

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

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**Continuing
Our UU Principles**
Join us live on Facebook
Sundays at 10:30 am.



*The goal of world community
with peace, liberty, and justice for all*

September 6 - by Joyce Ramay

*Respect for the interdependent web of
all existence of which we are a part*

September 13 - by Ariel Hoover

The Proposed 8th Principle...
September 20 - by Rev. CJ McGregor & Chantel Rhodes

The UU Life
September 27 - by Rev. CJ McGregor

**Youth RE resumes via Zoom
on September 20**

The Board of Directors meeting was held on August 19, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom teleconferencing.

After evaluating Florida's COVID status, the Board agreed that we must remain in Phase 1 of our Re-opening Plan due to the state's number of COVID-19 cases and its positive test rate. However, we are modifying our Phase 1 restrictions to allow Rev. CJ to meet with members and others one-on-one at All Faiths.

The Board confirmed that all church announcements and official communications will continue to be via e-mail or "snail mail" for those without e-mail. Some information may also be posted on the All Faiths' Facebook page, but the e-mail notifications will always be used because many members choose not to use Facebook or other social media.

The Board approved a plant sale that Judy Alberda will or-

ganize. The plants are potted and will be placed outside the church so no one will enter the building. A donation box will be placed on the porch. Judy Alberda will provide additional information and dates in a separate announcement.

We discussed the need to purchase recording/video equipment. The livestream services have been filmed using Regina's phone. Although her phone met our needs when we thought that we would only be livestreaming services for a couple of months, we now know we need to do this on a continuing basis, probably even post-COVID. Equipment specifically designed for the task is needed for high quality transmissions. Rev. CJ is working with someone to obtain equipment recommendations. Regina also provided the equipment list that AMCA is considering purchasing for their use. The ACMA equipment analysis was provided

as background information for the Board.

We all greatly appreciate the dedication of Regina, Ed, Joseph, Rev. CJ, and others in bringing us services every Sunday. It means so much to all of us to maintain this important connection. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Also, thank you to Ernie Reid for agreeing to be a back up for Regina in recording the services.

The Board approved Annely's plan to sell her hand made greeting cards to raise additional money for Operation Joy's holiday collection. Stay tuned for details. Annely reported that Operation Joy may go through other organizations to distribute needed items to less fortunate families for the holidays.

Judy Alberda, our lead gardener, has needed help with weeding, trimming, and other garden maintenance activities. Last Monday five people

showed up to help; this Monday there were two helpers. During summer months the weeds and bushes grow rapidly -- at the time when many regular helpers have gone north. Judy usually works on the garden from 7:30 to about 9 a.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. If you want to be a regular or occasional helper, let Judy know. We especially need someone who can handle heavier tasks such as moving bags of mulch. The Board is also evaluating whether to add additional duties to our current mowing crew or perhaps hiring someone else to provide a few hours a month to help maintain the garden.

Eileen Moran reported on her experience working in a Red Cross shelter during the recent storm that hit Pennsylvania. She was concerned that our current hurricane policy would allow emergency use of

(continued on page 3)

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 (please write organization and amount in the memo line of your check. See article on page 12)

September - One Tree (Climate Action Team)
October - Meals of Hope (Hunger)
November - Operation Joy (Christmas for children)

Food, Clothing, and Other Collections

McGregor Clinic - T/B/D

Second Collections

December 6 - Employee Bonuses

The August Share-the-Plate resulted in \$600 for "Operation Joy - Back to School"



FROM MCGREGOR BOULEVARD

by Rev. CJ McGregor



September always gives me the sense of "back to business." As a child the arrival of September meant the end of the freedom of summer. New clothes, new school supplies, schedules, and the gearing up to begin school again were sure signs that it was time to begin again. This feeling of getting back to business in September has never left me. I naturally think of it as a time of renewal, a time of returning, and a time to become more disciplined. I start organizing and planning in the fiercest way. It works this way in our Unitarian Universalist congregations as well. We coast through the summer and get serious in the fall.

