Donato**	12/29

If you do not see your name here and you want us all to celebrate your Birthday then email / call Bill or Andrea Coburn, Millie Mitchell or other membership folks.

Announcements

Annual HOLIDAY Party

December 20th at 10:30am is our annual Holiday Party! There will not be a Forum on this day. What we will have is entertainment by members and friends followed by a potluck. Now is your chance to take the stage and be a star! Sing a song, find a friend and sing a duet, trio, quartet, chorus or choir, play an instrument(s), recite a poem, juggle, dance a jig, whatever your talent we have a place for you! Contact Doug chewyw@comcast.net or Allie indigo8062@earthlink.net to get on the program.

HELP WANTED We need a volunteer(s) to **coordinate the potluck**. Are you willing to help make this years **Holiday Party the best yet?** Please reply by December 10th by contacting Doug or Allie. Thank you.

Meredith's Musings

Soup's On!

Tell me about the person that you want to be. Who would you like to become? What are the adjectives you most wish to describe your life?

When I have asked groups of Unitarian Universalists this question, I get a varied list. Generally, I don't hear rich or smart or beautiful. Maybe we don't like to admit those wants out loud. Or maybe we know that, though we pretend to want these things, they are not really our heart's dearest desire.

Instead, the UU groups I have asked give such answers as: interconnected, and peaceful, and centered. I might hear understanding and wise (importantly different from smart, of course). I hear from us a wish for equanimity and acceptance. I hear that we want to be loving, and compassionate; caring and kind. We would like a sense of humor, and a ready laugh. We wish to be awake and aware; insightful and perceptive.

I believe that the truth is that we already are these things. Pretty much all of us, really, are loving and kind and understanding. We do, however, sometimes lose sight of this. We forget just how wise and compassionate and funny and aware we are. Like most of us, I also forget.

You probably know the story of Stone Soup. The trickster says he can make a wonderful soup from nothing but a stone boiled in water. "But it would be even nicer with just a few carrots," he says once the stone has begun to cook. Add some onion, some potatoes, and a little salt. In the end, the soup is indeed wonderful. What an amazing, magical stone!

Of course, with all those other ingredients, the soup is good. The stone adds nothing. How could it?

Some of us do things to help us remember what we are. Some UUs journal, or meditate every day, or take solitary walks in the woods, or attend the worship service every Sunday morning, or pore over the Bhagavad-Gita, or the latest book by Eckhart Tolle. Such practices are nothing but the stone in the soup of life. All the real substance is already there without the stone.

What the trickster did with his stone was help the villagers remember the carrots, onions, potatoes, etc. that they already had. Some of us like to have some artificial device to help us remember the goodness of our lives and our selves. Others of us cook without that superfluous stone. Either way, the soup is awfully good.

*Bon Appétit,
-Meredith*

Separate Tables for Thursday, December 17th at 11:30 AM will be at the Olive Garden on Hwy 200, Ocala. There's always plenty of great soup and salad plus pasta of all kinds. Please sign up at the rear of the sanctuary. With questions, call Carolyn Denison at 245-0260.

A letter from James McIntosh, President Elect

Our consulting minister, Meredith Garmon has been with us for three of the nine months called for in our contract with him. In the beginning of this arrangement the Board of Trustees determined that we would invite the congregation to participate in a process of evaluation of the consulting minister program. Please note this evaluation is of the program, the services provided by a consulting minister, not an evaluation of Rev. Garmon. A member survey will constitute the first step in the evaluation process.

The survey will focus on the value of the consulting minister program and in what way, if any, it should continue. Although the survey will be provided to members we greatly value the opinions of our UUFMC friends.

