

UNI-VERSE

Chair person Bill Coburn & Ruth Deussen
May 2008

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

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 829, Summerfield, Florida 34492

Email: uufmc@comcast.net Web: <http://www.uufmc.org> Phone: 352-687-1680 or 352-750-1012

Forum 9:00 Sunday Services 10:00

Temporary Meeting Place At the junction of Highways 25 and 25A
Elks Lodge #2730, Silver Springs Shores - 7655 East Highway 25, Belleview, FL 34420

Future address: 7280 SE 135th Street, Summerfield Fl. 34491-2510

Future Telephone Number 352-245-7944

May 4th

Elk's Lodge setup leaders: (setup leaders will be announced as needed)

Coffee & Hospitality: Mary Hord

Forum: Group discussion of the topic, "What Do You Think a New UU Should Know About Unitarianism and the Local Fellowship?"

Greeters: Muriel Bingley & Rona Gold

Children's Program: Marti Bassette

Service Leader: Robert Ridgard

Chalice Lighter: Barbara Thomas

Speaker: Jo Laine Jones-Pokorney - "Sacred Differences - How Constructive Conflict Can Heal the World". As UU's we say that we embrace diversity and welcome differing opinions - which invites conflict! The good news is that science can now tell us what goes on in our brains and bodies when we are in conflict, and has outlined new behaviors that can actually make a conflict productive.

May 11th

Coffee & Hospitality: Barbara Schuster

Forum: Jim McIntosh "James Luther Adams and the Faith of Free Church"

Unitarians consider Freedom as a cornerstone of their individual search for spirituality. Traditional religions always place "faith" at the top their belief foundation. What are we really talking about? What does it mean to be free? Does faith have any place in a pursuit that cherishes freedom? Could faith be a potential connector between the two seemingly very different points of view?

Adams was professor of religious, social ethics at Meadville Theological School, the Unitarian seminary in Chicago. He was also a social activist engaged in issues of racism, civil liberties, and politics. He was an incurable storyteller (the good kind) and self-improver. As a student of Professor Irving Babbitt at Harvard College he developed a strong sense of the importance of standards and the "primacy of the will."

Greeters: Barbara Thomas & Julie Glaser

Children's Program: Mary Hord

Service Leader: Joyce Mills

Chalice Lighter: Peggy Wolfson

Speaker: Jim McIntosh - "James Luther Adams and the Faith of Free Church" Traditional religions always place "faith" at the top of their belief foundation. What are we really talking about? What does it mean to be free? Does faith have any place in a pursuit of that cherished freedom? Could faith be a potential connector between the two seemingly very different points of view?

May 18th

Coffee & Hospitality: Jeanne Collins

Forum: Jim Mitchell will review "Six Degrees, Our Future on a Hotter Planet."

Greeters: Mary Ann & Mike Donato

Children's Program: Carole Clarke

Service Leader: Ann Barefield

Chalice Lighter: Carolyn Dennison

Speaker: George J. Warheit, MDiv, PhD - "Religion in America: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" Over the past two centuries, religion in America has undergone a number of significant changes and at present its religious landscape is changing dramatically. Traditional mainline denominations have been losing members and influence while fundamentalist denominations have grown markedly and their political power has increased. In addition, advances in science and the secularization of our culture continue to challenge both mainline and evangelical denominations and new religious forms are emerging. These factors are discussed.

May 25th

Coffee & Hospitality: Fran Marciano

Forum: Robert Ridgard will present "All you ever wanted to know about our new AV system."

Greeters: Celia Friedenthal & Jeanne Collins

Children's Program: Millie Mitchell

Service Leader: Jim Mitchell

Chalice Lighter: Dick Bassette

Speaker: Ruth Deussen - "Beyond Tolerance" Tales of Pterodactyls and other 'sacred cows' can test our ability to be tolerant. What do YOU do when your neighbor is really, really weird?

