



The Communicator

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

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March Programs

Discussion Group at 9:30 am

March 5 – These days, many people dislike calling themselves “religious” and often prefer the label “spiritual.” **What do we mean by 'spirituality'?** What does this word mean to you? What does it mean in the context of our services. What does it mean in the context of our theme of this year, “Creating a Beloved Community”?

March 12 – Sensei Sullivan. **Buddhism 101.** Sensei Sullivan will discuss the essentials of Buddhism with us. Bring your questions.

March 19 – Peter Pitzele - **People of the Book: How do Jews Read the Bible.**

March 26 – **Saying Goodbye to the Woman’s Club.** Come share memories from the beginning of our Woman’s Club occupancy to the present.

UUCLC Information & Contacts

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Russ Littlefield, Vice Pres.	Carl Skiles
Joyce Axelson, Secretary	Suzie Lockwood
Stu Anderson, Treasurer	

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Worship Service at 11:00 am

March 5 – Dr. Robert Tucker – **“Why Your Pledge Matters.”** The Rev. Dr. Robert Tucker returns with a message on the crucial importance of good stewardship. Dr. Tucker’s messages are always inspiring and amusing. You won’t want to miss it.

March 12 – Sensei Morris Sullivan. – **Spirituality: Process, Not Product.** A recent Pew survey of the American religious landscape showed that the fastest growing group are people who don't identify with any religion or who identify as "spiritual, but not religious." But what does it mean to “be spiritual?” And is it possible to be spiritual without being religious? During his talk this week, Sensei Morris Sekiyo Sullivan will discuss what it means to have a spiritual practice, and how one might live a “holy” life with or without religious identity.

March 19 – Welcoming Ceremony for our newest members. Please join us for a very special service of word and music dedicated to our newest members.

March 26 – As we prepare to leave our long-time home in the Woman’s Club, our Minister Emeritus, Rev. Roger Seidner, comes to us with a message titled **“Closing, Closure, Continuing.”** We are dealing, Rev Seidner says, with a unique sequence of reflection as we remember the past and the lives that were part of it. We look to the present with the challenge of our faith. And we have hope for the future yet before us.

President's Message...

We are and have been very fortunate!

- For 22 years, UUCLC members have worked together to assert the need for an 'inclusive non-creedal fellowship that works for a just community (that) fosters a lifelong search for personal spiritual fulfillment'.
 - We continue to add new members, but have been careful to nurture the warmth and welcoming spirit of a beloved community.
 - Thank you to our members, new and 'old'.
- Although UUCLC has been primarily a lay led congregation, the Reverend Roger Seidner has served the congregation faithfully for approximately 20 years as our consulting minister, providing much needed continuity and ministering in times of crises. Thank you, Roger.
- In September 2014, we contracted with the Reverend Susan Berryman to be our Developmental Minister. Susan helped us to develop our Sunday Service Committee, called Worship Research and Programs (WRAP), plus much more. Personal circumstances took her to Arizona on family business in the summer of 2016. Thank you, Susan for helping us transition from what I call a Mom and Pop congregation to a mid-sized Congregation.
- An interview panel is currently reviewing candidates for a part time minister position. We plan to budget funds for a half time minister for 9 months (mid September to mid June) of FY 2018. Thank you to the interview panel, Egor Emery, Judith Havens and Carl Hommel, for surveying the congregation regarding ministerial priorities and evaluating our candidates.
- After 4 years of planning and work, construction on our new building at 1235 Mount Homer Road in Eustis is about to reach completion. We owe our benefactor – Ruth Gray – much gratitude for her generous bequest. Thank you, Ruth, not only for the bequest, but also for your confidence in UUCLC!
- And thank you to all the folks on the UUCLC Building Project Committee who worked countless hours poring over architectural plans, attending meetings, deliberating about design decisions and material choices. The fact that so many UUCLC members were involved in this building project is a testament to the skill, ability and HEART of our two primary project chairs. Carl Skiles is the overall Building Project Chair and Betty Emery is the Building Project Design Chair. Thank you Carl and Betty and all who worked and continue to work on making our new building a home for this congregation.
- Change is stressful; even the change that we deliberately orchestrate. Beginning this January, Susan and Peter Pitzele have led three Sunday morning Discussion Group sessions to help the congregation to envision how we can 'grow into' our new building. That is, what programs do we want to develop? What resources/talents do we have? What resources do we need to acquire and what steps will we take? This will be an ongoing discussion and we thank Susan and Peter for helping us to think and talk about our future "Out of the Box".
- Talk about Talent! That certainly is one of the things UUCLC has in abundance. Both our long-time members and our newer members come from broad backgrounds and bring a variety of skills and abilities. And that's a good thing, because we want to offer a variety of services to the community and to our congregation. We will be seeing follow-up material from the "Out of the Box" Sessions and Sign-Up sheets for Committee Activities. So don't be shy. Please offer to help. If you have questions or ideas or interests, there are multiple ways to be heard. All committee and Board meetings are open. Come sit in and listen and comment. Once a month, Discussion Group is an Open Forum—all subjects are welcome. And, it's time to resurrect the Suggestion Box.

