



# The Communicator

of the [Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Lake County](http://www.uuclakeco.org)

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## 11 AM Celebration of Life Programs

### September 7 - "Financial Challenges of a Liberal Faith in a Tumultuous World", with Rev. Roger Seidner.

Our Consulting Minister will invite us to examine together the growing stewardship responsibility we share jointly in our congregation. He promises to offer not an easy answer, but a very satisfying answer to our joint responsibility as we move rapidly towards a new era for Unitarianism Universalism in Central Florida.



### September 14 "Web of Change", with Rev. Maggie Lovins.

It is said that the only true constant in life is change. How we deal with, and integrate changes can shape the way we live our values in the various communities to which we belong.



Maggie will address the challenges of change in our personal lives, in our congregations, and in the UUA at large. She will explore with us how these changes and anxieties about them can affect our everyday lives. We will consider how we might harness and build upon the opportunities that accompany being a participant in the web of change.

Maggie is proud to be a member of the Southern Region's Congregational Life "HallelUUjah Staff". Residing in Pensacola, she previously served her home congregation as Administrator, Volunteer Coordinator and Children's Religious Education Coordinator. Maggie has served in many lay-positions in the Mid-South District, and Regionally as a Smart Church Consultant and Leadership Experience facilitator.

In addition to her Field Staff position, Maggie is currently enrolled in Starr King School of Ministry. She is passionate about Unitarian Universalism and believes that, while the freedom of thought and spirit have brought her to this place, it is the Faith itself that keeps her striving to make Unitarian Universalism a growing, sustainable worldwide movement. Supporting Maggie in her endeavors is her partner Chad, service animal Daisy Dog, and two loving felines.

### September 21 "A Covenant for New Beginnings", with Rev. Susan Berryman.

Rev. Berryman will share with us her hopes and desires, her understanding of the commitment, agreement, and pledge she is making with our congregation. This will be an interactive discussion allowing time for you to ask questions and to offer your suggestions and comments. Rev. Seidner will also participate. Susan and her husband Peter will return the week prior from their summer home in New Hampshire near their children. Susan is excited to be joining us in a ministerial and administrative role.



This is a landmark launch of a new era at UUCLC. Susan shares with us a strong conviction that this is the beginning of a beautiful and meaningful relationship.

## September 28 "Yom Kippur-an important Holy Day", with Rev. Roger Seidner.

Our beloved consulting minister will engage us in a discussion of the significance of Yom Kippur, probably the most important holiday of the Jewish year. Many Jews who do not observe any other Jewish custom will refrain from work, fast, and attend synagogue services on this day. Yom Kippur occurs on the 10th day of Tishri, which on our calendar begins at sunset on October 4th and ends at sunset on October 5th this year.

The name "Yom Kippur" means "Day of Atonement" and that pretty much explains what the holiday is. It is a day set aside to atone for the sins of the past year. In Jewish tradition, G-d inscribes all of our names. On Yom Kippur, the judgment entered in these books is sealed. This day is, essentially, your last appeal, your last chance to change the judgment, to demonstrate your repentance and make amends.

Yom Kippur atones only for sins between man and G-d, not for sins against another person. To atone for sins against another person, you must first seek reconciliation with that person, righting the wrongs you committed against them if possible. That must be done before Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur is a complete Sabbath; no work can be performed on that day. Jews refrain from eating and drinking (even water) on Yom Kippur. It is a complete, 25-hour fast.

Most of the holiday is spent in the synagogue, in prayer. In Orthodox synagogues, services begin in the morning (8 or 9 am) and continue until about 3 pm. People then usually go home for an afternoon nap and return around 5 or 6 pm for the afternoon and evening services, which continue until nightfall. The services end at nightfall, with the blowing of the tekiah gedolah, a long blast on the shofar.

Reverend Roger Seidner, our Consulting Minister, is available to respond to calls for pastoral care in crisis situations. If you or someone you know has a need, feel free to call him at (407) 905-5767.

Some members of Rev. Seidner's extended family are Jews. His extensive knowledge of Jewish tradition will allow us to better understand some of the most important Jewish beliefs and guidelines for living a virtuous and meaningful life.

