



# CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, *where diversity is treasured.*  
A member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

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*Happy 4th Anniversary  
Rev. CJ McGregor*



*Through hurricanes  
and pandemics, we are grateful  
for your compassionate leadership  
and steady direction.*

*The Board of Directors met on April 22, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. via teleconference.*

Your Board of Directors met two times during April, both times by teleconference. The first meeting was a special meeting to install the new board members and officers, select the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, and conduct other time-critical business. The second meeting was our normal monthly meeting.

At the April 7 meeting the board elected Chris Stotler to continue serving as the Chairperson and Rachel Spiller was elected as Vice Chairperson. These positions are elected from within the board by the board members. Treasurer John Conrad, Secretary Ed Elrod and the other members were elected by the congregation.

The board for 2020-2021 was installed by all members agreeing to follow All Faiths' bylaws when conducting the

congregation's business. The board members for this year are John Conrad, Ed Elrod, Linda Runkle, Marge DiGalbo, Peter Erickson, Annely Hudanick, Eileen Moran, Rachel Spiller and Chris Stotler.

The board voted to curtail spending by all committees and instituted other budget cutbacks until we better understand the budgetary impacts of COVID-19. Only essential costs are authorized. Salaries will remain at the 2019-2020 rate until further action by the board. These were the recommendations from the Finance Committee Chair.

The board approved submitting an application for a government loan in the amount of \$27,375 under the Paycheck Protection Program. The application, which was submitted through Iberiabank, required extensive documentation and the bank has repeatedly asked for more information. If award-

ed during the current or the next round of funding, we would not have to repay the loan if we continue to pay all employees as planned. It would be a great boost to our financial situation for the year. We are starting to work with another bank to see whether their process is more streamlined to allow a submission before money in the government's program is depleted again.

The board authorized the purchase of a subscription to Zoom videoconferencing service at a significantly reduced rate of \$110 through the UUA. The cost is being paid by special contributions from three members. If a committee needs to use the Zoom conference capability, they need to schedule it with Regina. These videoconferences should be included on the church calendar.

At the April 22 meeting, the board agreed that we need to continue the already-in-place

COVID-19 restrictions about people convening at All Faiths for services and meetings. We will continue holding services via livestreaming and meetings by teleconference. The process has worked well and we have been getting on average 60 connections for the live sermon broadcast on Facebook and several hundred hits for the recorded broadcasts. At our May 20 board meeting, the board will reevaluate when we can return to in-person services and meetings at the church.

Other actions at the April 22 meeting included agreeing to delay the auction fundraiser until fall, evaluating improvements or replacement of the church's security system, and agreeing on a covenant that each board member will sign when we can meet face-to-face. The board also approved a required bank resolution regarding signature authority.

*(continued on page 6)*

## Mission Statement

“All Faiths Unitarian Congregation is a welcoming, caring community, seeking diversity, practicing openness, and encouraging personal and spiritual growth. “We are working toward a just, free, peaceful and compassionate world.”

## All Faiths Collection Schedule

### **Share-the-Plate (10% of undesignated donations on the 2nd Sunday of the month)**

May - Meals of Hope

June - The Change, Alliance for the Arts (Racial Justice)

July - City Gate Ministries (Hearts for the Homeless)

### **Food, Clothing, and Other Collections**

McGregor Clinic - May 17, June 21, July 19

### **Second Collections**

December 6 - Employee Bonuses

***The April Share-the-Plate resulted in \$170.00 for the Community Forum***



# FROM MCGREGOR BOULEVARD

by Rev. CJ McGregor



Presently outside my bedroom window each morning are dump trucks, cranes, cement mixers, a well being drilled, and a dozen loud and gruff workers. A house is being built on the lot next to mine. I'll not need an alarm clock for the next six months.

I'm annoyed, but this morning while watching the noisy production I felt part of something. Perhaps a bit desperate for human interaction, I appreciated the waves from the workers. Desperate for signs that life goes on, I momentarily welcomed the chaos. A few months ago I wouldn't have given the people and their work a second thought, except to complain about the noise.

