



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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Congregational Retreat

Saturday, February 3, 2018

"Forward Through the Ages"

Hosted by Rev. CJ McGregor

(see page 12 for details)



Newcomers Orientation

Saturday, February 10, 2018

Please join us if you are new to All Faiths or just want
to learn more about us and our mission

(see page 9 for details)

All Faiths Celebrates 17 Years!

Founders' Day - February 18, 2018

Boxed Lunch by Chef Kendra Maroon

\$10/person - Staff and Children Free



Acoustic Eidolon Returns

In Concert - Monday, February 19, 2018

Welcome back Joe Scott & Hannah Alkire

Tickets \$20 (portion benefits All Faiths)

BOARD NOTES *by Diane Cartwright, President*

The Board Meeting was held on January 17, 2017.

Major issues before the All Faiths Board of Governors this month included proposed revisions to the bylaws, a proposed budget for fiscal year 2018/2019, a special collections proposal, and an annual report for the Annual Meeting in March.

Bylaws. Marsha Bates, Sharon Gray, Bill Snider, and Joyce Ramay have been working for several months to update and revise the bylaws of the congregation. After several opportunities for the board to offer their thoughts on each proposal, the bylaws were accepted by a unanimous vote and will be readied for approval by vote at the Annual Meeting on March 25th.

Budget. The board approved a proposed budget for 2018/2019 fiscal year. The proposed budget will be used for the pledge drive as a preliminary budget. The budget proposal may have to be adjusted once the pledge drive ends, and we know what income to expect from our members and friends. The proposed budget will then be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

Special Collections. The board has been concerned about the process of doing two separate collections on Sundays when we collect for community organizations or causes. Often the All Faiths' collection drops significantly on those Sundays when there are two collections. Many churches support their causes

by "sharing the plate." Rev. CJ has had experience with this concept and made a suggestion to the board. After extensive discussion the board approved a method to introduce "sharing the plate" to All Faiths. Every third Sunday ten percent of the total offertory will be placed in a Special Collections Fund for our approved community organizations. (The total offertory will not include funds mailed in or designated as pledges to All Faiths.) Details will be coming in the newsletter and from the pulpit to explain this process more fully.

Annual Report. We will, for the first time, be creating a comprehensive report for the Annual Meeting. The report will include the proposed bud-

get, the bylaws with proposed revisions, the nominees for election, and reports covering highlights of the past year and plans for next year. Reports will be submitted by the Minister, President, Finance Chair, Social Action and Outreach Chair, Music Director, Congregational Administrator, Stewardship Chair, Adult Education Chair, Communications Chair, and Building and Grounds Chair.

The next Board of Governors meeting will be Wednesday, February 21, at 3:45 p.m. Members and friends are welcome to attend.



FROM MCGREGOR BOULEVARD *by Rev. CJ McGregor*



We have been celebrating the theme of "***Championing an Attitude of Gratitude***" since the beginning of our pledge drive on January 21. This is when we ask our members and friends to consider how they will share their resources to keep this beloved community growing deeper in its values and in the number of people who have yet to find us

and experience our freedom of belief, our free church. When I think about our congregation's pledge drive I instantly think of those who came before us - not only those who assembled and gave birth to this congregation, but also those who led and inspired our movement and gave us our identity and heritage. Names such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, Lousia May Alcott, and Bronson Alcott come to mind. These Unitarians, these Transcendentalists, ushered in loving and transformative facets to our beloved Unitarian Universalism of today.

Transcendentalists regarded the inner spiritual transformation of the individual as the central event of human existence. A transformation. This experience of conversion involved a transcendence of the pleasures and routine miseries of everyday life, into the joy and righteousness that was to be found in a new, or renewed, relationship with the divine. The transformation took place on a personal level and shared the belief that an individual's relationship with the divine could be, and indeed should be, unmediated by institutions, by history, by conventions, or by other people. Following

(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...."

transformation, obviously, one remains a human being who continues to live and work in the material world, but conversion changes one's understanding of the world and of the relationships all around them. To understand that in this place we enter a conversion that holds us, inspires us and offers an opportunity to sustain this place is one of our goals of the pledge drive. I wonder, what will your transformation look like?