In our congregation we have focused on staying connected since March 2020. We've used Zoom to check in and to offer gatherings and meetings. September will take us further in staying connected, but also offer increased programming to nurture the mind and spirit. I've observed that our needs have changed and this is the next step in our response to you during this pandemic.

We will offer a new Zoom schedule that is listed in this

newsletter. The time of meditation has changed. We will offer adult education programming every Tuesday at 1pm called Teaching Tuesday, and will continue Coffee Hour and Newstalk on Sundays. Later in the fall you will be able to participate in "Building Our Own Theology" and "Faith Forward." These programs are multi-sessioned. Later in the year you will be able to participate in a program titled "Long Strange Journey" which teaches us our UU history.

The Unitarian Universalist personality is unique. We crave learning, information, and interaction to express our views and ideas. My hope is that by offering programming you will have the opportunity to mature in spirit and ease the craving of the mind all while interacting with members and friends of our congregation.

If you have an offering for a Teaching Tuesday I'd like to know. There is a place for all of us in our quest for engagement while we remain in isolation. September is here. Let us get back to business. Let us hold our teachers and children that they may be safe.

- Blessings, CJ



BOARD NOTES (Cont'd from page 2)

our building. However, our building does not meet safety and health needs for emergency use. She will prepare a draft revision of the policy and present it to the Board for review and approval.

Our deck is in serious need of major repair. It seems like only a couple years ago that we replaced most of the deck. And since that major replacement, other boards have been replaced. At the current time, it appears 60% to 80% of the boards and some support lumber have to be replaced. The Board will research and evaluate the costs for various approaches to fix the problem: replacing the deteriorated boards; undertaking a total rebuild of the deck; or replacing the deck with paving/patio stone. This will be a significant expenditure, likely more than we have in our capital fund. If you have deck or patio building experience, please contact me.

Rachael Spiller reported that the in-person Youth Social Justice Workshop that was being planned for September will change to a virtual conference. It is now scheduled for October 16, from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

Please stay safe and healthy. If you have comments or suggestions for your Board of Directors, please e-mail All Faiths or contact me (239.770.0795 or gcstotler@gmail.com) or other Board members. We like hearing from you.

Our next board meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2020 at 1:00 p.m., and will be conducted via Zoom teleconference.

PLANT SALE - SEPTEMBER 7 – 12 AT ALL FAITHS



Judy Alberda invites you to come to the All Faiths garden to select one or more plants to enrich your life, your porch, lanai, garden or yard. Time - dawn to dusk. The potted plants will be set around the property, marked as to type. Cost is a donation. There will be a box on the porch during business hours that Regina will check each day, or you can mail your donation to the office. Friends and neighbors are welcome. Maybe a friend would enjoy a gift of a live plant. Some of the types are:

Aloe, Bromeliads (variety), Mexican Petunia, Oyster, Coontie, Snake plant, Ginger (large pots), Maypop Passion Vine, Ferns (large), Royal Palm (small now, but will be huge)

Happy Shopping!

*Happy September
Birthday to you!*



September 08 Wayne Dean
September 11 James Kersey
September 13 Hank Shapiro (100!)
September 14 Edith (Edi) Griffiths
September 14 Cynthia Edgington
September 16 Ainsleigh Babcock
September 20 Roy Kennix
September 23 Jo-Ann Reece
September 25 Dottie Mayol
September 28 Carly Jeffery
September 28 Gerald Goen
September 30 Harold Philpot

And Coming Up...

October 4 Michael Pierre
October 9 Lynda Thompson

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



Solos Group Events

Saturday, September 19 - 1pm
ZOOM LUNCH!

Check your emails for Zoom link.

Contact: Annely Hudanick,
annelyblue@hotmail.com

Everyone is welcome to join the solos for
outings and lunch w/wo a movie date.