Quotes - From Celia Friedenthal

We can allow satellites, planets, suns, the universe, nay whole systems of universes, to be governed by laws, but the smallest insect, we wish to be created at once by special act.

Charles Darwin, English naturalist & author of the theory of natural selection, 1871

Evolution is not a force but a process; not a cause but a law

John Morley, English Statesman & man of letters, 1874

Announcements

President's update – Ann Barefield

Board Agenda:

*The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Wednesday, **May 7, 2008** at 2:00 p.m. at the UUFMC Fellowship Building. If committee chairs have items for the agenda, please share them with your Board Liaison by Wednesday, April 30, 2008. Board members, please send the agenda items to the president, Ann Barefield, by Thursday, May 1, 2008 so she can get them to Bill Coburn in time for the agenda to be printed in the weekly announcements.*

Memorial Concert: *The members and friends of the UUFMC are invited to attend the Memorial Concert for Bob Barefield at 3:00 p.m. on **May 25, 2008**. There will be a reception following the concert sponsored by the Board of Trustees. Attached to the weekly announcements there is a brochure about the concert.*

What Are We Passionate About?

We have worked long and hard to get our new home and we will be moving into it soon. We have given our time, our money, our sweat, and sometimes our tears to get this new home. Some have said we want a place to meet anytime we need to meet. Many have said we want to be a voice for liberal religion in this community. In our mission, we have said we want to provide a community that supports ourselves and others in life's journey and we want to foster universal social justice and responsibility. In our vision, we have said we want to be a growing and caring religious community devoted to freedom of thought, speech and spiritual beliefs. In our values statement, we have said we revere the interdependent web of all existence and value:

- Diversity and the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- The search for truth and meaning through critical thinking and the encouragement of spiritual growth.
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large
- The goal of a world with peace, liberty and justice for all with equity and compassion in human relations.

Now that we have our building, our new home, our place to meet anytime we want to meet, our place to invite members of our community to meet with us, how are we going to use it to accomplish the things we have said we want to be? Now is our chance to walk our talk as we never have before. **What are we, the members and friends of the UUFMC, truly passionate about?**

Passion is motivating. It is more motivating than money. Passion energises and transforms you. You are focussed. You are really in tune with yourself. When you're passionate about something, you produce better results. You seem to always have enough time, energy and money for those things about which you are passionate. Passion manifests itself as enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can be a contagious thing to the people around you. **What are we, the members and friends of the UUFMC, truly passionate about?**

Are we truly passionate about fulfilling our mission, vision, and values? If so, how do we plan to do it? We have the building, we have the people, and we have the potential to make a difference in this community. Do we have the passion? I challenge each one of us to consider what we are passionate about and to become active in this fellowship and help ensure that everything we do helps us fulfill our mission, vision and values. Together, we can make it happen!

BOARD POLICIES

It is the job of the Board of Trustees to develop policies that will help the fellowship run smoothly. We have recently finalized several policies and we would appreciate it if our members and friends would become familiar with them. If you have questions or concerns about any of the policies, please feel free to send your questions or concerns in writing to the president, Ann Barefield, and your comments will be shared and discussed at the next scheduled Board meeting. The policies that are being presented this month are as follows: Fifth Sunday Policy, Gift/Memorial Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy.

FIFTH SUNDAY POLICY

1) *The Social Justice Committee shall select by consensus a worthy charitable cause to donate the fifth Sunday cash and designated checks to. All undesignated checks shall be treated as a regular offering.*

2) *A written announcement shall be included in the UNI-VERSE and the weekly bulletin which shall inform congregation members and friends that all cash and designated checks collected on the Fifth Sunday will be donated to the selected Charity. The content of this notice shall be the responsibility of the social justice chair. A brief description of the selected charity shall be included.*

3) *The service leader shall make an announcement before the Fifth Sunday collection which shall include the information which had been included in the UNI-VERSE and the weekly bulletin.*

4) All cash and designated checks collected on the Fifth Sunday shall go into the general fund and the Fellowship treasurer shall cut a check equal to the amount of this collection which shall be sent to the selected charity. The Social Justice Chair shall compose a cover letter to be sent along with this check. This cover letter will be submitted to the board for approval.