You are aware of the consulting minister's monthly Sunday Services and Forum teaching sessions over the past three months but the following represents a more complete list of the consulting minister's duties, most occurring at each of his three monthly contracted dates. His duties have been as follows:

- 1. Sunday service presentations*
- 2. Forum adult religious education (RE) presentations*
- 3. Personal availability to us on Sundays and Mondays*
- 4. Attending/advising at Finance Committee Meetings*
- 5. Attending/advising at Board of Trustees Meetings*
- 6. Attending/advising Social Justice, Membership or Sunday Service Committee Meetings*
- 7. Teaching a "Lay Pastoral Care" seminar on Sunday evenings*
- 8. Leading Monday morning meditation sessions*
- 9. Leading one-hour training sessions for Board member prior to the Board meetings*
- 10. Facilitating and assisting with all-congregation discussions at two Monday potluck dinners*
- 11. Pastoral counseling with individual members*
- 12. Participating in phone calls of a pastoral or church administrative nature.*
- 13. Conducting the Hundt – Barefield wedding*

The Board will use the results of this survey to guide us in planning for the future of professional ministry at the UUFMC. In order to proceed it is necessary to understand the will of the membership and the congregation as a whole, so your thoughtful response to the survey will be appreciated. Although we are not tied to a hard deadline, we hope to complete the process in a timely manner. Survey results will be shared with the congregation and there will be additional opportunities for your input.

On Monday, December 14th, we will again have a potluck where we will share a meal together and Rev. Garmon will facilitate a discussion about professional ministry in our congregation. The future cannot be truly our own unless each of us considers it our responsibility to participate fully. Looking toward the future with you...

Jim

River Cruise from the Black Sea to Munich -- One cabin remaining with our travel agent for the 15-day cruise commencing April 4th. If interested in the details, please call Carolyn Denison, 245-0260.

YOUR HELP IS APPRECIATED

Through the generosity of members and friends who contribute to the Fifth Sunday collections it was possible for the Social Justice Committee to purchase food for the Thanksgiving meal prepared by the Soup Kitchen in Ocala. Approximately 400 people received a traditional Thanksgiving meal. One hundred of the meals were prepared for the Meals on Wheels program to distribute. The Soup Kitchen prepares approximately 250 meals every day seven days a week 365 days a year. This number has grown steadily over the past ten years with the greatest growth in recent years. Thank you for continuing to support our outreach efforts through your contributions to the fifth Sunday collections.

Greeters for December will be asked to do this by someone on the Membership Committee as folks walk in the door on Sunday morning. Your "job" will be to (a) welcome folks (2 before the forum, 4 before the service) and hand out the service bulletin, (b) pass around the two microphones during the main service when people wish to speak, (c) take up the collection (4) and (d) take a count of those in attendance and turn that number over to the person from the Membership Committee who is in charge for the month. December it will be Allie Gore. There is no road map for these tasks; just however it works out. So, smile when you walk in the doors and you may be the lucky ones chosen!!! Suggestions? Call Carolyn Denison at q245-0260.



Our UUFMC Library. Thanks to many hours of work by Bob and Marilyn Feser, we now have a well organized and professionally categorized library for our fellowship. Our new library is located between the board meeting room and the little meeting room. We hope you will all start visiting our library, and checking out any books that are of interest to you. There is even a card index for your use to research your chose topic!

- **To check out a book**, simply fill out the card in the book and leave it in the area provided for this use.
- **To return a book**, please leave it in the basket marked for Book Return.
- **To donate books**, please do not just leave them there! Call Marilyn and she will help you with this process. (352-237-7909)

We are in the process of building the library with books that are recommended by various committees, such as those recommended for learning more of Unitarian Universalist history.

We are looking for a few people to assist Marilyn and Bob with this ambitious endeavor. If you would like to volunteer to serve on our Library committee, please contact either Marilyn Feser or Celia Everist.

New articles above
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Reprint articles below

Carole Clarke -Can you help?

Relatively near to our UU Fellowship, there is a trailer park on 301, just south of 42. The San Pedro English program has begun giving classes there to Hispanic women on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 10:00-11:30. We need more helping hands to watch the children while their mothers are in class. The ability to speak Spanish is not necessary. If you could help one morning a week, we would greatly appreciate it. Please call Carole Clarke 352-753-9422 or 703-434-2426.