Happening at All Faiths

TEACHING TUESDAYS

Every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. a Zoom adult education program will be offered. People from the congregation and our community will present these programs:

- September 1 (1:30 p.m.)** Climate Action Team presents
Will Revehl of One Tree
- September 8** Calling People In, Not Out by Meg Dalabes,
Community Education Coordinator of ACT
- September 15** Managing Our Pandemic Anxieties by
Richard Keelan, Golisano Children's Hospital
- September 22** Finding Your Spiritual Practice by
Rev. CJ McGregor
- September 29** Word From the Fort Myers Black Lives Matter
Movement by Chantel Rhodes, Community
Organizer

ZOOM MEETINGS

- Monday** Schedule your one-on-one with Minister
Zoom, or in person
- Tuesdays** Teaching Tuesday 1 p.m. - Zoom address
- Wednesday** Meditation 11:30 a.m. - Zoom address
- Sunday** News Talk w. Richard Keelan 9 a.m. - Zoom address
Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. - Zoom address

SUNDAY SERVICE

The Sunday service is streamed *live* at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, on
our public Facebook page: www.facebook.com/allfaithsuc

View the services anytime on our website: www.allfaithsuu.org
by clicking on the You Tube button, or go to YouTube.com and
search "All Faiths."

SEPTEMBER 2020 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 1:30pm Zoom Teaching Tues Join the Climate Action Team with Will Revehl of One Tree	2 11:30am Zoom Meditation	3	4 7pm ACMA Concerts Zoom Concert w. Jamie Michaels & Annie Wenz	5 
6 9:00am Zoom News Talk w. Richard Keelan 10:30am Service Livestreamed 11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff	7 Labor Day Office Closed	8 1pm Zoom Teaching Tues. with Meg Dalabes of ACT	9 11:30am Zoom Meditation	10 10 am Zoom Finance Mtg.	11 	12 7pm ACMA Concerts On Facebook with Bill Metts, Jim Visone & Bruce Gallant
13 9:00am Zoom News Talk w. Richard Keelan 10:30am Service Livestreamed 11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff	14 10am Zoom Sun. Service Team Mtg. 12pm Zoom Book Club	15 1pm Zoom Teaching Tues. with Richard Keelan of Golisano Children's Hospital	16 10am Racial Justice Mtg. 11:30pm Zoom Meditation 1pm - Zoom Board Meeting	17 2pm Zoom Heart for the Homeless Team	18 	19 1pm Zoom Solos Lunch ACMA Concerts Check ACMA Facebook Pg.
20 9:00am Zoom News Talk w. Richard Keelan 10:30am Service Livestreamed 11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff	21 ← Youth RE resumes via Zoom Sunday 9/20	22 1pm Zoom Teaching Tues. with Rev. CJ McGregor	23 11:30am Zoom Meditation	24	25 	26 ACMA Concerts Check ACMA Facebook Pg.
27 9:00am Zoom News Talk w. Richard Keelan 10:30am Service Livestreamed 11:30 Zoom Coffee w. Staff	28	29 1pm Zoom Teaching Tues. with Chantel Rhodes of Ft. Myers BLM Movement	30 11:30am Zoom Meditation			

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

SEPTEMBER 2020 SUNDAY SERVICES

10:30 a.m. on Facebook

In September, our Sunday Services will continue with the UUA Principles. Members of our congregation will deliver the messages. We hope that these services will enlighten you and motivate you to do more to dedicate your lives to upholding our highest values through our thoughts, words, and deeds.

The member congregations of the UUA covenant to affirm and promote:

September 6

6th Principle: *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*

Message by Greg Monk

Worship Associate – Joyce Ramay

Music by Joseph Brauer

September 13

7th Principle: *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*

Message by Ariel Hoover

Worship Associate – Rev. CJ McGregor

Music by Joseph Brauer

Share the Plate with One Tree (Climate Action Team)

September 20

Proposed 8th Principle: *Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions*

Message by Rev. CJ McGregor

& Chantel Rhodes

Music by Joseph Brauer & Darlene Mitchell

September 27

The UU Life

Message by Rev. CJ McGregor

Music by Joseph Brauer

JOYS & SORROWS

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

Joseph Brauer, our Music Director, and Kody Jones will be getting married on Saturday, September 5. We are very happy for them and share in their joy.

Doug Cartwright had complicated ankle surgery, that has required multiple casts and substantial follow-up. He is doing well under the care of his loving wife, Diane.