This pandemic has brought anxiety and doubt into my life. Will I, will my family, remain healthy? Am I doing all I can to support and comfort each of you? Should I take to heart being called by people in the community naive, overly optimistic, and blinded by privilege for hanging a banner on our building? Wondering how long we can sustain ourselves under a stay-at-home order.

And so, maybe peeking over the fence this morning and appreciating the interaction with workers and welcoming the chaos says a lot about me. I re-

fuse to live in the space of impending doom. I require signs, like the building of a home and the anticipation of new neighbors, to remind me that life goes on. My spirit and mental health during this pandemic must seek and hold onto these little things, onto hope.

The builders outside my window are working intensely and laboriously to build something new. And, so shall we. The consequences of this pandemic will ravage our society. There will be noise, chaos, and heavy machinery in our hearts, minds, and spirits. We have a choice. We can either live in doom and gloom becoming completely overwhelmed, bankrupting our emotional and spiritual selves, or we can practice acceptance, becoming aware of the consequences and work to overcome them and our anxieties about them.

Because I am trusting of the resilience of people and our ability to save ourselves, I am not naive and blinded. I am simply someone able to peek over the fence and envision a building rising from a mess. I am someone who understands that the human spirit, especially in times like these, needs a crane to be lifted, a mixer to discern what is true and meaningful, and a well of moments of hope to be drilled in order to sustain ourselves and recognize the problem without remaining in the dark place.

Let us recognize, understand, and feel the darkness of this pandemic. It's okay to visit this place, but it's dangerous to live there.

- Blessings, CJ

# JOYS & SORROWS

*With our apologies for any omissions, here are the joys & sorrows expressed by our members in April*

At this time of stay-at-home precautions, it is particularly important for us to find ways to stay connected with our friends and loved ones. We at All Faiths care about what is happening in the lives of you and your loved ones. If you need moral support, reach out and lean on your friends. We are here for you!

**Judy Alberda's son, Philip**, who lives in Austin, Texas, had emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix. He is doing well.

**Marge DiGalbo** had kidney stone surgery. She has recovered well.

**Janet Falk's friend, Marty Valiant**, fell and was injured. She has been hospitalized. We hope that she has a speedy recovery.

**Carrie Feind** suffered the loss of her beloved dog, Sophie. Sophie was a 13-year-old German Shepherd. Carrie is missing her greatly, particularly during this stay-at-home time.

**Quillen McDaigle, daughter of Nicole and Jennifer**, was diagnosed with pneumonia. She tested negative for COVID-19 virus. We pray that she will soon regain her health.

**Rev. CJ McGregor** will celebrate his 4th year as our settled minister on May 1. Congratulations, and thank you, CJ!

**Emmie Spiller** has been sick for some time. We hope that she will soon be well.

**Joyce Ramay's stepdaughter, Dr. Maryam Ramay**, is an anesthesiologist at a hospital in Manchester, UK. She is working 12-hour days in the ER and ICU treating the most serious cases of covid19 virus. Please hold her in your thoughts and prayers.

"Hope is being able to see  
that there is light  
despite all of the darkness."

- Desmond Tutu

## Happening at All Faiths

*Happy May  
Birthday to you!*



May 7 Ed Kleinow  
May 13 Annely Hudanick  
May 15 Audrey Olson  
May 16 Laura Snow  
May 22 Laurie Babcock  
May 23 Jeanne Ezell  
May 25 Lisa Leonhardt  
May 26 Marge DiGalbo  
May 27 Rev. CJ  
May 29 Mary Ellen Taylor  
May 30 Nancy Frasca Cabazares

### *And Coming Up...*

June 1 Jeannine Martin  
June 6 Joyce Davison

*If you are missing or see someone  
who is missing from the birthday  
roster, please let Regina know.*



### Solos Group Events

Contact: Annely Hudanick,  
[annelyblue@hotmail.com](mailto:annelyblue@hotmail.com)

Everyone is welcome to join the solos for outings and lunch w/wo a movie date. The potlucks, however, are reserved for "single" solos.