### UUCLC Information & Contacts

Mail address: PO Box 1761, Eustis, FL 32727

Phone: (352) 728-1631

Email contact: [lakecountyuu@gmail.com](mailto:lakecountyuu@gmail.com)

Website: [lakecountyuu.org](http://lakecountyuu.org)

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The *Communicator* is published each month, from September through June.  
Editor: Ted Fessler Phone: (352) 735 -7405

### 9:45 AM Discussion Group Programs

September 7 – "The Spiritual Brain" by Dr. Andrew Newberg, of *The Great Courses*.

#### Treasurer's Report...

The 2013-14 Fiscal Year ended June 30. The total expenses for the year were \$26,358.22, which was 63 % of the budgeted amount of \$41,750. The total income was \$42,941.39. The closing balance of the checking account was \$23, 656, which included about \$1,500 designated for the Memorial Fund and the Children's Fund, which had not yet been transferred to the Money Market Fund. I will give more details about these two funds next month.

The Ruth Gray Bequest Fund received \$100,000 in June from the UUA which is holding the funds from Ruth's bequest in our name. The closing balance of the Fund was \$93,060.

The income in the month of July 2014, was \$2,367, and the budgeted expenses were \$1,390. The Ruth Gray Bequest Fund expenses were \$5,142, which included a down-payment of \$4,500 to Rispoli and Associates, the architectural firm that is designing our new church building.

I will answer any questions about this report. Call me at 735-5165. ...**Carl Hommel**

### **Book Club Meeting**

The UU Book Group will meet at 3:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, September 12th, 2014** in the UUCLC Office, at 127 N. Grove Street in Eustis. (The entry is in the front) At the last meeting we had a lively discussion of things religious roughly based on *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* by Eric Hoffer. Then those present continued a conversation ranging through many diverse topics. For September we are reading one of the following: The contact for more detail is Robyn Kelly; her phone number is 352-327-7513.

- No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam by Reza Aslan,
- Why I am not a Christian by Bertrand Russell,
- Christianity as a Fairy Tale by Rev. Dr. Ron Mazur.

### **An Overview of the Building Program...**

Upon the distribution of the funds left to our congregation by Ruth Gray for the construction of a new church building, we began to develop a program for carrying out Ruth's wishes. The building committee established goals for either the purchase of a site and construction of a new building, or the purchase and renovation of an existing building. The goals were:

1. To be in an area with future growth potential.
2. To be affordable – within our budget.
3. Be on a main highway – for visibility.
4. To have compatible surroundings.
5. To be accessible and easy to find.
6. The site should be about three to five acres to allow room for expansion.

A demographic study was prepared by the Unitarian Universalist Association and it indicated the best location for our building would be in the approximate geographic center of the area bounded by the Cities of Mt. Dora, Eustis, and Tavares. Many sites and existing buildings were reviewed in this area and due diligence studies conducted for the most promising sites. An existing building that could be renovated to meet our needs was not found.

Negotiations were conducted with the owners of several sites, and resulted in a purchase contract being signed for a 25 acre site at the northeast corner of David Walker Drive and Mt. Homer Road near Eustis. The purchase of the property was made possible by the owners, Mr. And Mrs. Aborio, giving us a generous discount in recognition of being a church congregation. The next steps in the program were to get the property annexed into the City of Eustis and rezoned to the "Commercial – Multi Family" designation which allowed a church. The City was most helpful and cooperative during the application, public hearing, and approval processes.

A boundary survey and an environmental evaluation was completed and a selection process begun to select an architect to plan and design the building. The firm of Rispoli & Associates, Architects, Inc. was selected and has begun the conceptual design phase.

Much work remains to finalize the design, select a contractor, and construct the building. We are hoping for a grand opening in early spring of 2016.