To transform is to change from one character, type, or purpose to another. Our bodies convert food into energy. We can convert inches to centimeters, pounds to kilograms, and dollars to euros. Our hearts can undergo similar transformations. We can change direction morally, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Transformation begins in the heart and radiates outward to affect everything we think, say, or do. Merely stating that conversion has occurred does not make it so. Real transformation is obvious as a person switches direction, changes allegiance and moves from individuality to community. As the heart is transformed, the actions follow until the entire life has been converted to humanity. Episcopal priest and theologian Carter Heyworth tells us, "Love, like truth and beauty, is

concrete. Love is not fundamentally a sweet feeling; not, at heart, a matter of sentiment, attachment, or being 'drawn toward.' Love is active, effective, a matter of making reciprocal and mutually beneficial relation with one's friends and enemies." The most compelling relationships demand hard work, patience, and a willingness to endure tensions and anxiety in creating mutually empowering bonds. What if we consider it this way? Recognize that loving in the way that Heyward describes – love as a "conversion to humanity, a willingness to be present to others without pretense or guile...a willingness to participate with others in the healing of a broken world" – is an heroic journey, one that requires a willingness to move beyond at least the pettiness of our personal ego to embrace, as far as possible, a love for others that is not weak and sentimental, not based on what or who we like or do not like, but rather is a life and world-changing commitment we can make? What kind of people would we be then? What choices would we make?

Love is a transformation to humanity, a willingness to participate with others in

the healing of a broken world and broken lives. Love is the choice to experience life as a member of the human family, a partner in the dance of life, rather than as an alien in the world or as a deity above

Religion for us is an openness to the mystery that sustains and upholds life.

the world, aloof and apart from human flesh. The Transcendentalists had it right. This is what our faith is all about, a conversion to humanity, a rescuing life from cynicism, redeeming it from crassness, saving souls, although

not in the narrow and restricting sense in which too many churches use that phrase. Many of us were reared in denominations where being saved meant taking communion every Sunday, or reciting the creeds, or confessing a laundry list of nit picky sins. Mark Twain ridiculed that kind of religion a century ago when he defined faith as "believing what any darned fool knows ain't so." That kind of faith is more concerned with obedience and conformity than with changing hearts or freeing the spirit.

But that is not our faith, not the one we support with our dollars, and not the one we celebrate as we think about our "Attitude of Gratitude." Religion for us is not about dogma, not about ritual or living up to other people's expectations. Rather, religion for us is an openness to the mystery that sustains and upholds life. It is a sense of kinship with the cosmos. It is an invitation to bolder dreams and more generous action. It entails radical affirmation. Unitarian Universalism is self-transcendence expressed in service to the world. This is not only the faith we choose, but also the faith that chooses us.

And so, we have a choice to choose love, a conversion to humanity. To become a member and a partner. A choice to sustain the free church, to be the liberal voice of the south, the hands and hearts of this congregation firmly standing,

(continued on page 7)

February Sermons by Rev. CJ McGregor



Feb. 04 – **Love versus Fear**

Music by Joseph Brauer

Feb. 11 – **On the Side of Love**

Music by Nancy Frasca-Cabazares & Joseph Brauer

Feb. 18 – **Bring a Friend**

Founders' Day Celebration and Lunch

Music by Darlene Mitchell & Joseph Brauer

Feb. 25 – **Oft Forgotten Love**

by Rev. Wayne Robinson, Minister Emeritus

Music by All Voices Choir w. Joseph Brauer

Ongoing Events at All Faiths

*Happy February
Birthday to you!*



Feb 3 Midge Magstadt
Feb 7 Kendra Maroon
Feb 14 Jolene Jeranson
Feb 15 Linda Arthur
Feb 17 Carol Sommer
Feb 18 Howard Silverman
Feb 24 Ed Elrod
Feb 27 Bill Benyak

And Coming Up...

March 1 Eileen Moran
March 2 Robert Way
March 3 Charlotte Blitt
March 4 Frankie Jennings

Come Into the Calm

Three Local Meditative Events Planned

Bhante Jayasara, Buddhist monk from Bhavana Society in WV, will lead the events. They are free (donation-based) events; no experience is needed. We'll have silent sitting, Dharma talks, personal time for stretching/mindful walking indoors or out, in lovely gardens.

Sat., March 3, Retreat: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Come for all or part of the day; vegetarian lunch provided. Unitarian Church in Naples, 6340 Napa Woods Way.