On February 26, hospice chaplain Orlando Rodriguez spoke to us about his ministry of presence. In preparing to meet with us, Reverend Rodriguez had learned about Unitarian Universalism and reflected on our 7 principles. He was very complimentary about UU philosophy in general and about our UUCL Congregation in particular. But, he did challenge us. The Rev. Rodriguez urged us to leave our collective comfort zone and take action to help make positive changes in the lives of people in our community. ►

► In order to do that, first we need to minister to each other (some call that a Caring Committee—although others would say we are all part of the Caring Committee) and then marshal our skills and talents in ever widening ripples around the circle of our Congregation, outward to our community....

Together we can do anything!

...Chris Higgins, President of the Board of Trustees

Tidbits from the Board of Trustees February Meetings

The Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lakes County (UUCLC) meets once a month at our Temporary Office in the Wells Fargo Building in Eustis, Florida. This meeting is open to all members of the congregation. However, due to the many projects with our new Building, planning for opening celebration, Annual Meeting, New Part Time Minister Search, and more the Board voted to meet twice in February. I offer the following tidbits from the February meetings:

Our February meetings were both opened by Chris Higgins, President with a moment of silence and Chalice Lighting on February 9th and February 23rd.

We had member visitors, Committee Chairs and as well as winter resident members attend these Board Meetings.

Finance -- Stuart Anderson said that our financial situation looks good for the remainder of our Fiscal Year. The Board, with the assistance of Stuart Anderson and committee members, will be establishing a Budget for FY 2018 to be presented at our Annual Meeting.

Nominating Committee members, John Landers, Joanne Reilly and Gina Rossi are creating a slate of names for members to vote on for the Board of Trustees in the upcoming election process. These names will be announced at least four (4) weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. Look for this slate sometime in early March.

This year's **General Assembly** is scheduled for June 21st – June 25th in New Orleans

Part-Time Minister Search Committee, Egor Emery, Judith Havens and Carl Hommel are working diligently to interview candidates for this position. Part of the interview process includes observing the candidates preach in a neutral location according to guidelines set by the UUA. A questionnaire was given to all members of the congregation to determine what needs members want the new Part Time Minister to fill.

Building Completion Celebration is being planned by a committee that was formed by Gina Rossi. That celebration will be on May 13th, with a performance by Lake Concert Band and conducted by John Landers. A reception will follow with light refreshments.

Nurture Your Spirit, Help Heal Our World, the UUA theme for the year, will be our theme as well.

The **Leadership Council** meeting was well attended by Committee Chairs, Board members, and members of the congregation.

Building -- Carl Skiles gave us a lengthy report on the status of the new building, sale of three acres of land on the north side of our property line and the line of credit that has been explored. March 31st is currently the date for completion of building with a Certificate of Occupancy.