...**Carl Skiles**

## President's Message...

I wrote the following as part of a report on GA 2014. Before you begin to read, however, know that I am very aware that we are beginning a new UUCLC season and ending the summer services. I will be in China during all of September and return on October 4. While I am there, I will be thinking about Chinese culture and (my passion) the religious heritage of this country, but I will be missing you, the UU Community of which I am a part. I will return to my home in October and join you once again. Until then, Chris Higgins will continue to do the job of President, which she has done most capably all summer. She deserves my thanks and yours as do many others who have carried on the work of conducting UU business including building our new Mount Homer home.

...Russ

## Thinking Outside the Box

As I write this, the building designs we are considering for our new home are preliminary designs on paper. They are essentially boxes. I do not mean this as a criticism. That is okay, I think, as long as we do not confine our thinking to a box as well. I am talking about constructing not a building, but a church with a mission. One of the things I found most interesting at GA, was the realization of how much of the mission of the UUA has moved beyond the concept of traditional church, even traditional UU church. We are partly traditional church; but we are also a dynamic movement. Teresa Cooley writes about this in the [cover story](#) of "UU World." Egor Emery reported on this article, I believe, at the June first service. Read it if you have not. Also look carefully at the [cover](#). It is a young woman whose mind seems to be on fire. She seems to be sending that fire into the world. It seems to me to sum up the spirit I sensed at GA 2014 – youth and fire -- in much the same sense as Pentecostal fire.

GA 2014 in Providence, RI, was the first GA that my traveling companion, June Sweeten, and I have attended. We came away with so many impressions and so much information that we likely will be trying to synthesize it all for months to come. I tried to attend sessions that would put me in touch with innovation. June tried to focus on RE for kids. Unfortunately, there were not many related workshops so she spent considerable time looking at UU youth materials in the book displays. She also attended workshops that would help us build our congregation. We are not a stagnant church (and yes, I have decided to call it a church); we are changing and, everyone hopes, changing in a way that will strengthen our movement. In particular, the young adults of our faith (and yes, I have decided it is a faith) are shaping a UUism that is somewhat different from what many of us have known. They are both radical and traditional and radical because they are traditional in ways that likely would make some of us uncomfortable. And they are influential. June and I sat through the Business Session whose purpose was to decide the Congregational Study issue for 2014-2018, for example. You know what they were (gun violence, immigration etc.) because our congregation discussed them at meeting in Discussion Group and decided to support "Renewing and Securing Our American Democracy." There seemed to be quite a bit of support for this at the GA Business Session. The study issue adopted, though, was "Escalating Inequality" and that was in large part because the Youth and Young Adult Caucus demonstrated and spoke so effectively for it. They presented it as an issue that affected them and their futures as indeed it does. They swayed the vote.

A second example of their influence is in their experiments in intentional community and worship (worship is the word that many young people use and the word that is accepted by most of the GA community). They are looking for meaningful engagement and are unafraid to use a language of reverence. One of the sessions I attended was called "Beyond Traditional: Experiments in UU Ministries." Patricia Cooley, who wrote the article I referred to above, was the moderator. In that article, she talks about her (and our) resistance to change. She writes movingly about her reluctance to embrace online worship. She says that she had resisted looking at [The Church of the Larger Fellowship](#) online for three months after it was launched, but when she did, she was "moved to tears." She knows that these "new models of affiliation" are our future. When I entered the room where the workshop on Experiments in UU Ministries was being presented, I wrote this in my notes, "these people are young." I was talking about the presenters. In fact, they were. Some were seminarians. They are our future, I am sure. They talked about two major directions that UU experimentation has taken, both complementary. The first direction takes the UU ministries outside of the church building and the traditional congregation. One such effort is called "Create Meaning." The

idea here is to offer spiritually connected classes for the community. Folks pay for attending and it does generate some money. Thirty-five percent of it goes to the class teacher. They offer classes like "Fully Awake/Truly Alive," or "Peace Psychology," or "Mandala Making for Healing." Most attending are not UUs, but classes promote UU values. Like all these non-traditional efforts, Create Meaning has a strong web presence. You can find them at [createmeaning.org](http://createmeaning.org). Be patient when you click this as it takes a while to come up.

