



The Communicator

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

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April Programs

11 AM Worship Service

April 5 – Easter Sunday, with Rev. Susan Berryman. Come join us for an exploration of the Unitarian Universalist take on Easter. What is the meaning of the springtime story of Easter? What of resurrection, of transformation, of life after life? Wear an Easter bonnet and rejoice for the renewal of life!

April 12 – Yom Hashoah, with Rev. Roger Seidner. Our consulting minister will lead in a service that is observed worldwide, remembering the tragedy and death of some 11 million people in Europe during World War II. Drawing on personal reflections of survivors and the ongoing problem of hatred and isolation, we will focus on the meaning in our time.

April 19 – The Re-enchantment of the Future, with Rev. Randolph Becker. One of the great gifts of modern liberal religion was its reliance on reason as the basis of understanding and action, replacing a reliance on superstition and magical thinking. But, at the same time, the gift of reason robbed religion of a sense of the relational which allows one to be moved as well as to know. In the name of objective thinking, have we denied ourselves the very tools needed to face the world's urgent needs?

April 26 – Stewardship and Responsibility, with Rev. Roger Seidner. Rev. Seidner will address the role that we have in responsible stewardship focusing on one's personal faith in terms of sustainability.

9:45 Discussion Group

April 5 – “Near Death Experiences and Creating a Spiritual Science” with Franklin Pennington, PhD.

April 12 – “The General Nature of Ethics”, part of the Natural Law and Human Nature series of the Great Courses, by Prof. Joseph Koterski, PhD.

April 19 – Food. The Social Justice committee will provide a working definition of sustainability. You will also learn about where locally to buy healthy food, what seafood is sustainable, facts about "slow food", why/when to choose organic, and the role sugar plays in health.

April 26 – Open Forum. Please bring your topics for discussion.

UUCLC Information & Contacts

Mail address: PO Box 1761, Eustis, FL 32727
Office Phone: (352) 728-1631
Email contact: lakecountyuu@gmail.com
Website: lakecountyuu.org

| Officers | Trustees |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Russ Littlefield, President | Betty Emery |
| Chris Higgins, Vice Pres. | Carl Skiles |
| Carl Hommel, Treasurer | |
| Kit Tatum, Secretary | |

Rev. Susan Berryman, Developmental minister.
Phone: (386) 956-6110

Roger Benton Seidner, Consulting minister.
Phone: (407) 905-5767

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Editor: Ted Fessler Phone: (352) 735-7405

Dear Congregation,

In March we celebrated generosity and stewardship and found out just how amazingly generous and abundant we are as a congregation from your increased pledges to your gifts for our new church. We can feel hopeful for the future of our liberal faith.

This month we will be celebrating the earth and the joys, concerns and sorrows we feel toward the treatment of our one and only planet home. As Unitarian Universalists we take seriously the responsibility to future generations to leave this earth in is as good or better shape than we received it from our parents. This seems a tall order and there is work to be done, but we will get there, Woyaya.

As we celebrate springtime with our Flower Communion, a Passover Seder and Easter Sunday I want to wish each of you a renewal of your spirit in the warmth and joy we share as a community. There is so much to be grateful for; the beauty, the peace, the camaraderie and the fellowship we share.

May you welcome the hope and freshness of springtime into your heart and be reminded of the cycles of life, never ending, ever evolving and transforming.

May you know that you are loved, cherished and needed,

Rev. Susan Berryman

Highlights from the Meeting of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees held a meeting on March 16, 2015. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Chris Higgins made the Treasurer's Report. We had \$31,000 of income from pledges and miscellaneous income, with expenses running nearly \$41,000. The outstanding pledges and plate income should bring our balances in line.

The Pledge Drive is in full swing. Please refer to the printed Budget and Brochure which was distributed on Sunday, March 15. Read the Budget for a glimpse of future expenses and income and the Brochure for a study of our Vision, Mission, and Goals.

The work and leadership of the Committees was reported to the BOT and their work and progress was reviewed.

A Congregational Survey is going to be compiled with questions designed by the Committees. The Survey will be prepared and distributed early in April, 2015.