**Saturday, May 2, 1p.m.**  
Potluck - Cancelled

**Saturday, May 16, 1 p.m.**  
Lunch w/wo a Movie  
Cancelled

The following Zoom meetings are scheduled on a weekly basis:

**Sunday Coffee Hour with the Staff**  
Every Sunday at 11:30 a.m.

**Meditation**  
Every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

**Coffee Talk with Rev. CJ & Regina**  
Every Thursday at 11:00 a.m.

**Listening Circle**  
Every Friday at 11:00 a.m.

**Please use this link and password to get into all of the above  
scheduled meetings:**

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4276470168>

Meeting ID: 427 647 0168  
Password: 682318

### Sunday Service

The Sunday service is streamed *live* at 10:30 am on Sunday, on our public Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/allfaithsuc](http://www.facebook.com/allfaithsuc)

Click on "videos" on the left hand menu.  
This is the only place you can view the service *live* at 10:30.

### Recorded Service

Once the *live* service is over on our public Facebook page, the then recorded service will be downloaded by 1:00 p.m. to:

- The Members and Friends Facebook page.
- The You Tube button on our website:  
[www.allfaiths-uc.org](http://www.allfaiths-uc.org)

# MAY 2020 CALENDAR

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



<p><b>3</b> 10:30am Service Livestreamed</p> <p>11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff</p> <p>No Adult Ed. Forum or Children's RE</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>1:30pm No Climate Action Team Mtg .</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>4:45pm No Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Zoom Meditation</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>11am - Zoom Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>1</b> 10:30am No Meditation</p> <p>11am - Zoom The Listening Circle</p>	<p><b>2</b> 1pm No Solos Potluck</p> <p>7pm No ACMA Concert</p>
<p><b>10</b> 10:30am Service Livestreamed</p> <p>11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff</p> <p>No Adult Ed. Forum or Children's RE</p> <p>Mother's Day</p>	<p><b>11</b> 10am No Sun. Services Team</p> <p>12pm No Book Club</p> <p>Share the Plate w. Meals of Hope</p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>4:45pm No Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Zoom Meditation</p>	<p><b>14</b> 10am Finance Comm. (Remote) Mtg.</p> <p>11am - Zoom Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>8</b> 10:30am No Meditation</p> <p>11am - Zoom The Listening Circle</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>7pm No ACMA Concert</p>
<p><b>17</b> 10:30am Service Livestreamed</p> <p>11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff</p> <p>No Adult Ed. Forum or Children's RE</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>6-7:30 No PFLAG Mtg.</p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>20</b> 10am No Racial Justice Team Mtg.</p> <p>1pm - Zoom Board Meeting</p> <p>7pm Zoom Meditation</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>11am - Zoom Coffee Hour</p> <p>2pm No Homeless Action Team Mtg.</p>	<p><b>15</b> 10:30am No Meditation</p> <p>11am - Zoom The Listening Circle</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>1pm No Solos Lunch</p> <p>7pm No ACMA Concert</p>
<p><b>24</b> 10:30am Service Livestreamed</p> <p>11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff</p> <p>No Adult Ed. Forum or Children's RE</p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>4:45pm No Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Zoom Meditation</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>11am - Zoom Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>22</b> 10:30am No Meditation</p> <p>11am - Zoom The Listening Circle</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>7pm No ACMA Concert</p>
<p><b>31</b> 10:30am Service Livestreamed</p> <p>11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff</p> <p>No Adult Ed. Forum or Children's RE</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>4:45pm No Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Zoom Meditation</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>11am - Zoom Coffee Hour</p>	<p><b>29</b> 10:30am No Meditation</p> <p>11am - Zoom The Listening Circle</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>7pm No ACMA Concert</p>

Check the online calendar at: <http://www.allfaiths-uc.org>  
for post-printing updates

## MAY SUNDAY SERVICES

Worship Services livestreamed on Facebook  
at 10:30 a.m.