Sunday, March 4, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Happhatchee, a lush five-acre Eco-Spiritual Center in Estero, 8791 Corkscrew Road

Monday, March 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
UU Church of Fort Myers, 13411 Shire Lane

For details and RSVP, contact Ann, email: yoganni@yahoo.com, 239-682-4575, or visit [Facebook.com/MindHarmony](https://www.facebook.com/MindHarmony)

Book Club & Brown Bag - February 12 at 12pm

Meeting on the 2nd Monday of the Month

Contacts: Diane Chernow, dianecher@comcast.net and Annely Hudanick, annelyblue@hotmail.com

Be prepared to give a brief talk about a book you're reading or you have read that is relevant to any kind of *discovery* - use your imagination.

Free Inquiry Group (FIG) - February 15 - 6pm

Contact: Sharon Gray, geema1@yahoo.com

FIG of SW Florida is a group of humanists, rationalists, skeptics, free thinkers, atheists, and agnostics. The first segment of each FIG meeting is a social time. Second segment, tons of insightful topics and discussions.

Meditation - Wed. at 7pm & Friday at 10:30am

Wednesday Contact: Lisa Leonhardt, kindreds@aol.com

Friday Contact: Jeanne Ezell, jeannezell@gmail.com

Join friends to develop your mindfulness, compassion, and sense of serenity.

McGregor Clinic Collection - Sunday, Feb. 18

Collection is on the third Sunday of every month.

Coordinator: Joyce Schaffer, joycelschaffer@gmail.com

Please donate non-perishable foods such as cereal, peanut butter, tuna, as well as men's and women's clothing to help HIV/AIDS patients and their families. This month the clinic would appreciate CEREAL over other non-perishable foods.

All Voices Choir Practice- Wednesdays at 5pm

Except the 3rd Wednesday of the Month

Contact: Joseph Brauer, jodabrauer@gmail.com

Solos Group Events

Contact: Annely Hudanick, 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.

Sat. Feb. 03 - No Potluck this Month due to Congregational Retreat

Sat. Feb. 17, 1pm - Lunch w/wo a movie, *Saigon Bistro*, 12995 S. Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers

FEBRUARY 2018 CALENDAR

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Will you be our valentine?



| | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | | | <p>1</p> | <p>2 10:30am Meditation</p> <p>6:30pm Visuality <i>Groundhog Day</i></p> | <p>3 10-3pm Congregational Retreat</p> <p>7pm ACMA Concert <i>Melissa Welke, Annie Wenz & Kim Mayfield</i></p> |
| <p>4 9am & 11am Service</p> <p>10:10 am Adult Ed. Forum</p> | <p>5</p> | <p>6 10am Membership Mtg.</p> <p>12pm <i>Pathways</i> Loss Support Group</p> | <p>7</p> <p>5pm Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Meditation</p> | <p>8 10 am Finance Comm. Meeting</p> <p>12pm Exec. Comm. Meeting</p> <p>6pm NAACP Mtg.</p> | <p>9 10:30am Meditation</p> <p>6-10pm Visuality Dance</p> | <p>10 10am Newcomers Orientation</p> <p>7pm ACMA Concert <i>Lipbone Redding w. Gallants opening</i></p> |
| <p>11 9am & 11am Service 10:10 am Adult Ed. Forum</p> <p>12:15pm Memorial Service for Joe Whitehill</p> | <p>12 10am Sun. Service Team Mtg.</p> <p>12pm Book Club</p> <p>6pm Mildred Smith's Odyssey</p> | <p>13 12pm <i>Pathways</i> Loss Support Grp.</p> <p>1pm Teaching Tues. <i>(see pg. 10)</i></p> <p>6pm Social Action & Outreach Mtg.</p> | <p>14</p> <p>5pm Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Meditation</p> | <p>15</p> <p>6:30 pm Free Inquiry Group (FIG) Meeting</p> | <p>16 10:30am Meditation</p> | <p>17</p> <p>Founders' Day Setup (no concert)</p> |
| <p>18 Founders' Day 9am & 11am Service (New Member Recognition)</p> <p>McGregor Clinic Collection 7pm ACMA Concert</p> | <p>19 Presidents' Day - Office Closed</p> <p>7pm Acoustic Eidolon in Concert</p> | <p>20 12pm <i>Pathways</i> Loss Support Grp.</p> <p>6-7:30 PFLAG Mtg.</p> | <p>21 3:45pm Board Meeting</p> <p>No Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Meditation</p> | <p>22</p> | <p>23 10:30am Meditation</p> <p>7pm ACMA Workshop</p> | <p>24</p> <p>7pm ACMA Concert <i>Bill Mize w. Bill Burkert opening</i></p> |
| <p>25 9am & 11am Service</p> <p>10:10 am Adult Ed. Forum</p> | <p>26 6:30 pm LIFE Rally Iona Hope <i>(see pg. 9)</i></p> | <p>27</p> <p>1pm Teaching Tues. <i>(see pg. 10)</i></p> | <p>28</p> <p>5pm Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm Meditation</p> | <p>See the calendar on-line: http://www.allfaiths-uc.org Updates & Corrections will be on the website in Red Print.</p> | | |