The Building and Design Committee reported on the response to the request for funds for special design projects in the new church. This fund has grown to \$50,000 from donations. This committee is considering hiring an interior designer, who will work on the finishing of the interior of the new church. This person will be able to recommend furniture, paint, kitchen equipment, sound equipment, etc. The designer will be interviewed on Thursday, March 19. The BOT members passed a motion to allow the head and co-chair of this committee to hire the designer if they think he will perform well and do good work in compliance with our desires and intellectual philosophy.

There will be the formation of a Ministerial Relations Committee. The minister, Susan Berryman, will nominate two people and the BOT will nominate a third person.

The formation of a Leadership Council, in compliance with our bylaws was discussed. This committee will consist of the members of the BOT and the Chairs of the Standing Committees.

The Slate of Nominees for vacant positions on the BOT was presented to the Congregation on March 15, 2015, and will be voted on at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on April 12, 2015.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on April 16, at 1:00 p.m., in the building at 127 North Grove, in Eustis, Florida.

Kit Tatum, Secretary

President's Message, three notes ...

A Note on Our Governance

We are a congregational church. That means the congregation or their representatives make the decisions that set our course and determine our outcomes. We have no hierarchy to blame or to praise. The only elected positions we have is the Board of Trustees which acts on behalf of the congregation. It is the Board's responsibility to keep the congregation informed about their activities. The information avenues that the board has are emails, The Communicator, the bulletin board, and announcements at Sunday services. In addition, special meetings may be called from time to time.

To make this congregational governance system work, the bylaws call for the board to establish standing and temporary committees as they see necessary. These committees are essential to the operation and success of this UU congregation. Among these committees are Social Justice and Environment, Worship Research and Planning, Membership, Publicity, We Care, and Finance. It does not take long to see that what one committee does may affect another. A social justice event, for example, may also be an opportunity to interest someone in membership. In addition, nearly all of our committees should tap into our Publicity Committee. In order to share information and coordinate activities, the Board has established a Leadership Committee consisting of the chairs and co-chairs of standing committees as well as the members of the Board. The plan is for this group to meet periodically to share information and facilitate planning.

One of the first tasks for the Leadership Council will be to put together a congregational survey that will ascertain congregational views on what each committee, the board, and the minister have done and evaluate some future directions. You might be asked, for example, to evaluate the success of the Michael Dowd presentation (if you attended) by checking off, say, one of four or five responses from very successful to not successful at all. The leadership council will meet with the Board on April 9 to put these questions and an evaluation scale together. The hope is to administer the survey in late April. We sincerely hope members and friends will take the time to fill out this survey when it is administered in late April.

From my Notebook

It seems I cycle around to this issue once a year or so. The truth is I just can't seem to let go of the UU, because it seems to be the only place I can find liberal religious community, even though it leaves me spiritually wanting. But I want to have it all, and I want it in one place.

The quotation above, a part of an article sent to me by Gina Rossi, captures exactly how I feel about UUism; only instead of cycling around this issue every year or so, it occupies my thought at least weekly. She found the article in *Patheos*, an online magazine that offers thoughtful essays on a variety of spiritual/religious issues. The writers range from atheists to evangelicals. This article was called "The Baby is the Bathwater, Why I Haven't Joined the UU Church." In it, John Halstead, a birthright Mormon and self-described Pagan who attends a UU church, expresses a feeling that I suspect many have about the UUs. On the one hand, he admires the UU's commitment to social justice and rationality while, on the other hand, lamenting the fact that the UUs have a hard time delivering the kind of transformative and life-changing experience that some evangelical and mega-churches have had such success with. Have you ever felt that way? I've been around this congregation long enough to know that for some it is hardly an issue at all; but for others, it is. I am one of the latter. I've been wanting to have a conversation with some interested folks about this for a long time now. Maybe we could take it up in discussion group. We'll see. For those who are interested, here is a link to the [article](#).