Betty Emery also provided a lengthy report on the work of her committee in addition to her work on completing the Medallion (sign) for the outside of the building. Betty went on to update us on the status of furniture, appliances for the kitchen, research on stained glass windows, and the podium. A vibrant discussion on the use of the land was enthusiastic as well as informative.

Membership Committee developed and provided a two-day orientation for 12 new members. A service to welcome these members will be held in March.

WRAP Committee has been working hard to provide rich, meaningful and innovative discussion groups and services. Attendance at services has increased. ►

► **Adult Education** – Christie Cleveland has been generously providing TAI CHI for members of the congregation. The group is learning and practicing once a week on Tuesdays at the Wells Fargo Office Building and now is practicing outdoors.

Social Justice --- Open Door always welcomes volunteers to assist in UUCLC's commitment to serving homeless in Eustis.

This is just a snapshot of some of the happenings on the Board and the many committees at UUCLC. Please check the website for the minutes of each meeting that are posted for your review and information. Next Board Meeting: Thursday, March 9th

...Joyce Axelson, Secretary

Congregational Survey Results

The members of the pastoral search committee, Egor Emery, Carl Hommel, and Judy Havens would like to thank all those who took the time to complete the survey. The following is a summary of your answers.

1. In what order would you like our pastor to prioritize his/her ministerial duties. Choose three.
The following three duties scored the highest among the members of the congregation:
 1. Spiritual leader
 2. Pastor
 3. Person of character
2. Which of the following priorities would you consider to be the most important?
The following priorities scored the highest among the members of the congregation:
 1. Presenting stimulating and challenging Sunday services
 2. Fostering a sense of fellowship and community within the church
 3. Caring for and counseling individuals.
3. Which of the following qualities do you think are the most important considerations in screening ministerial candidates?
The following three scored the highest:
 1. Professional competence (ability to communicate, counsel, empower etc.)
 2. Character (strong moral consistency, stability, reliability)
 3. Empathy (genuine interest and concern for others)
4. The minister should have freedom of the pulpit, whereby he/she may express whatever views he/she may hold without censorship from the congregation.
The majority agreed with this statement.
5. The UUA assembly adopted an equal opportunity practice in that no discrimination regarding race, color, disability, sex affectional or sexual orientation, age or national origin be permitted.
The majority agreed with this statement.
6. Which statement best describes the minister's administrative role?
The majority of the congregation believed that, while the board and the committees set policy or organize the programs of the congregation, the minister also has an administrative role in operations. This necessitates a cooperative, collaborative approach.
7. What predominant style of ministry would you prefer in the next minister?
The majority chose Pastor: The minister as chaplain, by virtue of his/her spiritual and moral gifts, the minister becomes an influential counselor to individuals and to a strong lay leadership.

Update on the new building...

We are nearing the completion of our new congregational home. In about 30 days – give or take – we will be able to realize the dream of our beloved benefactor, Ruth Gray, with a building of our own. Over the last several years we have seen this project go from an idea on paper to the purchase of land to an amazing ►

► structure we can all be proud of. When the doors open to greet us, we will have a versatile structure that has been designed to meet the needs of a growing congregation for years to come.

Here is a tour of what we have to look forward to! When you enter the building, you will walk into a large grand foyer that connects directly to the social hall to the left and just beyond the sound room, the celebration hall is straight ahead. To the right is the office which has a direct view into the foyer as well as the outside. The hallway on the right leads to our library which will have a window to see directly into the celebration hall. Just a few steps down the hallway will be the restrooms and then at the end of the hall are two classrooms. Each classroom will also have its own entrance from the outside of the building. One classroom will have a door directly into the celebration hall as well. The celebration hall will have a large, easily accessible stage to allow for flexibility of programs. The room is a good size but if we need even more space, we have the ability to open up the room by folding back the acoustic wall that separates the celebration room from the social hall. The two spaces can then be used as one. From the social hall you reach the kitchen that has been designed to accommodate food preparations for a large group. There is a pass through from the kitchen into the social hall. The kitchen will also have a pass through window to the outside to allow for events in an area that is a future patio. Off the kitchen is a large storage room/pantry that includes a washer/dryer. For even more storage we have another storage room in the back of the social hall. Then from the social hall we circle back into the grand foyer.