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM

by Joan Marshall, Co-Chair



This month the Climate Action Team is assisting the All Faiths Green Sanctuary Team effort to secure an EPA Environmental Justice Cooperative Problem-Solving Grant that would provide funding and EPA-assisted guidance in helping to resolve issues concerning water problems currently being experienced in the Dunbar area. You may remember that last year the Climate Action Team partnered with the STARS Community Forum in conducting a survey in the Dunbar community to identify the kinds of environmental problems they are currently experiencing.

Applying for this grant requires a great deal of effort and coordination with the many stakeholders involved including Dunbar residents and organizations, plus state, city and county governments and academia. We hope to be able to report a successful outcome of this effort to secure the grant sometime later this year.

We are also making plans for a film screening and discussion about solar energy in collaboration with other environmental groups including the Calusa Sierra Club, the Pachamama Alliance and the League of Women Voters to take place early in March. This will be open to the public and hopefully will help us reach a broader audience with our climate change message about transitioning to renewable energy.

Many thanks to all of you who participated in our letter-writing party on January 28th. Our focus at this time of year is on the Florida legislature, but we will be planning future letter-writing events that will also address city, county or federal issues.

The regularly scheduled February CAT meeting took place early, on January 29th. However, a special meeting may be scheduled for late February in preparation for the film screening taking place in early March. Our next regularly scheduled meeting (1:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month) will take place on March 6th. The CAT meetings are open to anyone who wishes to participate. Lots is happening. Come be a part of the excitement.

GREEN SANCTUARY UPDATE

by Karen Grabia

The Green Sanctuary Team is well underway with the application for candidacy. We have begun work on a grant for our Environmental Justice component of the application. After our work with Rising Together, and the strong leadership of Joan Marshall and Lewis Robinson, we were approached to consider applying for a grant for money to work in the Dunbar Community. This is underway. The GS Team will be working with the CAT to complete the required projects in the next month. Anyone who is interested or would like input into the final projects, please contact Karen Grabia at lifisgood1317@gmail.com

TREASURER'S REPORT

by Sharon Gray, Treasurer

CASH ASSETS AS OF 12-31-17

(After Payroll Deducted)

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 100 · Iberiabank General Fund | 4,852 |
| 102 · Iberiabank Operating Reserve | 43,526 |
| 103 · Raymond James Legacy Acct | 31,912 |
| 105 · Pay Pal | 679 |
| 107 · 2017 Capital Fund Acct. | <u>4,536</u> |
| Total | \$85,045 |

December 2017 P&L

| | |
|----------|---------------|
| Income | 19,490 |
| Expense | <u>16,663</u> |
| Net Gain | \$ 2,827 |

We are still welcoming back more snowbirds. Welcome back!

We are into the home stretch of our fiscal year. Only two months till the new budget will be in effect.

You have received, or will shortly receive, your final 2017 donation amount letter from the office (if your contribution was more than \$250/year) for IRS tax purposes.

A reminder for those Baby Boomers who are approaching the year in which you turn 70½, please check with your accountant about a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA or 401(k). Directly paid donations to All Faiths Unitarian Congregation from an RMD is considered a "Qualified Charitable Distribution" (QCD). These QCD's reduce your taxable income by the amount you donate, providing they are sent from your brokerage directly to All Faiths in your name. This could be a very beneficial to your future tax filings.

The finance committee, the board, our minister and I have developed a proposed preliminary new budget for 2018/2019 (which will begin April 1, 2018). There will be a Question & Answer session announced in March before the Annual meeting on March 25, 2018 at which time a vote for approval will be taken.

Additionally, the bylaws committee will have finished the proposed bylaws and a Question & Answer session is also being scheduled in March before the annual meeting, which will have the proposed bylaws on the ballot for congregational approval.