To recognize the Thanksgiving Holiday the science group, **Spinosa's Lens**, will not meet on the last Tuesday in November. To recognize the winter holidays, we will not meet on the last Tuesday in December. Due to an unforeseen conflict with the rummage sale, the group will not meet on the first Tuesday of December.

Thanks, Peggy

On Tuesday mornings at 10:00 we offer series of science lectures followed by discussion. The group is called **Spinosa's Lens**. The Science of Self is a series of lectures on the genetics of human beings, with related topics. We begin with 2 lectures that address what science is, the fundamental vocabulary of science, life and human beings, and an overview of the course. This week we continue with the lecture series on The Science of Self with Lee Silver. The lectures will cover an exploration of what the human being is. This will be followed by the first full lecture on genetics, a look at Gregor Mendel's discoveries. Thanks, Peggy Wolfson

Future Course for Spinoza's Lens. This course would run for six weeks which means we might be able to accommodate our snow birds. Flippenko is an excellent lecturer. **Bob Zannelli**

Black Holes Explained

by Alex Filippenko ([Biography](#))

RUMMAGE SALE!

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SALE!

Such a Deal! Dec 6th-9th are set aside for our UUFMC Rummage Sale extravaganza. Here's how you can be a part of this wonderful event.

Donations: Everything EXCEPT computers, computer related items, and large furniture. All items must be small enough to carry and fit into vehicles.

Dec 5th (Saturday) Time: 10-4 All donations will be accepted at the fellowship. If you don't drive, contact Rona Gold at 352-750-3913 or gold339@comcast.net to see about having someone pick up your items.

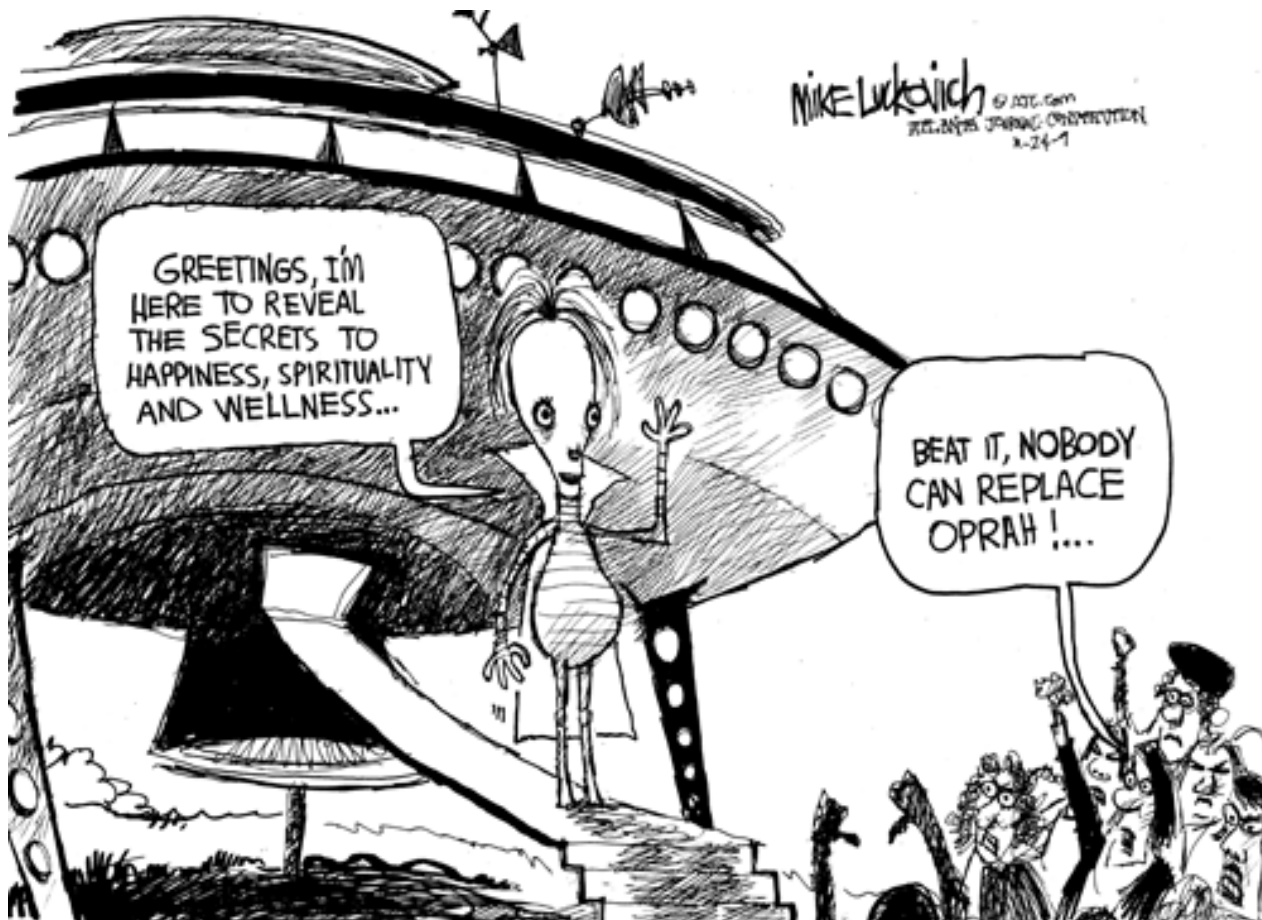
Dec 6th : Time 12-4 after services & Dec 7th Time: 10-4 Sale for members/friends only