John Conrad had heart surgery with two stents installed. He recovered quickly and is again performing his job as All Faiths Treasurer.

Mahilen Dianz lost her beloved dog, Pupi, who contracted an infection. We extend our sympathy to her.

Ed Elrod was hospitalized with a foot infection that required some surgery. He has recovered and is back at his duties as All Faiths Board Secretary and sound operator.

Jan Guardiano was hospitalized, but she has returned to Skilled Nursing. We are happy to report that she is doing much better.

David Hauenstein was hospitalized again, but has returned to the Pavilion at Shell Point for continued care. We hope that his condition improves.

Susan Meissner lost her beloved dog, Jack, who was 15 years old. We extend our sympathy to her.



News Talk w. Richard Keelan
Sundays at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom
Link Sent via Email

News Talk is a facilitated group that will offer a time and space for you to discuss the weekly headlines. Please join in.



Coffee Hour with the Staff via Zoom
Sundays at 11:30 a.m.

Link Sent via Email

All are welcome to join Rev. CJ, Regina, and Joseph Brauer every Sunday after the service. Stay connected with some fun and fellowship!

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Chair



In our August meeting your CAT team discussed ways we can make a difference in the outcomes of the election this November. Unquestionably, the results of this election will profoundly influence the impact of the escalating climate crisis on our nation and the world. For this reason, CAT is focusing its activities this fall on the election. We are urging everyone to find ways to help get out the vote.

Here is a brief synopsis of a presentation Joe Bonasia made at the CAT meeting about the Rights of Nature amendment on the ballot in Orange County. Essentially, Rights of Nature is a movement to legally give our ecosystem the right to exist, flourish and evolve. In so doing it protects the right of people to have clean water, clean air and healthy eco-systems. These fundamental human rights do not currently exist in our legal system. Clearly our current system is failing. Florida springs are often seriously polluted. Despite five years of water summits, over half of our forty thousand Florida waterways are polluted. Why? Policy-making is controlled by the dependence of our legislators on corporate financing of their campaigns.

BAD NEWS! The corporate opposition to the Orange County amendment is mounting a huge, well-funded campaign to defeat it. They know that, without rights, nature has no way to be defended against their abusive practices.

This amendment is critical, not just for the residents of Orange County, but for those of us living in Southwest Florida, for their waterways naturally drain into Lake O. which then diverts excess water into the Caloosahatchee River. Their pollution becomes our pollution. If this amendment fails it will seriously set back the movement for clean water here and across southern Florida.

GOOD NEWS! There is a major campaign underway to pass this amendment. The Rights of Nature organization has hired a campaign manager and is seeking funding from everyone interested in protecting the quality of Florida's water. Donations, which are not tax-deductible since they are to a PAC can be sent to: <https://righttocleanwater2020.com>. Please contribute if you can.

And please find a way to help **GET OUT THE VOTE** this November. Future generations are counting on us.

OPERATION JOY - HOLIDAYS

by Annely Hudanick



Hello All,

I know you most likely will shudder at the thought of the upcoming holidays -- what ? already ? it's only September!

But you know that being a holiday elf is a year-round job, and Operation Joy aims to be especially busy this year. It is not going to be a joyous occasion for many children and families; it wasn't a joyous year for sure.

We know we can always count on your generosity to help Operation Joy fulfill its goal to supply necessities to needy families, and this year more so than ever before.

Well, how can we raise more funds?

Many of you know that I like to play with paper, that is, I like making greeting cards. Many of you bought some when I offered them for the "Burn the Mortgage" campaign a year and a half ago.

So, here it goes: for a donation of \$25 (or more) made out to All Faiths (Operation Joy in the memo line) you will receive three handcrafted holiday cards with a simple sentiment inside. The cards will be lovely, I promise. All of the cards will be holiday themed (no Thanksgiving cards included). I'm sorry there will be no choice in design, but I will pay for the postage to mail them to you.

To place your orders, please e-mail me (not Regina) no later than November 1. Mail your check, made out to All Faiths, with Operation Joy in the memo line. You will receive your cards by November 15.