GIFT/MEMORIAL POLICY

The UFMC encourages the solicitation and acceptance of gifts to the Fellowship for purposes that further the Fellowship's mission. This Gift Policy applies to all gifts offered to the Fellowship (other than payments on pledges to the annual operating budget).

The Fellowship may accept both gifts that are unrestricted and gifts that are designated for specific purposes ("restricted gifts"), provided that such gifts are consistent with the Fellowship's mission, purposes and priorities. All decisions on the acceptance of gifts, both unrestricted and restricted, will be made by the Gift/Memorial Committee in consultation with the Treasurer, and others as deemed appropriate. All unrestricted gifts, once accepted, immediately become the property of the Fellowship and are given with the understanding that the gifts have been donated with no restrictions, including restrictions on use, sale or disposal. Restricted gifts, once accepted, will be managed in accordance with the agreed restrictions unless and until the restrictions are modified or removed.

In deciding whether to accept a gift, the Gift/Memorial Committee will consider any potential costs associated (including maintenance, insurance, transport, appraisal, potential liability, costs of disposition or sale, etc.). The Fellowship may seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts when appropriate (such as closely held stock, restricted stock, transactions governed by contracts, potential conflicts of interest, etc.)

Marketable Securities:

As a general rule, gifts of marketable securities will be converted to cash and transferred to the Fellowship's Treasurer for investment as quickly as possible.

Personal Property:

In deciding whether to accept gifts of tangible personal property, the Gift/Memorial Committee will consider the following criteria:

- Is the property consistent with the Society's mission?
- Are there carrying costs associated with the property?
- Is the property marketable?
- Are there any undue restrictions on the use or sale of the property?

Real Estate:

In deciding whether to accept gifts of real estate, the Gift/Memorial Committee may wish to consider the following criteria:

- Is the property useful for the purposes of the Fellowship?
- Are there carrying costs (which may include insurance, property taxes, mortgages, notes, etc.) associated with the property?
- Is the property marketable?
- Are there any restrictions, reservations, easements or other limitations associated with the property?

In addition, prior to acceptance of a gift of real estate, the Fellowship may require an environmental review. When appropriate, a title binder may also be obtained by the Fellowship prior to the acceptance of the real property gift.

All gifts will be promptly acknowledged in writing on behalf of the Fellowship by the Chairperson of the Gift/Memorial Committee and or the Minister. The Treasurer of the Fellowship will be responsible for providing donors with receipts sufficient to satisfy IRS requirements. The receipt may include a description of the property, but each donor will be expected to rely upon his or her own professional counsel concerning valuation, tax and estate planning implications of gifts and representatives of the Fellowship should refrain from advising donors on these issues.

Exceptions to this Gift Acceptance Policy should be rare and require the approval of the Gift/Memorial Committee, acting in consultation with the Board of Trustees and others as deemed appropriate.

Gift/Memorial Policy changes are made by the Gift/Memorial Committee submitting recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Purpose Statement:

We believe that:

- The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Marion County (UUFMC) should be a safe and welcoming environment that respects the human dignity of all who attend.*
- All who attend or are employed by UUFMC have a right to participate in an environment that is free of discrimination, which includes freedom from sexual harassment.*
- The adoption of a sexual harassment policy provides a means for dealing with harassment experienced within the church community.*
- The best resolution of any situation will both stop the unwanted behavior and allow all parties to still feel comfortable within the church.*
- We understand that harassment is not always intentional, but may in fact arise through miscommunication or lack of awareness. Regardless, we believe this is a serious issue that our congregation can best face by adoption of the following policies.*