#### PART OF THE CREATEMEANING.ORG WEBSITE



We will offer interfaith/multi-faith experiences that lead to spiritual growth, create connections in community, and make the world a better place. This will be a place where you can learn and process what you know already about your spiritual life and learn something new! We are based on core values intended to positively impact the lives of spiritual seekers:

- 1) Everyone is sacred and worthy
- 2) We are all connected
- 3) The search for meaning and truth is ongoing and best done in community
- 4) The world needs our gifts

Gatherings will happen in various places like libraries, coffee shops and churches who are willing to donate their space. Also visit our web-site for resources for your journey.

Although they are associated with LA, Denver, and Reno, I could not help but think that in an area like Mount Dora it might be worth a try. It is important to realize that the meeting place for these classes is not a UU Church. They could meet in a fire station or a dance studio or a library. Two thirds of those attending are non-UUs and many would not think of entering a UU building.

Another fascinating effort is the Lucy Stone Cooperative in Boston. Lucy Stone is an intentional living housing community where UU values are practiced. Those living there share responsibilities such as home repair, cleaning, and cooking. They construct, plant, and maintain gardens. Before meals, they say grace and on Sunday evenings, they invite the public to Sunday night supper and singing. The best way to get a sense of what they are about is to go to [uucommunitycoops.org](http://uucommunitycoops.org) and take a look at their slide show or go to the Lucy Stone Cooperative on Facebook where their core values are stated as "sustainability, spiritual practice, and social change."



SUNDAY SUPPER AT LUCY STONE

I want to report on some UU experiments talked about at this session that are kind of hybrids, i.e., both outside the church building and in. A preeminent example is The Sanctuary in Boston. The Sanctuary is dedicated to non-denominational worship. They describe themselves as "a church without walls." In

between twice monthly worship services at the host churches, First Church in Boston and First Parish in Cambridge, they might meet in people's homes. Again this seems to me largely a younger persons' movement and, again, quite a few of those worshipping at Sanctuary are not UUs. Some are "nones." The freedom and spirit of this movement reminds me very much of the spirit of the Emerging Church movement, which I have written about in this space. Like the other two experiments I mentioned, they have a strong web presence. Try [thesanctuaryboston.com](http://thesanctuaryboston.com) for a start and also take a look at their Facebook page.

#### AT SANCTUARY BOSTON



Similar to the Sanctuary Boston idea is Awake Ministries in Annapolis, MD. This is a mid-week service specifically targeting the "nones." Unfortunately there was no one there from Awake. I think they were at another workshop scheduled for the same time. Nevertheless, you can find some information about Awake written by Tandi Rogers (Growth Specialist for the UUA) at <http://growinguu.blogs.uua.org/organizational-maturity/awake-ministries/>

Finally, Ian White of Original Blessing in Brooklyn was at this workshop. This startup congregation has made a strong impression within UU circles. It is an attempt to restore real reverence (and the language that goes along with it) to UU worship. He and his congregation are unabashedly challenging the reluctance of UU congregations to become God-centered. Ian talked about the effort, as he does on a video that I know a few of you watched, as a "spiritually ambitious movement" with a desire to reclaim the sacred and to talk openly about "the holy" and "God."



"For us," he said, "it starts with God. We do God." He claims that once we find the voice of Unitarian Universalism (and for him, I believe this means a willingness to talk in traditionally religious language) the money will show up. Is he right? And would this work in our congregation? Ian says their kind of UUism is not for everyone and I completely agree. What is significant -- and, in a way, this is an important subtext of all I have written about above -- is that the UU movement does seem to be moving toward what Bill Sinkford (previous UUA President) called for: "a language of reverence."

Our younger members are leading the way. I believe we (as a religious movement and as a congregation) are still trying to find our way with this, but we are much closer than we have been since 1961 when the Unitarians and the Universalists joined. Here is a link to some of the Original Blessing videos. While not just a youth movement, as you watch the videos, notice how many of those participating are young people, some with families. <http://vimeo.com/90699447>