We have a building that maximizes our space and give us flexibility to have multiple types of events with ease. This has been a labor of love for everyone who has worked very hard to make Ruth's dream come alive. We are all very excited and look forward to our new home with great anticipation.

A wish list has been started on Amazon for items that we would like for our new building. The list is growing and new items will be added soon. We are hoping that members and friends who are interested would purchase these items as a gift for the congregation. For anyone wanting to see the wish list, go to Amazon's website and look for: FIND A LIST OR REGISTRY. Under LIST type in Lakecountyuu@gmail.com. Then hit SEARCH. Our wish list will then come up. There are many UU churches that have wish lists. The way to find ours is to search by our email address. Our list will not come up by our congregation name. Please do not have anything shipped directly to our new building. If you order something, please have it shipped to your home. Keep watching the wish list site for new items as they are added.

...Betty Emery



UU Book Group...

The UU Book Group's selection for March is "Lone Wolf," by Jodi Picoult. It is available as an eBook and in paperback. Also, check libraries and used book stores. Book Group will meet Tuesday, March 21 at 3, in the office.

Gladys Becker celebrated her 95th Birthday at Waterman Village this past October. It was hosted by her youngest son, Randy, who is a Unitarian Universalist minister in Key West. Some members from our church attended to share cake and wish charming Gladys well.

Days are long for Gladys because her sight and hearing are not very good but her attitude is one of acceptance and cheerfulness in recognition of what is. She is sometimes confused but often is right on in her observations. She needs visitors and your presence would be much appreciated. She is my adopted mom and I try to see her once a week. I encourage you to adopt a shut-in and make that a mission you can contract weekly. Of course, you are blessed as much or more than the one you visit.

...Susan Mulholland

March Birthdays

Julie Champion, March 11
Stuart Anderson, March 14
Bob Cleveland, March 22
Ted Fessler, March 22
Ozell Ward, March 25
Betty Emery, March 27
Patti Stiner, March 27
Joyce Gray, March 30

WHERE DO WE STAND?

Russ Littlefield

Recently, near the end of one of our discussion groups, members of WRAP and the Board distributed a Declaration of Conscience written by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. We had dual objectives. One was to call attention to the Declaration which one may sign as an individual. The other was to seek approval from the members present to sign it as a congregation. On the copies of the Declaration we passed out, we provided a place to register your agreement or disagreement with the statement. We tallied the results and concluded that we did not have enough members voting to sign the declaration as a congregation. I don't know what was in the minds of those members who disagreed with the statement, but I think it is important that we find out.

As things stand now, everyone has an opportunity to express their personal support of the Declaration by going to this link <http://www.uua.org/action/show-love/declaration-conscience> and casting an individual vote. Perhaps we will try taking another vote when more of our members are present.

In the meantime, here is an interesting bit of history.

A TALE of TWO DECLARATIONS OF CONSCIENCE

The first Declaration of Conscience was a speech given by Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican from Maine, in response to a speech that Joseph McCarthy, also a Republican, had made charging that the U.S. State Department was chock full - full o' Communists. What follows is taken directly from Wikipedia's account of the **Chase Smith/McCarthy Conflict**:

The **Declaration of Conscience** was a speech made by U.S. Senator [Margaret Chase Smith](#) on June 1, 1950, less than four months after Senator [Joe McCarthy's "Wheeling Speech,"](#) on February 9, 1950. Her speech ►

► was endorsed by six other liberal-to-moderate Republicans. In it, she criticized national leadership and called for the country, the [United States Senate](#), and the [Republican Party](#) to re-examine the tactics used by the [House Un-American Activities Committee](#) (HUAC) and (without naming him) Senator [Joe McCarthy](#). She stated the basic principles of "Americanism" were:

- The right to criticize;
- The right to hold unpopular beliefs;
- The right to protest;
- The right of independent thought.