Underlying Principles and Assumptions

- Sexual harassment is unacceptable within the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Marion County.*
- Sexual harassment is not the fault of the victim.*
- People who have been harassed need support, empowerment, and a structure within which to respond effectively and safely.*

Definitions of Sexual Harassment:

- Sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome conduct that has sexual overtones. This includes but is not limited to:*
 - physical conduct: such as touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse.*
 - verbal conduct: such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions.*
 - written conduct: such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations.*
 - visual conduct: such as gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters or magazines.*
- Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of the various relationships that exist within the church community (for example: minister/congregant, adult/child, amongst peers) rather than as an exclusively sexual issue.*
- Sexual harassment has both males and females as its victims and perpetrators. All who attend or are employed by UUFMC should be free from harassment by members of the opposite sex or of the same sex.*

- Procedures for addressing all incidents (or suspected incidents) of sexual harassment are outlined in the Procedures Manual.

Gift / Memorial Committee

Our Gift/Memorial Policy has been written according to guidelines recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association. In keeping with this newly approved policy, we would like to make our members and friends aware of some gift-giving opportunities to enhance our new UU home. Some considerations are the following: sanctuary furnishings; landscaping and other exterior decorating such as benches, sculpture, plantings; kitchen fixtures and furnishings; works of art throughout the building; office equipment; music fund. If you have questions or are interested in contributing towards the purchase of any of our needed items, please contact the committee co-chairs who will then also involve the appropriate committees, i.e. landscape, kitchen, music, etc.

Mary Ann Donato 751-7543 Fran Marciano 430-3109

Forum

The "Forum" which meets at 9:00 prior to the Sunday service is always looking for good ideas for presentations. The purpose of the Forum is to provide our members and friends with information on a particular topic. More importantly it is to provide an opportunity for us to interact with each other and thereby broaden our knowledge of a whole host of topics. If you have a particular slant on something that you would be willing to present please let Jim or Millie Mitchell or me, Jim McIntosh, know about it. If you know of someone with such a topic that would be able to present, let us know that to. If you have a topic that you think would be important to discuss don't keep it to yourself. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

Jim McIntosh

Pledge and Donation Reports – Jim McIntosh

Members and Friends:

On Sunday the Fellowship will be providing fiscal year ending (Apr 1 to Mar 30) pledge and donation reports this Sunday, **April 27th**. The actual data will include business through April 16. With the exception of a few new pledges that were received after the report was printed, all fiscal 08 - 09 pledges are shown. An explanation of the report format will be included. Please take a moment to pick up your report and check it against your records for accuracy.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the material.

Jim McIntosh, Treasurer UUFMC

Planning Ahead

Many Unitarian Universalist groups have an annual Water Service/Ceremony. This can be a meaningful experience for members, friends, guests and visitors. We are planning a Water Service at UUFMC in October. Your participation is welcome and necessary if our service is to be meaningful. All you need, to do, is to collect a small amount of water from a stream, pond, lake, river, fountain, or other place that has meaning to you. Since many of us travel in the summer it is a good time to collect the water. Keep the water until we have the service; you will be reminded to bring your water. Remember collect water from your travels this summer and hold on to it until we announce the Water Service this fall. Thank-you and have a great summer!

Memorial Concert & Reception

Members and friends are invited to the Memorial Concert for Bob Barefield, May 25th 3:00PM with a reception immediately following the concert. If you would like to assist with the reception please look for the sign up board. Questions contact Allie Gore 861-4564 or indigo8062@earthink.net.

Invitation to Speak

Dear Members and Friends,

The Sunday Service/Program Committee would like to invite you to speak to our congregation during an open Sunday in June or July.

Look for the sign up board and place your name on the date you would like to speak. Within one week of signing the board please email or snail mail your topic and provide a synopsis of your presentation to any member of the committee Bob Zannelli, Rona Gold, Mary Ann Donato, Phil Lindsley, Ruth Deussen and Allie Gore.