As always, your time, talents and treasures are greatly appreciated.

innovative, offering intellect, spirit, mercy and justice in an aching world crying out for us. Love as a virtue is a possibility: it is an opportunity to expand our small selves into a larger sense of self, which includes the world. It is a chance to engage others creatively and “without pretense or guile,” opening ourselves to new ways of shaping the world and our place in it. If we approach problems like global warming, poverty, health care reform or war from a perspective of love, the whole conversation shifts. I’m asking you to choose to set aside other causes, other requests for your resources and give to this congregation, knowing that you continue to build a place that will defend, occupy, and promote the values of reason, compassion, and equity that we hold so dear. Supporting this congregation beyond belief will maintain what we have already built and create a center of community that honors love not hate, comfort not judgement, that strengthens not destroys. If you support one thing, surely it would be this congregation that heals, challenges, questions, offers companionship and compassion, a way to becoming whole. Do other places you contribute to offer you this opportunity? Are they able to become the center of your personal, spiritual, justice seeking lives? Probably not. This congregation can offer that to you and is asking to be part of your conversion to humanity.

Answer the call. Be **bolder, more generous** and **rise in support** of this community that embraces you and all that you believe in and hold dear. Together we can spark a conversion here and now, in our families, in our communities, in our state and around the world simply by making a commitment to this holy place. May you understand that your conversion to humanity starts here.

- *Blessings, CJ*



**February's
ODYSSEY
Mildred Smith
Monday, February 12
6:00 p.m.**

This month Rev. CJ has scheduled an Odyssey with All Faiths' member *Mildred Smith*. Each month Rev. CJ will host an evening program where he will “interview” the member. It will be a mix of interview, storytelling, and an intimate look at the life and story of our members.

JOYS & SORROWS

With our apologies for any omissions, here are the joys & sorrows of our members expressed in December:

Joe Batal had extensive cervical spine surgery. We wish him a complete and speedy recovery so that he can be back with us soon.

Barbara Goolsby has been suffering from a bad bout of pneumonia. We hope that she receives effective treatment so that she will be healthy again soon.

Carol Papke had a stroke, and after hospitalization, she has gone to hospice in Minneapolis. We send our thoughts and prayers to her and her family.

Midge Magstadt sent greetings from freezing Rapid City. She has been receiving treatments for cancer, and sent the good news that a recent PET scan showed all areas of cancer were marked "resolved" except for a small area. We hope that her treatments continue to be effective.

Linda Runkle fell and broke her knee cap. She had orthopedic surgery to save the knee, but she has to have her leg in a full leg brace for 8 weeks. We send her our healing thoughts.

Memorial Service - We will hold a memorial service and place a brick in the Memorial Garden for **Joe Whitehill**, who passed away in December. The memorial will follow the second service on February 11.

Several of our members have been stricken by severe flu and bronchial infections. We hope that they all recover soon without complications. It's the time of year when everyone needs to take precautions, and get prompt treatment. Maybe not so many handshakes and hugs for a while. Now that's a real challenge!

"MAMMA MIA" AT BROADWAY PALM

Saturday, April 7 - 11:45 a.m.

All are invited to join in the celebration of All Faiths' April birthdays at the Broadway Palm dinner theatre located at 138 Colonial Blvd.

On Saturday, April 7, 2018, we will enjoy the celebrated smash hit musical “Mamma Mia.” The matinee performance will include a dinner at 11:45 a.m. with the show following at 1:15 p.m.

How to make your ticket reservations: Call Broadway Palm at 239-278-4422 to reserve seating. Mention “Dr. Ryan and order number #575641 to get a discounted price of \$56 for dinner and show (regular price \$60).

For hilarious entertainment, fun and fellowship, call now as group seating is limited. Questions? Call Joy Ellyn Ryan at 239-567-1062.

TOGETHER ON THE JOURNEY

by Fran Way, Member Services

Each month the newsletter will profile an All Faiths' veteran and/or new member. This month we feature Valerie Meacham.



Valerie Meacham Member Since August 2017

Valerie Meacham became a member of All Faiths in August of 2017. No stranger to Unitarian Universalism, she was first introduced to it in a congregation in Watertown, NY. While growing up, she was exposed to many different denominations by her parents, who held choir master positions in Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Christian Science congregations. She learned a lot about Catholicism when her mother was teaching music in a parochial school.

As a young person, she realized there is more than one religious view of the world. And she was increasingly offended by anti-LGBTQ attitudes and uncomfortable with rigid beliefs she encountered. Finally in the Watertown UU congregation, she found a faith that proclaimed the "inherent worth of all." This religious concept "opened a new chapter in my life. It was OK to hold different beliefs and still be respected!"