I have reflected for some time about what all this experimentation means for us and, to be honest, I don't have a well-formulated answer. This, though, I know: when I look at the videos, websites, and Facebook pages I have referenced above, I see people, many -- maybe most -- of them young, and of different religious backgrounds looking for a community where they can find, for want of a better term *sacred meaning*. I don't know what this means exactly and they may not even know what it means, but somehow they are constructing a context that gives them an emotional connection to some abstract that satisfies their need for a religious experience. They are doing it online and at places like the Wildgoose Festival in North Carolina (see <http://wildgoosefestival.org/festival-2014/about/> ). Many of these people may never attend a Sunday morning UU service, but they are UUs even if they never enter a UU church building. Maybe our new home can become a hub for promoting some innovative efforts similar to the ones I have described. I

can conceive of a worship space, for example, that remains aesthetically appealing and inspiring whether it is used by small groups or large. And it does not matter if these groups meet on Sunday or on other days of the week, and it does not matter whether they talk about "God" or not. We have room for more than one kind of UUA and for more than one kind of service, or, as some would say, more than one kind of worship. Who knows what is possible. What is possible???

### **From Karen Woolhouse: Memories Of The Florida District Meeting in April**

In a recent issue of "The Communicator" Russ Littlefield reported on the Florida District meeting of the Southeast Region, which he and I and Jack Champion attended back in April. Russ gave a comprehensive account, so here I will just mention some of my principal memories of the meeting.

One major feature of attending a large denomination meeting is that you meet and are inspired by people who have made a major commitment to the UU principles. James Key, who was elected to a six year term as the moderator of the UUA in 2013, holds the highest volunteer position in the denomination in the USA. He gives sixty hours a week to his commitment. He spoke to the District meeting for an hour via an internet-based TV transmission (which worked very well). In late June he will chair the UUA General Assembly in Providence, RI.

Jim spoke about the future of the denomination and the need to evolve the notion of "church" to meet the changing customs and spiritual needs of society. He believes that Unitarian Universalism and its commitment to love and social justice has more relevance than ever today.

In addition to his broad comments, there were several notable quotes that I remember. He mentioned the need to have a short response ready for people who ask "What is Unitarian Universalism?", and said that one that he likes is "We are not about getting into heaven. We are about getting heaven into us". He has been running into people who say "Oh – you're the love people" because of the visibility of the Standing on the Side of Love campaign. Another interesting comment: Unitarian Universalism is the only major denomination whose name states its beliefs. Other denominations are named after their founder or their faith leader or their system of governance, etc.

The meeting also raised my awareness of and understanding of Unitarian Universalism as a "covenantal faith", as considerable agenda time was spent on this. Within congregations people covenant to walk together in a spirit of love, service, and justice. We agree to follow a democratic process for decision making, and to abide by the outcome of that decision process. However congregations also covenant with other congregations to be part of the larger denomination organization, to achieve the scale and resources to put love and service to use in a way which will bring justice and make a world impact. This is an inspirational thought.

The covenant principle is being applied in new ways. Traditionally there have been clusters of congregations, based on geographical proximity, which shared some resources and ideas. Today technology takes away the requirement for geographical proximity, and new affinity clusters are being formed using internet-based tools to share ideas and best practice based on congregation size, topic, etc., and to collaborate on service projects.

There is a lot of organizational change happening in UUA at present. The Florida District has been a pilot for a new means of funding the denomination office and staff; namely, each congregation sends a percentage of its annual operating budget, rather than an annual fee for each member of the congregation (which had the unintended consequence of denomination membership numbers being understated). This new funding approach has been a success and will be extended. The Districts will also be working more closely together in Regions, and in fact Jim's talk was simulcast to the District meetings throughout Southeast Region, all of which took place on the same weekend, and we all heard each other's questions and comments after the talk.

There was lots of other interesting information at the meeting, including a very good session on stewardship which I attended. But the biggest impact of the meeting, in the end, comes from the people whom one meets, and their deep commitment to our shared faith.

## Highlights of Board of Trustees Meetings...

June 19, 2014 -

**Treasurer's Report:** We now have a 2014-15 Fiscal Year Pledge figure of \$31,600, an eleven month expense figure of \$32,922 and an eleven month income figure of \$39,941, and can closely estimate the Fiscal Year total figures. Using these figures Carl Hommel has prepared a draft budget for 2014-15, which he would like to have the Board to act on.