Recorded and available at our website:  
[www.allfaiths-uc.org](http://www.allfaiths-uc.org)

### *May's Theme: Thresholds*

#### **May 3 – Turning Toward the Unknown**

by Rev. CJ McGregor  
Music by Joseph Brauer

#### **May 10 – Celebrating Mother's Day**

by Rev. CJ McGregor (prerecorded)  
Music by Joseph Brauer  
Share the Plate with Meals of Hope

#### **May 17 – Bird-Dogging**

by Rev. CJ McGregor  
Music by Joseph Brauer

#### **May 24 – We Have Much to Remember**

by Rev. CJ McGregor  
Music by Joseph Brauer

#### **May 31 – Magnitude and Intensity**

by Rev. CJ McGregor  
Music by Joseph Brauer

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## MAY CHILDREN'S RE

Mary Corrigan will plan projects and activities  
with the children directly.

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## MAY ADULT ED. FORUMS

No Adult Ed. Forums in April

## BOARD NOTES *(Cont'd from page 2)*

During the past month a new dishwasher was installed by Michael Pierre (thank you, Michael). This was paid by special contributions from members so it does not impact our budget. The new dishwasher has sanitizing capability, which the old one lacked.

The board is thankful for the continued financial support of members through pledges and extra giving. We ended the past fiscal year approximately \$6,700 in the red because we had curtailed in-person services during March and we had to postpone our major fundraising event. If not for the COVID-19 impacts, we probably would have ended the year with a balanced budget. The \$6,700 shortfall was covered with funds from our Operating Reserve. By instituting budget cutbacks, delayed pay increases, and good financial support from the congregation, we will manage our current financial situation in a manner that avoids further depleting our reserves.

Some members have committed to share part of their \$1,200 stimulus checks with All Faiths. It is understood that for some of us the stimulus checks were unanticipated windfalls, while for others they are critically needed for their on-going living expenses. If you fall into the former category, please consider sharing a portion of your check as an extra contribution to All Faiths.

Please stay safe, healthy and do what is necessary to keep your spirits up during these difficult times. If you have comments or suggestions for your Board of Directors, please email All Faiths or contact me or other board members. We like hearing from you.

*The next board meeting will be held on May 20, 2020.*

## AMERICANA COMMUNITY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

### A Message from Alice Schaffer

Hi Folks....hope everyone is safe and well. We are missing live in-person music for sure but, thankfully, there are many live streams happening almost every day of the week by your favorite ACMA musicians! 8 Ball Aitken, Roy Schneider/Kim Mayfield, The Rough and Tumble, Doug Macleod, to name a few - all have concerts coming up in the next few days.

Check out the website of your favorites for times and days and be sure to send a donation their way during the live stream as this is how they make their living for now. AND our ACMA FB page is updated every Saturday with YouTube or music links from our scheduled Artist for that date.

# CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Chair



For the past few weeks we have all been attempting to adjust to the new reality of having to cope with the Coronavirus global pandemic by sheltering in place and learning our way around a new virtual reality world. For your Climate Action Team this has meant

cancelling numerous live events and looking for ways to continue our work online. Thanks to all of you who responded to Joan's Earth Day 2020 message during the April 19th service and to the All Faiths "Save the Earth" Commitment form we sent out on Earth Day. Many of you are already taking all of the actions suggested on the form and are looking for more ways to make a difference.

When we first began our efforts to become an accredited Green Sanctuary, we sent out a survey to gather information about our environmental strengths and weaknesses. This month we will be sending that same survey to you again so we can evaluate our progress in these areas and address those matters that need more attention. Please support us in this effort and return the updated survey to us at your earliest convenience.

It is still too early to be able to begin rescheduling in-person activities so the Climate Action Team will not meet at All Faiths in May. However, we urge each of you to examine for yourself what you can personally do to live more sustainably and to explore ways that you can help strengthen the global climate change movement.