Smith voiced concern that those who exercised those beliefs at that time risked unfairly being labeled [communist](#) or [fascist](#).

In the Declaration of Conscience, Smith said,

"The [Democratic](#) administration has greatly lost the confidence of the American people by its complacency to the threat of communism and the leak of vital secrets to Russia through key officials of the Democratic administration. There are enough proved cases to make this point without diluting our criticism with unproved charges.

Surely these are sufficient reasons to make it clear to the American people that it is time for a change and that a Republican victory is necessary to the security of this country. Surely it is clear that this nation will continue to suffer as long as it is governed by the present ineffective Democratic Administration.

Yet to displace it with a Republican regime embracing a philosophy that lacks political integrity or intellectual honesty would prove equally disastrous to this nation. The nation sorely needs a Republican victory. But I don't want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny -- [Fear](#), [Ignorance](#), [Bigotry](#) and [Smear](#).

I doubt if the Republican Party could -- simply because I don't believe the American people will uphold any political party that puts political exploitation above national interest".

The Second Declaration of Conscience was written by representatives of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. I can't help but wonder if they had Margaret Chase Smith's famous speech in mind.

Dear Friends of Faith and Conscience,

We're writing with what we expect is the same urgent sense of concern you're feeling about the results of the presidential election and what will follow. Based on the many conversations we've had with each other, people of our communities, our partners, and those most likely to face looming threats, we've concluded that in these extraordinary times we must be united in purpose to protect the values of our democracy and those vulnerable populations among us.

To that end we have undertaken an unprecedented degree of coordination between the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. There is a sense of urgency, and a need for vigilance. And there is clarity that we must act, not alone, but together. We need everyone—including you, your congregation, your friends, and your colleagues.

As a first step, we have prepared a [Declaration of Conscience](#) stating in the strongest possible terms our commitment in these troubling times. By signing the declaration, individuals and congregations will be affirming our core values and declaring our willingness to put them into action. Please read it and, with your signature, join us in standing on the side of love, protecting the most vulnerable among us, and defending core values that are under attack.

We will be vigilant of administration actions, policies and verbal assaults that undermine the principles of our declaration or disparage, threaten or attack innocent people. We will respond by speaking truth to power and mobilizing support for those who are under siege. To be successful, your support and that of your congregants will be critical. ►

► This is not about partisan politics. It is a principled response to the potential targeting of people not for what they have done, but for who they are. It is a commitment to speak out and to act in support of basic human rights. We will keep you informed of the progress of this effort and of further opportunities to advance our cause together in the coming weeks and months.

We cannot predict what the future will bring, and we do not pretend to have all the answers, but we can and will be ready for the struggle ahead of us. If you feel the same, please join us. Join us in transforming faith into action, sign the [Declaration of Conscience](#) today, share it with your own networks and please encourage others to sign as well.

Thank you for your concern, vigilance, and willingness to act.

In Faith and Solidarity,

The Rev. Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Hon. Thomas Andrews, president and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Declaration of Conscience

At this extraordinary time in our nation's history, we are called to affirm our profound commitment to the fundamental principles of justice, equity and compassion, to truth and core values of American society.

In the face of looming threats to immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and the LGBTQ community and the rise of hate speech, harassment and hate crimes, we affirm our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

In opposition to any steps to undermine the right of every citizen to vote or to turn back advances in access to health care and reproductive rights, we affirm our commitment to justice and compassion in human relations.

And against actions to weaken or eliminate initiatives to address the threat of climate change – actions that would threaten not only our country but the entire planet – we affirm our unyielding commitment to protect the interdependent web of all existence.

We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil.

As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us.

We welcome and invite all to join in this commitment for justice.

The time is now.