Please be aware we have no way of knowing the response we will receive to this invitation. Depending upon the members and friends interested in speaking, to our congregation, and the scheduled speakers from outside our Fellowship, we are unable to guarantee your specific date request.

The following guidelines are provided to help you decide if your topic is appropriate for the main Sunday service or if it is a Forum topic. The committee will make the final determination.

Presentations will adhere to our covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The Sunday service/Program Committee appreciates members and friends commitment to honor diversity, demonstrate inclusiveness and respect for each other and other religious beliefs in their presentations.

Thank-you!

UUFMC Directory Update – Barbara Schuster

Dear Members and Friends,

In order to keep the directory up to date, please take the time to e-mail me with any changes in your Directory information. If you prefer, please bring a written copy of your Directory information to the fellowship on Sunday, or call me at 353-390-3822.

Thank you, Barbara

Bob Zannelli invites all our Members and Friends to join him for

Evolving Humanism: An Agenda for the Future

When: Friday evening, **May 9 – through Sunday, May 11**, 2008

Where: Sarasota Hotel and Marina

This will be your opportunity to connect with other Humanists groups throughout Florida to make friendships, exchange ideas, talk about issues and make a difference.

Humanists of Florida (HFA) will be unveiling plans for a proposed Florida think tank project named **Evolving the Future: Toward a Science of Cultural Change**. The think tank will be dedicated to applying evolutionary theory to how we think about and analyze education, law, business, political science, economics, management, anthropology and the social sciences

Cruise News

Your Building Fund needs YOU to sign up for our 10 day **January 18th** relaxing, enjoyable cruise to intriguing sights to Aruba, Curacao, the Panama Canal, Costa Rica and a private island. Our first cruise brought in \$2,450 to the building fund and the second one brought in \$2,850. Let's exceed that amount - your help is critical. Make your reservation now to be certain you can get the type of cabin you want because Panama

cruises are very popular. Call Anita Noble at AAA, 352-753-2500-Ex. 2259 - your reservation can be handled by phone. Talk to Pete Jarmer or Rona Gold for more details.

Cares & Concern – Marti Bassette

eotwin@aol.com

dolson@aol.com

From Don and Eleanor Olson

Joy to the world.

Hi everyone,

Don and I became great grandparents this morning (April 25) at 4:40 am. Our granddaughter, Melissa, gave birth by C-section to Elias Carlisle. Both Mom and big boy (8 lbs. 5 oz) are doing well and should be going home in a couple of days. We're hoping to see them before we leave Little Rock.

Life is good!

Eleanor

PAUL KORPELA HAD A TUMOR REMOVED WHICH WAS BENIGN.
THAT IS GOOD NEWS. – From Dot O'Hara

I touched Base with Hydle and Ruth Papin. They manage driving OK; they just don't always have "the go" required to get to Sunday services. – From Karl D. Scheffer

The Care and Concerns co-chairs need to know about anyone that is ill, home bound, or hospitalized. For anyone in the Top of the World area notify Jeanne Collins, 352-291-2925. In The Villages Marti Bassette, 259-4503.

May - UU & YOU! Carolyn Denison

UU and You Social Evenings will be held at 6 PM Wednesday, May 21st, and Thursday, May 22nd in host's homes.

This is an opportunity to get together with church friends and members to socialize. A sheet will be out to sign up for Wednesday OR Thursday.

You will be notified where your gathering will be held; directions will be provided. Your responsibility is to bring sandwiches, veggies/salad or dessert to share; hosts furnish beverages.

Our goals are to keep the groups the size the hostess/host can accommodate, to keep the groups approximately the same size, and to have one each month in the Villages and one evening north or west of there.

If you signed up to attend but find you are unable to keep this commitment please contact Carolyn, 307-4682, so the necessary changes can be made. Thanks so much!

Signup sheets will be on the table every Sunday until May 18th.