Here are our tips for this month:

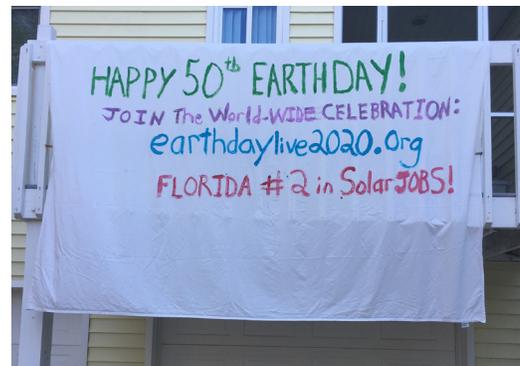
1. Unplug your electronics and other electrical devices such as lamps when they are not in use. They still draw energy when off. Use of power strips helps facilitate this effort
2. Reduce the number of plane trips you take.
3. Divest from fossil fuel related stocks.

**Watch Joan's April 19th Earth Day message by visiting [www.allfaiths-uc.org](http://www.allfaiths-uc.org) and clicking on the YouTube channel**

# NO STOPPING ALL FAITHS' EARTH WARRIORS!



*Ainsleigh B. (left) wishing us all a Happy Earth Day; and Dottie Mayol doing her part to stay safe and celebrate Earth Day.*



*Ariel Hoover celebrating and getting the message out with her banner.*



*Buddha, gifted to All Faiths by Diane and Doug Cartwright, watches over our piece of the planet in the Memorial Garden.*



## AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL FAITHS CONGREGATION

by Doug and Diane Cartwright

Congress has passed, and the president has signed a bill to provide every American with a stimulus check to combat the economic adverse effect of the coronavirus.

This means that imminently, you will receive a check for as much as \$1,200, \$2,400 for married couples. Undoubtedly, you can probably use the money to pay bills or buy something you've delayed buying. If you're working and have been laid off or had your hours reduced, this money will be a welcome windfall.

But if, as many of us in our All Faiths family, you do not have a desperate need for some or all of this money, you might want to consider making a donation to All Faiths of a portion of your check. Every church or institution of faith is being hit by the coronavirus closings. Although we can attend services vicariously by computer streaming or by Facebook, when the offertory is taken, the collection bag comes up empty.

The bulk of our budget goes to salaries for staff. Reverend CJ; congregational manager, Regina; music director, Joseph; and sexton, Joe, all have duties and are remaining on the payroll, although at a reduced rate from that which was approved in our most recent budget.

All Faiths is family, and we will survive this crisis; but you can help by sharing your stimulus in this time of uncertainty.

Once we have determined what portion of our stimulus check we need to cover unexpected expenses, Diane and I will be committing to share at least \$500 of our stimulus check over and above our annual pledge. Also we will be pre-paying Sadie's pledge until the end of the current year. We hope we may even afford more, but that remains to be seen.

We treasure our relationship with All Faiths and want to assure that All Faiths survives to reassure our congregants that the relationship is mutual. We hope you feel the same.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

by Joyce Ramay, Finance Chair

We are grateful for your financial support of our dedicated employees, programs, facilities and outreach during this past fiscal year. We thank Sharon Gray for serving as Treasurer for five years. We welcome our new Treasurer, John Conrad, who was elected for a two-year term at the Annual Meeting.

### Balance Sheet: Cash Assets - March 31, 2020

Iberiabank Checking	\$ 8,452.00
Iberiabank Op. Reserve	14,924.73
Live Oak Op. Res. CD	20,428.21
Raymond James Legacy	37,070.88
Pay Pal	254.76
Iberiabank Capital Fund	<u>4,502.11</u>
Total	\$85,633.57

### March 2020 P&L

Operating Income	\$18,571.99
Operating Expense	<u>18,498.38</u>
Net Gain	\$ 73.61

### 12 Month FY thru 3-31-20 P&L % to Budget

Operating Income	\$211,103.97	90.5%
Operating Expense	<u>217,774.66</u>	93.0%
12 Mo. Loss	(-6,670.69)	

In addition to the above, an extra \$24,814 was donated to reduce our mortgage principal. We collected \$3,526 on Share-the-Plate Sundays for local charitable organizations.