To her family and close friends, Valerie is known by her middle name, "D'Lo," which means "dearly beloved" in Dutch.

Born in Perryville, MO, Valerie and her sister were "backstage babies" and moved frequently. Her mother was educated as an opera singer, and her father was a professional actor and director. Through their Broadway affiliations, her parents knew many famous performers like Ethel Merman and Tony Randall. Once, the family was threatened with disaster when the small commuter plane on which they were riding developed mechanical troubles. While her mother looked after her older sister, she handed toddler Valerie to Dick Clark, who held her in his lap and soothed her until the plane landed safely.

Valerie describes her parents' life as "nomadic." In addition to their work on Broadway, they travelled all over the United States. Both parents were also professional educators and periodically took positions as choir masters, music directors and teachers. One summer they worked summer theater in Glacier National Park. Valerie recalls it as a happy, adventurous time, except when she came face-to-face with a grizzly bear and suffered a knee injury while escaping from it.

Valerie met her husband Dan while in high school in Syracuse. She said Dan was shy, and she admired him from afar. One day he showed up at the door where she was baby-sitting. She was startled by his arrival until she discovered that her charges were his siblings! Dan and Valerie began dating and were engaged for five years. Dan had joined the Army right

after high school, and Valerie says it took an act of war (the Persian Gulf) for her to finally agree to marry. They have been married 27 years and have one daughter, Emily, who manages a salon in Cape Coral.

Because of Dan's Army career, the couple has lived in many places in the U.S., plus two tours of duty in Germany. Valerie studied nursing but did not complete her degree due to their frequent moves. But her interest in caring for others has continued. Over the years, she has held several positions in hospitals, including several years at Health Park in Ft. Myers.

During Dan's long Army career, Valerie was a "hard core Army wife" She was a Girl Scout leader and a coordinator for an army family readiness group. She also volunteered for the Red Cross. Never interested in following their parents onto the stage, both she and her sister absorbed their father's aptitude for stage production. She and her sister, who lives nearby, have organized and produced several events in Ft. Myers.

After Dan's recent retirement from the armed services, they settled in their new home near All Faiths. Valerie and her sister are currently helping several elderly neighbors. And she finds herself drawn to the problems of the homeless. "I am drawn to others in need of comfort."

When asked about her goals for herself at All Faiths, she said she is interested in helping to organize fund-raising and social events. As a newcomer to All Faiths, Valerie has high praise for the attention and care that she and Dan received from CJ and members of the congregation when Dan suffered the sudden loss of both his father and youngest sister.

BLACK LEADERS TO SPEAK AT ALL FAITHS

February 8 at 6 p.m.

Come hear what they have to say

As we commit ourselves to racial justice, it is wise to listen to black leaders in our community versus assuming what the community needs. We will have an opportunity to listen to black leaders and ask questions in a forum led by the NAACP at All Faiths on February 8th at 6pm.

One thing we know is that people who are black need to lead and white allies need to listen and to learn. People who are black need to control the narrative because whites have controlled it for far too long. Look at what this has come to in our history. The answer to the question, "what do black leaders want from their white allies?" has varied. In fact over the past couple of years the black narrative has changed. Come and get an answer to that question.

FEbruary ADULT PROGRAMS

INCLUDING SUNDAY FORUMS

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| February 4 10:10AM | Sun. Adult Ed. Forum <i>Recycling: Everything You Need To Know</i> by Molly Schweers, Lee Co. Solid Waste Coordinator Climate Action Team Forum led by Peter Erickson AF Sanctuary |
| February 8 6:00PM | Thurs. Black Leaders The NAACP has gathered black leaders from Ft. Myers and will present the needs of the community and how we may respond AF Sanctuary |
| February 11 10:10AM | Sun. Adult Ed. Forum Short Stories Series: "Paul's Case" by Willa Cather AF Sanctuary |
| February 13 1:00PM | Tues. Haunted Church - Part 3 Reflecting on our religious past and grounding ourselves in UUism AF Community Room |
| February 18 10:10am | Sun. No Adult Ed. Forum |
| February 25 10:10PM | Sun. Adult Ed. Forum Short Stories Series: "A&P" by John Updike AF Sanctuary |
| February 27 1:00PM | Tues. Haunted Church - Part 4 Reflecting on our religious past and grounding ourselves in UUism AF Community Room |

LIFE

Two Important Meetings to Attend

February 26, 2018 - Monday - Rally - 6:30 pm

Iona Hope, 9650 Gladiolus Dr., Fort Myers
This meeting is to gear up and get informed about the Nehemiah Action

March 20, 2018 - NEHEMIAH ACTION - 6:30 pm

St. Columbkille, 12171 Iona Rd., Fort Myers
This meeting will ask authorities to take action

NEWCOMERS ORIENTATION

Hosted by the Membership Committee

February 10 from 10:00 a.m.