Separate Tables – Jeanne Collins

We will lunch together on Thursday, May 15th at Olive Garden in Ocala on Highway 200

3363 SW College Rd

Ocala, FL 34474

352-854-0900 | [Website](#)

Call Jeanne Collins for details 352-291-2925.

Please be aware that reservations are made for Separate Tables at a busy time of day for the restaurants. If you have signed up to attend but cannot make the luncheon please contact the host or hostess so the restaurant can be notified. Thank-you for your thoughtfulness.

Separate Tables is a social event where the men and women have lunch at separate tables. Each group enjoys their own discussions about topics that are important and/or interesting to them. Separate Tables was created to draw the Fellowship members together by allowing them the opportunity to get to know one another better.

*Signup sheets will be on the table every Sunday until **May 11th**.*

Singles Club

Book Club

Membership Committee

Are you new to Unitarian Universalism? Do you want to learn more?

Classes will be forming to discuss the history, principles, and traditions of Unitarian Universalism.

Contact Allie Gore at 861-4564 or Andrea Coburn at 751-6673 if you are interested in participating.

Chalice Lighters

Our Sunday service chalice lighting and extinguishing is another opportunity to share something which, like our principles, sets a positive tone of acceptance, respect and an appreciation for diversity. The program committee extends an invitation to members and friends to participate in this part of the service. Sign up for a specific Sunday date. Your responsibility is to light the chalice and present a reading and extinguish the chalice and help close the service with another reading. Please see the Chalice Lighters signup sheet, on the info table, any Sunday. Thank you.

Social Justice Committee - Bob Zannelli

Fifth Sunday

The Social Justice Committee has selected the Interfaith Emergency Services as the recipient of the fifth Sunday collection in June. We all know the need is great in our local area, foreclosures are at a record high and the building trades and local manufacturers are laying off large numbers of workers. Please give as generously as you can.

In addition, the Social Justice Committee welcomes suggestions as to worthy recipients for future fifth Sunday collections. Contact any social justice committee member to make your views known. The members are: Bob Zannelli, Pete and Ray Jarmer, Andrea Coburn, Mary Ann and Mike Donato, John Deckman, Rona Gold, Carolyn Denison, and Ann Barefield.

Christmas Family.

The Social Justice committee, represented by Ann Barefield, continues to keep in touch with our "adopted" family and will report back to the social justice committee if they express a need for additional help.

Rebate your rebate to the needy.

Many congregations in the UU are asking members to donate a portion of the stimulus rebate to a worthy cause. The need is great at the Interfaith Emergency Services. Donations can be sent to

Interfaith Emergency Services, Inc.

435 NW 2nd Street • Ocala, FL 34475

Music Committee

The choir will be singing just one more time until fall. So the committee, throughout the summer, will be looking for individuals who would like to sing or play a solo, duet, trio or quartet. Please call Ruth Prentice @ 307-6620 if you have music or can learn something we already have.

Coffee Committee

Message to all Coffee Committee volunteers, if the date you're scheduled is not convenient for you, please switch with another member. Thank you for all you do. You're terrific!

We're down to 7 members for one reason or another. If you know anyone who might be interested in joining our esteem team, let me or Carole know. Fran 430-3109

Happy Birthday Notice

Sheffer, Rodney*	April	29
Szwed, Jean*	April	29
Bassette, Dick*	May	1
Villella, Bradon	May	4
Wilroy, Marcy	May	4
Love, Roy	May	5
Marciano, Fran	May	7
Coburn, Andrea*	May	11
Colussi, Louise*	May	19
O'Neill Catherine	May	23
Jarmer, Ray*	May	25
Whicker, Jean	May	27
Pearson, Bonnie	May	29
Jarmer, Pete*	May	30
Mitchell, Jim*	May	30
Olson, Don*	June	1

Getting to know us.

Carole Clarke



Carole Clarke grew up in Massachusetts and spent her adult life in Washington, DC. Her son and daughter-in-law live in Seattle. She has been widowed for 11 years.