Operating expenses were down by 7% of the approved budget, but our operating income for the fiscal year was down by 9.5% of the budget due to several factors. Some major donors died or moved away. Because of the COVID-19 emergency, we could not hold our annual auction, which is our biggest fundraiser, and we did not have offertories on the last two Sundays of March when our services had to be live-streamed.

We appreciate your continued generosity. Stay well and stay connected until we can meet again.

# 2020 CARES ACT MAKES CHANGES TO REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTIONS AND EXPANDS TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR CHARITABLE GIVING

Contributed by Sharon Gray



The CoronaVirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act suspended, or waived, all Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) due in 2020 for those over age 70½. You will not be required to take your RMD for calendar year 2020. This applies to all defined contributions retirement plans, including IRAs, 401(k)s, 403(b)s, SEP IRAs, SIMPLE IRAs, traditional IRAs and Roth IRAs, including those types inherited plans.

Though RMDs are suspended for 2020, the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) rules remain fully in effect. You still can make a QCD in 2020.

The QCD won't count toward an RMD in 2020 (since that has been waived this year), but it still has benefits. As in previous years, the amount you withdraw as a distribution and have sent directly to the charity, is income-tax free. The QCD is not included in your gross income.

In addition, regardless of your age, a change has been made in allowing a charitable donation deduction when you file in 2021. If you take the standard deduction (\$12,400 single, \$24,800 married filing jointly and \$18,650 head of household) when filing your 2020 tax return in 2021, you can claim a brand new temporary deduction of up to \$300 (\$600/ couple) for cash donations to most charities you made in 2020. Normally, you have to itemize on Schedule A to get a tax break for charitable donations. In this case though, it's the other way around—if you itemize, you can't take this new deduction.

This charitable donation will be an “above the line” adjustment to income that will reduce a donor’s adjusted gross income (AGI), and thereby reduce taxable income. There are other considerations for large donations,

Please contact your accountant or tax advisor to see how this change may affect your finances this year. This information was in the CARES Act passed by Congress and signed March 27, 2020.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE STAFF



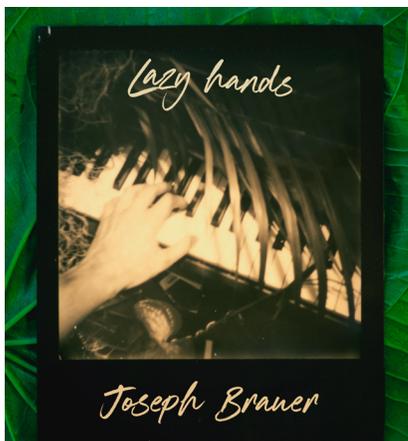
Our bulletin board is full of love! Rev. CJ, Regina Kilmartin, Joseph Brauer and Joe Gayton would like to extend our great appreciation to all of you for your wonderful, uplifting, kind notes of appreciation. It means so much to know you care.

We love you, we miss you, we look forward to staying connected with you through notes, phone calls, and, yes, Zoom meetings! Until we can *Enter, Rejoice and Come In* once again, you remain in our hearts and on our minds.

"Where there's hope,  
there's life. It fills us  
with fresh courage and  
makes us strong again."

- Ann Frank

## JOSEPH BRAUER RELEASES LAZY HANDS ALBUM



Hello All!

This month I will be releasing a full piano album on CD, a first for me. I'm so excited to share some more music with all of you, but not long ago that excitement was drowned out by fear and doubt.

“When are you going to record a CD?” Kody asked me, for the hundredth time.

I chuckled, as usual, and explained that recording is a tedious and time consuming process, and closed with “nobody buys CDs anymore, anyway. I’m better off spending my time practicing for and booking live gigs.”