Email: annelyblue@hotmail.com, Subject Line: Op Joy Holiday Cards. Of course, the sooner I hear from you, the better.

Note: The "Operation Joy-Holidays" Share-the-Plate collection takes place in November. The proceeds from Annely's handcrafted cards will be used to supplement the November collection

THE STATE OF YOUTH RE

by Mary Corrigan, Youth RE Facilitator

On Tuesday, August 18th, a group of interested stakeholders met via Zoom to discuss All Faiths' vision and future plans for Youth Religious Education (RE). Thank you to Emmie Spiller, Laurie Babcock, Rachel Spiller, John Conrad, Regina Kilmartin, and Rev. CJ McGregor for participating!

Here are my 'take-aways' from that meeting:

- Youth RE is envisioned as a safe space for exploring and developing one's own faith through compassionate relationship with one another; conscious contemplation of UU principles and ethics; expanding our knowledge about topics such as anti-racism, multiculturalism, diversity, inclusion, climate change, and social justice; and acting upon our beliefs and convictions.
- Improvements and growth to be pursued: Effective communication between youth and congregation; intergenerational interaction; increase youth visibility and participation in congregational life.
- Suggestions: Use of Connections, Facebook, and email to improve communication; engagement in activities such as 'Secret Friends' to encourage intergenerational relationships; space in Connections, common room, and service to increase visibility and participation.

An invitation: What time, talents, and treasure can you contribute? There are many ways to help grow our youth beyond volunteering to teach. In fact, I would like to take that off the table for the moment. If you would like to be a part of our gatherings during service, I would suggest joining us first, co-facilitating when you feel ready, and then leading the group on your own should you desire. We are a congregation of many abilities, insights, and intelligences. Sharing an experience, teaching a skill, helping with a project, etc. are all ways to participate. I would like to gather information about congregants so that when something "comes up" during a lesson, I can reach out to you. Recently, Emmie wondered what protesting was like during the height of the Civil Rights movement. I know that many of you would have willingly provided a first-hand account. Therefore, you will be receiving an inquiry from me in the near future regarding this. And, of course, donations to Youth RE are appreciated; financial support creates possibilities for expansion and growth.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to those who have already contributed their time, talents, opinions, and ideas to crafting a meaningful spiritual experience for our youth. I am committed to develop and conduct youth programming, learn more about how to foster intergenerational relationships, communicate more consistently Youth RE news and happenings, and work with you to provide enriching opportunities for us to grow together.

I invite you to explore ways to communicate to our youth that they are cherished and valuable members of our congregation.

TREASURER'S REPORT

by John Conrad, Treasurer

Balance Sheet: Cash Assets - July 31, 2020

Iberiabank Checking	\$26,698
Iberiabank Op. Reserve	29,967
Live Oak Op. Res. CD	20,582
Raymond James Legacy	37,073
Pay Pal	145
Iberiabank Capital Fund	<u>3,893</u>
Total	\$118,357
Prior Month	<u>122,992</u>
Net Loss	\$ (-4,635)

July 2020 P&L

Operating Income	\$ 14,553
Operating Expense	<u>16,500</u>
Net Loss	(-1,967)

■ Revenue/Operating Income improved in July, compared to June. The generosity of our congregants is very much appreciated especially during these times of being unable to attend All Faiths in person.

■ Expenses have remained lower than budgeted because of the fiscal restraints that the BOD approved at earlier BOD meetings. Expensive air conditioning repairs were incurred during July.

■ The Burn the Mortgage program continues with donations of \$1,1400.00 received in July. The outstanding mortgage principal at the end of July was \$106,175.97. We anticipate that by the end of August the mortgage principal balance will drop under \$100,000.00!! This is significant progress because on April 1, 2019 (less than 1.5 years ago) the mortgage principal balance was \$151,234.48.

■ The Small Business Administration PPP loan was approved on May 1, 2020; and the \$27,300 loan was deposited on May 5. We anticipate that the loan will be forgiven and treated as a grant by the SBA once proper documentation is submitted. Susan Anthony of the Finance Committee is taking the lead on the necessary paperwork to help ensure that the documentation is sufficient and completed in a timely fashion.