How much do you know about your congregation? How much do you know about Unitarian Universalism? Did you know that UU congregations are self-governing, and that authority and responsibility are vested in the membership of the congregation, or that we adopt our own bylaws, elect our own officers and approve our own budgets?

At All Faiths we want our members to understand what we believe in, what we strive for and what we celebrate. We encourage every member to participate actively in their faith community.

If you are a relatively new member and have joined All Faiths in the past two or three years, or maybe you're just thinking about becoming a member, we invite you to join us on February 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for a fun and informative workshop that will bring you up to speed on the community you chose to become a part of. Sign up on the bulletin board.

NEW SPECIAL COLLECTION POLICY

by Rev. CJ McGregor

On January 17, 2018, the Board adopted a policy guiding the process for funds collected during services for local community organizations.

Policy/Procedure:

As part of our mission, the congregation has special collections supporting local community organizations. Community organizations can only be added to our special collection list by Board approval.

Ten percent (10%) of the collections received during the services on the third Sunday of the month that are not marked as pledges, or otherwise specified for a particular use, will be set aside for the outreach program benefiting that particular month. The Minister's Discretionary Fund and Employee Bonuses are to be handled in separate collections. These funds will be used to support local community organizations approved by the Board. Organizations may be added; however, it is the Board's goal to keep the list of organizations that benefit small to offer impactful donations.

The organization that will be benefiting each third Sunday will be announced in the newsletter and from the pulpit. The Board, in consultation with the Finance Committee, has the authority to raise the percentage of funds collected at their discretion.

ALL FAITHS

Silent & Live AUCTION

Saturday, March 10 at 5 p.m.

\$5 per person
includes wine & light hors d'oeuvres



Gifts
Trips
Art
Dinners
Antiques
Theatre Tickets
and so much more!

Something for
EVERYONE!

A Fundraiser for All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

**THIS WILL BE A MAJOR FUNDRAISER
FOR ALL FAITHS**

Save the Date! Sunday, March 10 - 5pm

Since the practicality of holding a spring yard sale has become increasingly difficult, this year we will replace it with a *silent and live auction*. This is a fun way to raise money for your congregation, but we need your help. To see how you can contribute, please contact Kendra Maroon at chefkendra@yahoo.com

INTRODUCING SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AT ALL FAITHS

In March 2018 All Faiths will roll out a Small Group Ministry (SGM) program titled *Reflections*. We need volunteers to help coordinate the small group ministries. Please contact Rev. CJ if you are interested.

What is SGM?

Small groups of 5-6 people that meet monthly in someone's home or at our building. Each group has a facilitator that will lead the group. It's an opportunity to go deeper with messages coming from our pulpit.

What happens at SGM meetings?

Group meetings are guided by session plans that are simple and include opening words, lighting the chalice, topic discussion, reflection, and closing words.

Where do the topics come from?

Rev. CJ picks a monthly topic related to one of his sermons for the month.

How do I get involved?

During February we will provide an insert in the order of service asking you to provide information that will help us schedule three groups that you can choose from. We are looking for people who might act as facilitators/hosts. The program begins in March 2018.

What does SGM offer?

SGM offers a sense of community, connection to larger meaning, deeper feeling, a connection to the sacred, a place to belong, a place to hear and be heard, a place to talk about what matters most, and a place to seek meaning about life.

FEBRUARY CLEANING CREW VOLUNTEERS

Before Feb. 04 Ed Kleinow & Joyce Ramay
Before Feb. 11 Doug Deiningor
Before Feb. 18 Sharon Gray & Bill Snider
Before Feb. 25 Can You Fill This Spot?

Thank you all for doing such a great job all year.
Your donation of time is greatly appreciated.
We need a few more volunteers.