I’ve used all of these excuses before. The reality is, I’m scared to record. I’m afraid of playing something, thinking it’s perfect, then playing it back only to discover that it’s scarred with a wrong note. Or bad timing. Or background noise. I’ve spent a lot of time recording; and it usually ends with me stressed, frustrated and insecure.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started to get serious in the US, I was forced to confront these excuses. I said “I don’t have time”, the universe laughed and cancelled most of my upcoming gigs and contracts. I said “who will listen?” People in my life encouraged me to create, to produce something to bring a little peace and escape from the noise around us.

I jumped into the project, taking ideas from the birds around my yard, from the distant sirens and motors I heard from my front porch. I tried to suspend my self-judgment and focused on the idea of creating a backdrop for meditation and relaxation. I’ve had intermittent insomnia since I was a teenager, and I have a handful of go-to artists (Enya, Sigur Ros, Phillip Glass, Paul Simon) I would listen to in order to calm myself. This is what I wanted to achieve. Using minimal recording tools available in my home, I created a full-length piano album.

I decided to name the album *Lazy Hands* because throughout the process I’ve had to remind myself to stop worrying about trying to fill all the silence with fast, complicated notes. To breathe. To allow the listener to find some silence and tranquility between phrases. It is also a completely improvised album, so it’s lazy in the sense that it flows and evolves without being tied to a set composition. Making this album has been healing and empowering for me; my hope is that it will have the same effect on those who listen. A huge thank you to all those who have pre-ordered and made com-

ments of encouragement. My All-Faiths family has been especially supportive and positive.

If you would like to pre-order a CD (discs will start shipping early next week), an online order form can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2Ya8ZVa>, or you can email me at [joseph@josephbrauer.com](mailto:joseph@josephbrauer.com). I will also be hosting a free streaming of the album through the All Faiths Facebook page in the near future, so stay tuned!

*Yours in spirit and in song,*

*Joseph*

[Editor's Note: Joseph Brauer has served as All Faiths' gifted Music Director since September of 2017.]

### ♥ FOR THE HOMELESS NEWS

*by Barb McFarlane*

All Faiths' Heart for Homeless team met via Zoom on April 16. Although we have no current projects, the county and local non-profits continue to provide services to people living on the streets.

Lee County, in collaboration with the City of Fort Myers and the area Homeless Coalition, approved the placement of portable toilets, hand sanitizing stations, portable showers, and the distribution of vouchers for showers to those living without housing. This is a major accomplishment. Advocates had been working on this long before the COVID-19 crisis.

Let's thank them!!

[www.leegov.com/boccc](http://www.leegov.com/boccc)

[mayorhenderson@cityftmyers.com](mailto:mayorhenderson@cityftmyers.com)

If you find a few extra dollars in your pocket and are inclined to support local efforts, our team and congregation have supported the following agencies over the past couple years:

1. Salvation Army, Rapid Rehousing for families:  
2400 Edison Ave., Fort Myers, FL 33901
2. Angel Wings of SW Florida, shelter for single women 8-64 years old:  
13331 MedCircle W., Fort Myers, FL 33907
3. All Souls Homeless Outreach, meal, groceries, outreach:  
14640 No. Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers, FL 33903



The 2020 Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, which was to be held in Providence, Rhode Island, June 24–28, will instead be held entirely online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UUA Board of Trustees voted on April 13 to approve the plan, which the administration has been negotiating and which the UUA announced publicly on April 16.

In making the shift to a virtual event, association leaders weighed options for conducting the required business of GA and allowing UUs to connect with one another while honoring the UUA’s contractual, legal, and fiduciary obligations, said LaTonya Richardson, UUA General Assembly and Conference Services Director. Even if travel and other restrictions are lifted by late June, Richardson noted, 70 percent of GA attendees are typically over 55 years old, an age group more susceptible to COVID-19. Given travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders, restrictions on the size of gatherings of people, and limits on public transportation, in Rhode Island and in so much of the country, UUA leaders were clear that a virtual GA was the best decision.

“The accessibility, safety and well-being of people was also critical throughout this whole analysis,” said Richardson.