■ In July, \$297 was collected for Angel Wings (Homeless Team).



JOSEPH AND KODY
MAKE IT OFFICIAL

*Our Next
Adventure*

NOW ONLINE

Saturday, Sept. 5th, 2020

5:45 Online Welcome

6:00 Streamed Ceremony

6:30 Cake Cutting/Champagne Toast

ZOOM MEETING ID: 832 3691 4562

PASSWORD: WEDDING

www.zola.com/registry/josephandkody

www.amazon.com/wedding/share/josephandkody



How Does Our Garden Grow?



With tender loving care.

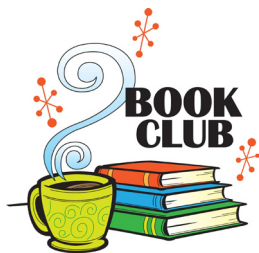
Judy Alberda, our chief gardener, comes to All Faiths every Monday and Thursday morning. She could really use some extra hands to keep our gardens beautiful. Please contact Judy at judyalberda@yahoo.com, or just show up around 7am. *Be part of the interdependent web of existence of which we are all a part!*

AMERICANA COMMUNITY MUSIC ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER CONCERTS

The ACMA Facebook page is updated every Saturday with YouTube or music links from our scheduled artist for that date.

September 4, 7pm - Zoom with Jaime Michaels and Annie Wenz

September 12, 7pm - Facebook Live with Bill Metts, Jim Visone and Bruce Gallant. The Long and Short of it Trio



The Book Club will start holding Zoom meetings on its regularly scheduled meeting on the 2nd Monday of the month at 12:00 p.m. If you are on the Book Club email list, you will receive a Zoom link prior to the meeting. If you would like to join the Book Club or check to see if you are on the list, please contact Diane Chernow at dianecher@comcast.net.

♥ FOR THE HOMELESS NEWS

by Barbara McFarlane

In August we experienced amazing generosity from the congregation.

A member, who wishes to remain anonymous, donated \$1,000 toward buying a car for a young woman moving out of Angel Wings. After a year living there, getting her nursing license reinstated, and working in an area nursing home, she's moving into her own apartment on September 6. Her move was postponed when the landlord died of Covid-19 in the midst of remodeling the apartment. She needs a car to get to work once Angel Wings' staff will no longer provide transportation. This was a huge help! She's meeting with a potential seller as I write. Thank you -- and Angel Wings thanks you too!

Another member donated 39 baseball hats! Our team delivered them to All Souls ministry in North Fort Myers. Hats are a high-demand item for those living on the streets. Thank you for thinking of those most in need!

And, July's Share the Plate, \$297, went to Angel Wings, the temporary housing for single women experiencing homelessness.

We are overwhelmed by these acts of kindness.

Our team members are starting a "car ministry" after learning what Barbara Gaiser has been doing. She has a small box in her car with water, socks, masks, Little Green Books (resource guides for those living on the street). When encountering someone asking for money, she hands them one or two items while engaging briefly. We hope others will be inspired to do the same. Due to the economic fallout from the corona virus, there are more people than ever in need right now. Some have never had to ask for help in this public way. If you have questions about how to do this, feel free to contact Barbara. If you'd like to carry some of the Green Books in your car, contact Judy Alberda.

As always, everyone is invited to attend our monthly team meeting via Zoom on the third Thursday of the month at 2:00 p.m.

"Every soul is beautiful and precious; is worthy of dignity and respect, and deserving of peace, joy and love."

– Bryant McGill

LIFE

Lee Interfaith for Empowerment

by Regina Kilmartin

As we delve into another cycle of LIFE starting with House Meetings in September, I am happy to report that **Marsha Bates** and **Donalie Benyak** will step into the roles of Team Leader, and represent All Faiths as members of the LIFE Board.

As team leaders, they will host house meetings in September, al beit virtual, to talk to congregants about community issues that they feel need to be addressed in the upcoming year. All Faiths has been an active participant in LIFE since 2013, and a first-hand witness to their successful engagement in justice issues in Lee County, and beyond. Anti-bullying, children's access to mental health, civil citations, ban the box, children's services and, most recently, affordable housing (see below article published by WINK news on August 19) are just some of the issues that LIFE has sought justice for.