Dec 8th & 9th Time: 10-4 Sale will be open to the community at large

Unsold items will be donated to charities supported by the UUFMC

In the interest of conservation and cost, please bring bags to hold your purchases. If you have extra bags you'd like to donate, please bring them to services and they'll be collected in the back of the room.

The Rummage Sale Committee will meet at the UU on November 19th at 3:00 following Separate Tables. Please come and help us make final plans. rona



UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund, December 2009

The UUA Board of Trustees convened in October, and in the report written following the meeting I indicated I would write more about Rev. Peter Morales' thoughts on the "critical" issues facing Unitarian Universalism. In the Trustee report which is available on the District web page I wrote about President Morales' belief that UUs must create a new ministry for a new century. He believes our faith needs to be much more than the "tiny, fringe religion that it is today" and we have not responded effectively for the needs of the liberal spiritual community. Another opportunity we must focus our energy on is growth.

Growth of our faith is not something that is just organizationally desirable. According to Pres. Morales it is a moral and religious imperative in a time when our congregations are amidst the spiritually hungry and religiously homeless who need us. Rev. Morales believes we have failed to grow because of the misplaced attention and energy in media campaigns and costly efforts to start large churches. Growing our faith will happen in our existing congregations through quality relationships, quality welcoming, and a sense of mission. Congregations have much to learn from each other. Congregations that have experienced growth have not done so by creating a growth plan but by being passionate about the possibilities and seeking excellence in congregational life. These congregations realize that growth is not a goal, but is a measurement of health and vitality.

President Morales says there are things we must do. We must create and sustain a sense of urgency throughout our faith by unleashing the commitment and idealism in our congregations who are on both a

visionary and practical path. We need to work with our fastest growing churches in close partnership. They are the folks who know how to grow our faith. We must focus growth efforts by ensuring that our UUA staff is an effective partner to our congregations. Rev. Morales stated UUA field staff must focus their efforts on working with congregations committed to sharing our faith and serve as capable consultants who assist in unleashing the congregation's potential. Our UUA must reorganize the way we deliver services to congregations. According to Rev. Morales there is broad consensus that we should move to a more flexible regional model. New congregations need to be started in growing and underserved areas, using new approaches that build on the expertise of our leading congregations and use the opportunities of modern technology.

Whatever your congregation is doing to celebrate the end-of-year holidays I wish your congregation good health and good relationships. Please know I am available for conversation, and/or speaking at a Sunday service. I am usually a phone call (813-931-9727) or email (jlund@uua.org) away. Happy Holidays one and all.



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