Registration for virtual GA 2020 is \$150. In-person registrations, which cost \$400, have been converted to virtual registrations. The UUA is offering registrants options for handling the \$250 cost difference, including a refund. Visit [UUA.org/ga/registration](http://UUA.org/ga/registration).

Richardson said she hopes that the nearly 2,000 people who have registered for in-person GA will choose to attend online and that thousands more also will attend. Virtual GA removes the barriers of travel costs, time, and accessibility concerns, she said, and reduces the event’s carbon footprint. “We have the potential to make this our highest-attendance GA ever, and I would very much like it to be,” she said.

While many details are still being worked out, virtual GA

2020 will be a streamlined version of a full General Assembly. “We definitely want everyone to feel good about their investment in attending virtually,” Richardson said. Virtual GA will include popular programs such as the Ware Lecture, featuring Naomi Klein this year, and worship services, including the Service of the Living Tradition, with a sermon by the Rev. Danielle Di Bona.

GA will acknowledge the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ arrival in what is now Massachusetts with programs highlighting the ongoing violence of colonization and the powerful legacy of 400 years of Indigenous resistance. Native scholars, leaders, and activists will be major presenters.

And the Commission on Institutional Change will present its final report on systemic racism in Unitarian Universalism, including recommendations for countering white supremacy.

“It’s all a big experiment,” said Richardson. “We are a living tradition, we are a revolutionary faith, we like to live out our mission in innovative ways, we like to honor the earth, and to the extent that is true we have opportunity here.”

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY VIRTUAL REGISTRATION**

### **Off-site Registrant Participation in General Assembly**

**Virtual Registrants are able to watch and ask questions in live sessions including workshops and business sessions (mini-assemblies, hearings, etc). Voting Delegates are also able to propose amendments in the live business sessions, participate in debates, and vote in general sessions.**

**Virtual registration for General Assembly is \$150 per person. Registration for General Assembly is the same process for delegates and non-delegates.**

**Register Now!**

# WHO YOU GONNA CALL?



If there's something strange  
in your neighborhood,  
Who you gonna call?

If there's something weird  
and it don't look good,  
Who you gonna call?



## All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Phone: (239) 226-0900 – Email: [office@allfaiths-uc.org](mailto:office@allfaiths-uc.org) – Website: [www.allfaiths-uc.org](http://www.allfaiths-uc.org)

**Executive Board:** Chris Stotler, Chair; Rachel Spiller, Vice Chair; John Conrad, Treasurer; Ed Elrod, Secretary; Diane Cartwright, Past Chair.

**Directors:** Marge DiGalbo, Peter Erickson, Annely Hudanick, Eileen Moran, Linda Runkle, Rachel Spiller, Chris Stotler.

**Staff:** Regina Kilmartin, Administrator; Joseph Brauer, Music Director; Joe Gayton, Sexton.

**Minister Emeritus:** The Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson

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*Newsletter*

Regina Kilmartin

*Proofreaders*

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Joyce Ramay

*Social Media & Website*

Regina Kilmartin,

Kendra Maroon, Sharon Gray

### Adult Education Forums

#### Sunday Service Team

Joyce Ramay

### Hospitality Coordinator

Nicole McDaigle

### Member Services

Fran Way

*Greeters*

Marsha Bates

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### Sound Technician

Ed Elrod

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Michael Pierre

### Social Action & Outreach

*Climate Action Team*

Joan Marshall

*Community Events*

Richard Keelan

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Barb McFarlane

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Rachel Spiller

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Regina Kilmartin,

*McGregor Clinic*

Joyce Schaffer

*Mano a Mano*

Charlotte Blitt

*Operation Joy & Solos Group*

Annely Hudanick

**Minister: Rev. CJ McGregor - Cell: 508-736-3361**



Deadline for the **June** Issue of *Connections*  
is **May 18**

(Brief announcements may be accepted later,  
and will be included *if* space and time permit.)



OFFICE HOURS: 9am to 4pm, Monday thru Thurs;  
9am to 12pm, Friday and Sunday.  
Congregational Administrator: Regina Kilmartin