Living in Washington, DC from 1967 was an exciting experience. She worked on many city political campaigns, starting with the first Home

Rule government. Imagine the excitement in the city in 1974 - the first opportunity that Washington citizens had to elect their own government officials. (Of course, there still is no voting representation in Congress.)

Carole was a teacher in the DC Public School system where she taught hospitalized and homebound children. This work provided many varied experiences. At various times she taught in every section of the city. She taught children with minor problems such as a broken leg to those with more devastating illnesses. She taught in an embassy and in housing projects. Through it all she had the opportunity to work intimately with the children and their families. It was a great career.

After retirement Carole spent 2 years in Guatemala with the Peace Corps. She lived in the mountain area in a Mayan and Latino Community. Her main assignment here was to work with the teachers in local schools to develop sanitation projects.

She moved to the Villages in 2005 where she discovered Unitarian Universalism. It has opened up a new world full of wonderful people and ideas to her.

Carole is coordinating a program where English is taught to adult immigrants in the community. Classes meet for 1 ½ hours on the weekday evenings and also during the day on Saturday and Sunday. The classes are held on alternating days in Wildwood and Leesburg.

Jean Collins, Rona Gold, Karen Hoch, Diane Jacobsen, Mary Ann and Mike Donato, Louise and Mark Colussi, and Oscar and Barbara Nair, fellow Unitarians, are volunteering with the program. There is always a need for more volunteer teachers or child care helpers. Call Carole to see how you can be involved in the program.

UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund May, 2008

Recently I acquired a little book which explains how and why we Unitarian Universalists function as we do: *The Cambridge Platform*, edited by Peter Hughes. Even though we are different in theology from other churches we share a common tradition of polity that originated with *The Cambridge Platform*. The 1648 signers of this document established how churches defined membership, chose leaders, came to decisions, handled dissent, and acted together despite disagreements. The Platform set forth a non-hierarchical congregational polity which meant churches would be independent both of outside authority and of each other. It explained and justified how congregational churches work. Both Unitarians and Universalists evolved from early New England churches governed by the Platform.

The framers of the Cambridge Platform continuously referenced the authority of the Bible which makes it a foundational document for our UU polity, and other faiths molded by Puritanism. The Puritans had tried to reform the Church of England in the direction of a more personally experienced spiritual life. Their experience of being persecuted and punished persuaded them something had gone awry and led them to look in the Old and New Testaments where very different patterns of authority were to be found. The New England Puritans believed all religious authority to be in the members of each congregation. The Platform, based on the biblical second commandment, declared that the substance of the free church is the spirit of neighborly love.

The authors of the Platform did not see themselves as "separatists" and insisted the autonomy of free churches did not imply isolation from other free churches. Churches were to be concerned about other's welfare. In the 1600s churches founded by the Puritans engaged in pulpit exchanges. Lay members sometimes attended services in their own churches and then, if visiting friends, went to another in the afternoon. These early Puritan churches sent letters of recommendation to a congregation in a town to which one of their members was moving; sometimes they helped with money and/or officers if need arose; and they assisted in starting new churches.

Even though the framers held Scripture in great reverence they believed not all that is necessary in the free church is indicated by the bible. In addition there is a very strong statement on the importance of covenant made by each member of a church to walk together with other members, in love. There were some drawbacks in that the framers assumed a tiered level or privilege and authority in churches was a natural thing. There is so much more to be learned about our history in the Cambridge Platform.

Perhaps I have tweaked an interest in learning more about the Cambridge Platform. The book can be purchased through Skinner House at www.UUA.org/skinner for those of you who would like to learn more. I always look forward to hearing from you at jlund@uua.org or 813-931-9727.

UUFMC

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Marion County

512 Downers Grove

The Villages, FL 32162



***Sign up to receive your newsletter via e-mail instead of snail mail
Send your request to billcoburn@thevillages.net***