LIFE is also happy to have six perspective new congregations coming on board. There is strength in numbers, especially faith-based numbers - people tend to listen when representatives from 14-plus religious organizations walk into the room.

I personally want to thank Marsha and Donalie for leading this most important All Faiths' ministry. If you would like to jump on the wagon with Marsha and Donalie and become a LIFE Team Leader, please contact me at the office and I will be happy to share what that role involves. Keep an eye on your email for house meeting dates.

WINK News: Lee Interfaith asks Fort Myers to invest \$3M annually in affordable housing plan

Faith leaders in Southwest Florida want to help others find more affordable housing options during a time when folks might be struggling to make ends meet due to the coronavirus pandemic. It's something that could also curb crime in neighborhoods.

Lee Interfaith for Empowerment wants to start an affordable housing trust fund to open up thousands of units that would be accessible to those struggling to make ends meet.

Lee Interfaith is asking the City of Fort Myers to give \$3 million a year for the next 10 years for affordable housing for those struggling to get by.

"Improves crime rates. Crime goes down," said Pastor William Glover of Mount Hermon Ministries. "It improves property values, which makes the city a better place to live."

Lee is pushing the city to establish an affordable housing trust fund to help those who make less than 80 percent of the area median income. Pastor Glover says he sees the need in his own congregation.

"It's replayed time and time again, whether it's the single mother of three who can't afford housing or a recent college graduate who has to room together to afford housing or essential workers who are on a three-year wait list for subsidized housing or apartments," Glover said.

Lee Interfaith says the city's current plan is for workforce housing. They say that targets those who at or above the area median income. The group presented its ideas to the city this week. Now, faith leaders are hoping the city takes action.

"We need 7,000 units," Rev. Rickey Leon Anderson Sr. said. "If they don't do something, it's going to get even worse."

April Perkins in Fort Myers says finding affordable housing has always been a major struggle for her.

"I do make a little more than minimum wage," Perkins said. "But it's still a struggle for me monthly to do the rent."

Perkins's kids no longer live with her, but she can remember needing to ask for more time to pay her rent when they did.

"That's kind of embarrassing when you have to do that throughout the whole year," Perkins said.

Alison Carville in Fort Myers is struggling to find housing that is both affordable and accessible for her to move around in a wheel chair.

"It should be the norm of like, 'OK, here is the baseline for accessibility everywhere,'" Carville said.

Lee Interfaith for Empowerment says it already has developers on board who are willing to contribute to affordable housing efforts. They also expect the trust fund to grow from private donors, state funds and federal funds.

Fort Myers City Council says it will research the idea and see what other cities are doing.

SHARING THE PLATE WITH "ONE TREE"

by Joan Marshall

Earlier this year, the Climate Action Team designated their recipient of the Share the Plate to be the Community Forum Foundation in Dunbar. However, because of the pandemic, this group is inactive at the moment.

One of the projects CAT has been working on involves planting trees at the Apostolic Church of God in Dunbar. We met at this church earlier this year with *Will Revehl*, the head of the organization *One Tree*, who was to supervise the event and provide all the necessary materials, including the tree saplings. Because of the pandemic, the event had to be cancelled, but we expect to reschedule this tree planting event for next spring. In order to raise the necessary funds for purchasing the tree saplings, *One Tree* has agreed to set up an account

account to hold any funds contributed by All Faiths for that purpose.

One Tree is a 501(c)3 non-profit. All Faiths' executive board has approved this share-the-plate change from Community Forum Foundation to *One Tree* for the month of September.

The second Sunday of each month is dedicated to sharing the plate with local community organizations. If you would like to support this important community project, please write "*One Tree*" on the memo line of your check and the amount you wish to donate when you mail in your September 13th contributions -- then stay tuned for further details!



All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

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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.

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

Minister Emeritus: The Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson

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Deadline for the **October** Issue of *Connections* is **September 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