Carl Hommel made a **motion, based on this budget** to make the total of \$35,020 a Working Budget. Jack Champion seconded the motion. The vote was called and the **motion passed**.

### Concerns:

1. Jack Champion made a motion to accept the proposal with the stipulation that the Landscape architecture is included as an optional service and authorize the contract submitted by Rispoli & Associates Architecture, Inc. to be approved by the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County and signed by Christina Higgins, as Vice President of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County. The motion was seconded by Carl Hommel. A vote was taken of those present in the room and the members of the BOT who were listening on phones. The vote was unanimous "YES". **The motion passed.**
2. The BOT members are seriously considering a proposal from Susan Berryman to become a paid part time minister to our congregation. We want to set a date to present all of the information regarding her qualifications, proposed salary, and months she will live in Florida at a Congregational Meeting.
3. There will be a Memorial Service for Bill Becker on August 2, at the chapel in Waterman Village.
4. The Board members adopted the **motion** made by Jack Champion to pay the fee of \$250 for one delegate to the Southern Region Presidents' Convocation on July 7-11. Chris Higgins will be our representative.

July 30, 2014 -

**Treasurer's report:** Carl Hommel noted the Share the Plate funds for June and July had not been dispersed. The attendees decided to wait for the next meeting of the Social Justice Committee to get their recommendations.

A detailed 2013-14 Budget, Actual Expenses, and the 2014-15 Budget was discussed and a recommendation from Carl Hommel that such a document should be presented annually.

The **Building Design Committee Report** was given by Betty Emery. She noted a meeting with Joseph Rispoli, AIA on July 17 presented various floor plans, a Programming Analysis, a Checklist of Design Elements and a preliminary Floor Plan Layout for the new church. Additional drawings will follow.

The hiring of Susan Berryman was discussed. A contract of employment and compensation guidelines will be developed by Chris Higgins. Ms Berryman will furnish references and has agreed to let us run a background check.

We are waiting for an answer to our request on the renewal of our lease contract, of the Woman's Club Building, from the City of Eustis.

Gina Rossi reported progress is being made on the content of a new website.

The next meeting of the BOT will be on September 10.

...Kit Tatum

## **From the Building Design Committee...**

We had a very productive meeting with Joe Rispoli tonight (August 29). He presented 3 plans which were modifications of the "5" series and as a group we felt that he had done very well with the feed back we sent earlier in the week. We made just a few more modifications at the meeting and Joe will be sending us a new plan for final feed back in the next couple of days. We believe that he has a plan that will give us the functionality and space we are looking for. As soon as I have the drawing, I will forward that to everyone. We will be meeting with Joe again on Thursday, September 11th, at 1pm at the church office. We will be going over some exterior designs at that meeting.

Thank you all for your invaluable input! We are making great progress.

...**Betty Emery**

## **Sale of Greeting Cards for the Religious Exploration Program**

Hinda Ramsay is again donating greeting cards for UUCLC to sell, to raise funds for curriculum materials and supplies for a religious exploration program for children. The greeting cards are sold with 100% of the proceeds going to UUCLC, for this purpose. Last season over \$200 was raised.

All of the greeting cards are a limited edition printing on high quality paper with a matching envelope. The original art is from New England artists, all text is printed from hand calligraphy, and the original poetic verses are noted on the back of the card.

The greeting cards are packaged in bundles of ten, at a price of \$10.00 per bundle. As before, a bundle of birthday cards is available, and also an all occasion bundle of birthday, get well, sympathy, and note cards.

In October we will add bundles of bright, colorful holiday cards, also to be sold at a very competitive price.

Please save your greeting card and holiday card business for this important fundraiser for UUCLC education. If you need greeting cards, please contact Hinda at [hindaramsay@gmail.com](mailto:hindaramsay@gmail.com) or 352-552-1404. Later in the season we will resume selling them on Sunday mornings.

## **September Birthdays**

Phyllis Gillette, September 9

Bob Sanford, September 21

**Have you seen our new website? Check it out! [lakecountyyuu.org](http://lakecountyyuu.org)**