A Note on April's Book Group Selection

As I write this, a Saudi Arabian led coalition of largely Sunni nations are bombing the Houthis, a Shia version of Islam in Yemen. How fortuitous that the UU Book Group's choice for this month helps explain the development of Sunnis, Shia and their offshoots. *No God but God*, by Reza Aslan, presents Islamic history

in a lucid, readable style. Maybe a year or so ago, I heard Aslan interviewed on the NPR program *Fresh Air* about another book he wrote called *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. He and his parents fled the Khomeni revolution in the 70s and came to the U.S. He shocked his not-too-religious but Islamic parents by converting to a fundamentalist Christian faith at the age of 15; but, after studying a little history, became disillusioned and turned back to his Islamic tradition (the word “tradition” rather than “faith” chosen deliberately). He received a Master of Theological Studies degree from that bastion of liberal religion, Harvard Divinity School and a Master of Fine Arts from the prestigious Iowa Writers’ Workshop. Along the way, he picked up a PhD in sociology from the University of California where he now teaches creative writing. There are quite a few interesting little tidbits in this book including the real story on Muhammad’s wives and the politics of early Islam. In addition, Aslan does some informed speculating about Islam’s future. It is currently second to Christianity in number of adherents and, as it is arguably growing faster, may soon outdistance it. Come and learn something about this religion which touches all of our lives. We will meet on April 14th at 3 in the Grove St office.

...Russ Littlefield

Nominating Committee Report

The members of the Nominating Committee are June Sweeten, Chair; Bill Hermann; Wayne Linfield; and Jean Burda, Alternate. The slate of new officers is as follows: Christine Higgins, President; Russell Littlefield, Vice-President; Stuart Anderson, Treasurer; and Suzanne Hanscom, Trustee. These candidates will be voted on at the Annual Meeting, following the service on April 12.

June Sweeten

April Birthdays

Frank Bishop, April 2
Marvin Jacobson, April 14
Debbie Miller, April 19
Pat Linfield, April 25
Betty Emery, April 27

Update on Donations Campaign for Beauty of the New Building

The response to our campaign for significant donations for the beauty of the new building has been very generous. Ruth Gray would be delighted to know how many people have come forward with donations for the building which she gave us. Ruth’s generous bequest will build a functional and serviceable building, but it is up to the rest of us to provide the extra touches to make it beautiful – things like stained glass windows, or more attractive entrance doors, or furnishings and equipment for the rooms, or art, or statuary for the grounds.

Already there is a substantial fund for purchase of stained glass for windows, and a grand piano with necessary accessories like a cover and a spider dolly to support it. There will be a new lectern and a beautiful new chalice to stand beside it. There will be some garden statuary, and there’s funding for furnishing specific rooms. Plus, there is a sizeable fund of money which has been provided for the Building and Design Committees to use as they see fit for the beauty of the building.

In addition to becoming beautiful, the building is also becoming very personal to the congregation. There have been donations in memory of spouses, and of friends, and of parents. Some people have offered to join committees to help with the selection of specific items. The building will hold many memories.

This is the time when the Building and Design Committees need to know what they will have to work with in finishing the new building. We hope that anyone who wishes to make a significant (\$1000 or more) donation to the beauty of the new building will make their decision soon, and let a member of the donations

committee know. The donations committee is Karen Woolhouse, Frank Bishop, and Bernie Greenberg. Conversations with a committee member about a possible donation will be confidential.

A couple of important points: A donor can make a commitment now and choose to pay their donation any time in the next year. The important thing is for the donor's intention to be known. Also, donors can choose to be anonymous if they wish.

Thank you again to our generous donors. The Committees working on the new building are very grateful for your help. Plus, UUCLC congregations will enjoy the results of your donations for many years to come.

Karen Woolhouse

Another Chance to Buy Greeting Cards!

Last year we raised almost \$500 for the UUCLC Children's Program Fund through the sale of greeting cards. Hinda Ramsay donates the greeting cards, which include original art by several artists and original text written by Hinda. The cards are printed on high quality paper, and include high quality mailing envelopes.

The greeting cards will again be offered for sale, on Sundays during April. As before, they will be offered in bundles of ten, a birthday card bundle and an all occasion card bundle. A bundle of ten cards will cost \$10.00, and all proceeds will go to the UUCLC Children's Program Fund.

These are beautiful cards, for personal use or for gifts. Please take this opportunity to purchase some, and benefit the Children's Program Fund.