If you can help, please call the office 239-226-0900

ICE CREAM AND CANDY BAR!
All Flavors of Love
LGBTQ+ Dance
7-10pm
DJ
FEBRUARY 9TH, 2018
2756 McGregor Boulevard
Fort Myers, Florida 33901
Ages 16-24
VISUALITY



Children's R.E. is held in the Robinson Room during the 9 & 11 a.m. service on the 2nd & 4th Sundays, and 11 a.m. on all other Sundays

February 4 - This session explores the second Unitarian Universalist Principle: justice, equity, and compassion in human relationships. We will discover how, by finding balance in our own lives, we can promote equity across the interdependent web of life.

February 11 - In this session, children learn about and experience our third Unitarian Universalist Principle: acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth. Children find their own individual gifts and interests affirmed as the group explores a variety of spiritual practices from singing to making a Zen garden.

February 18 - In this session, we will explore the third Unitarian Universalist Principle: acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations. Children hear a contemporary story about Aisha, a pagan Unitarian Universalist girl, who celebrates the harvest holiday Lammas at a peace rally. During the celebration, she finds the courage to take the stage and lend her voice to the gathering.

February 25 - This session introduces our fourth Unitarian Universalist Principle, a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, through the story of Egbert Ethelred Brown, a Jamaican man who converted to Unitarianism. Though he experienced many hardships to fulfill his calling to the Unitarian ministry, Brown devoted his life to inviting others to learn about our free faith.

CHAMPIONS OF GRATITUDE!

Pledges for the 2018/19 pledge drive have started rolling in. If you haven't received a stewardship brochure and pledge card, be sure to pick one up at All Faiths or call Regina at 239-226-0900. We would like to have all pledge cards returned by Founders' Day, February 18, so we can finalize our budget.

Many of you have upped your pledges for the coming year, and for that we are grateful. Your financial commitments support All Faiths' mission, a compassionate, caring, hands-on minister, a fantastic new music director, all of our outreach programs, children's R.E., a dedicated staff, and a beautiful building and grounds. *It's about gratitude! It's about giving back! It's about commitment!*

MARCH ON!

All Faiths had a great turnout for the MLK March on January 15. Thanks to everyone who braved the cold to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his dream.



AMERICANA COMMUNITY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

February 2018 Concert Line-Up

Concerts Start at 7pm

\$15 General Public/\$10 ACMA Members

Saturday - February 3

HomeGrown:

Melissa Welke, Annie Wenz & Kim Mayfield

Saturday - February 10

Lipbone Redding

w. Bruce and Cecile Gallant opening

Sunday - February 18

Muriel Anderson

w. Ray Cerbone opening

Saturday - February 24

Doug Macleod

w. Bill Metts opening



Save the Date - February 19 - 7pm



Acoustic Eidolon (Joe Scott and Hannah Alkire) will be back playing for us for the sixth time! They will delight us with their music, a combination of guitar and cello, on *Monday, February 19 at 7:00 pm*. Tickets are \$20, available from Regina, Ed Elrod, or at the door. A portion of the proceeds will benefit All Faiths. If you want to see or hear more about them, visit www.acousticeidolon.com.

FORWARD THROUGH THE AGES

a congregational retreat

Saturday, February 3 - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Hosted by Rev. CJ McGregor

This retreat will help us define appreciative inquiry and use this concept to name All Faiths' DNA, who the congregation is at its core. We will identify strengths, challenges, opportunities, and a plan to move forward. Help us discover a process of naming who the congregation wants to be and naming where the congregation wants to be. This retreat will educate the congregation about the Life Cycle and Stages of Development for Congregations, and identify where our congregation stands. Your input is important and appreciated. Plan to attend!

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

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Email: office@allfaiths-uc.org Website: www.allfaiths-uc.org

Board of Governors: Diane Cartwright, President; Bill Snider, Vice-President; Sharon Gray, Treasurer; Ed Elrod, Secretary; Ed Kleinow, Past Chair;

Governors: Robert Bennett, Barbara Gaiser, Annely Hudanick, Lisa Leonhardt, David Slocum.

Staff: Regina Kilmartin, Administrator; Joseph Brauer, Music Director; Joe Gayton, Sexton; Robert Bennett, Hospitality

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Finance

Joyce Ramay

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Sunday Services

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Climate Action Team

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L.I.F.E.

Bill Snider & Regina Kilmartin

McGregor Clinic

Joyce Schaffer

Mano a Mano

Charlotte Blitt

Operation Joy

Annely Hudanick

Animal Ministry

(seeking leader)

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

Minister Emeritus: The Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson

Deadline for the **March** Issue of *Connections*
February 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 12:00pm, Friday and Sunday.
 Congregational Administrator: Regina Kilmartin