

If you don't see this e-mail properly, view it online



# Connection

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice

*A welcoming, caring congregation encouraging spiritual growth, seeking meaning and pursuing justice.*

Issue No. 2054

Venice, FL

March 2021

## Sundays at UUCOV

### Sunday Services

#### March 7, 2021: LIVE Online Service: No Caravan of Despair



**Rev. Khleber Van Zandt.** The season of Lent is not a season of despair, but rather an invitation to be honest with ourselves about the ways we are not yet living out the love and compassion that would build the Beloved Community.

#### March 14, 2021: LIVE Online Service: My Losing Season

**Rev. Khleber Van Zandt.** There is no better teacher in all of sports - and maybe in all of life - than failure. This week, a paean to the return of baseball and to the wisdom the universe makes available to losers of all varieties.

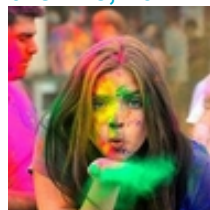


#### March 21, 2021: LIVE Online Service: No Longer Black and White

**Rev. Khleber Van Zandt.** Our dictionaries often define racism in terms of individual prejudice, but this does little to explain how social hierarchies are reproduced. While those of us who are white may be against racism, we still benefit from the distribution of resources put in place and controlled by people like us.



#### March 28, 2021: LIVE Online Service: After the Jubilation



**Rev. Khleber Van Zandt.** The stories about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem say it was a time of celebration and jubilation. But after the crowds turned away, things got ugly fast. How often does the excitement of a big moment entice us away from the real work of life?

### Special Offering

#### March 14, 2021: Open Door/Family Promise

Family Promise of South Sarasota County's Open-Door Program offers families with children facing homelessness a chance to get back on their feet. They do this by helping with rent payment if the family falls behind, or by helping pay 1st, last, and security deposit on a rental home, or by paying for 1-3 days of emergency shelter in a motel while housing is being secured. These and similar contributions can make

sustainable independence a reality for families with children in the South Sarasota County area. Please make checks payable to UUCOV with 'Family Promise' in the memo line.



## Minister's Corner

## How to Contact Us

### Which Way Do We Go?

I've been mulling some past history:

On March 8th, 2020, we held our last in-person Sunday service (a total of 22 COVID deaths had occurred in the U.S.).

On April 1st, the Board of Trustees decided to officially close the campus (deaths totaled 3,170 in the U.S. to that point).

In May, I 'partially returned' early from sabbatical to help Rev. Dennis McCarty with some pastoral tasks (George Floyd was murdered by police in Minneapolis on May 25th)

On July 19th, Rev. Dennis ended his term as Sabbatical Minister as I officially returned from sabbatical (the U.S. had just recorded a world-record single-day rise of new cases, with 77,638 new infections reported on the 17th).

In early September, Dick Smith and I determined that we should begin working toward live-streaming rather than recording our services (on September 1st, the U.S. passed the 6-million mark of reported COVID cases).

On December 24th, we posted a recorded Christmas Eve service featuring Grace Grote and the late Lori Baribeault, and hosted an online Christmas Party on Zoom (on January 1st, the U.S. passed the 20-million-case milestone).

On February 7th, Dick Smith, Thom Reeves, and I successfully live-streamed the first service held on a Sunday morning since the previous March (by that morning, COVID deaths in the U.S. totaled 445,000).

As I write a sermon for February 21st and prepare this column for the March 2021 newsletter, I read that the total reported cases of COVID in the U.S. are approaching 28 million, with the total number of deaths near 500,000.

The counselor side of me might ask, "And how does that make you feel?" Of course having lived through the history I've just recited, I'm going to be emotional. Wouldn't anyone be?

There are positive signs, though: more and more of us are finding ways to get a vaccination. New-case numbers have turned down in the past few weeks as has the number of deaths as well as the occupancy levels of local ICUs. So there's that.

**Mailing Address:** UUCOV  
1971 Pinebrook Road  
Venice, FL 34292-1563

**Website:** [www.uucov.org](http://www.uucov.org)

**Minister:** Rev. Khleber Van Zandt V

Email:  
Phone: 314-223-0551

**Office Administration:** Salli L. Clarke  
Phone: 941-485-2105  
Email:

We're all desperately tired of this pandemic and the closeness and connections we've lost because of it. It's not going to be easy coming out of the hole we've been in. The next few weeks or months are not going to be a walk in the park, no matter what.

As we struggle to decide when it will be safe enough to gather face-to-face again, we need to remember what we've been through, and the dangers we're still facing, and how hard this has been on every one of us.

Let's give each other a break, shall we? Hasn't it been hard enough already? From my perspective, it certainly has.

See you in church, not if, but when,

Khleber



## From the Board

---

### President's Message

As we enter the month of March we end UUCOVs fiscal year preparing for our new year starting April 1, 2021 with a virtual Annual Meeting Saturday March 20 via Zoom. Sadly it has been a year since we have been able to meet on our campus or in our Sanctuary.

We all miss being able to be with fellow congregants for small talk, what is happening in our lives, the life of UUCOV or the world. We are looking forward to our beloved congregation making a smooth transition into a future that will be different and hopefully better. The limited personal contact has made decisions challenging. The members of the Board and the hardworking volunteers of Teams, Taskforces and Ad Hoc planning groups have been considering all the information possible and the history of the congregation when making plans. Things often work smoother when we can chat on the lanai but the very nasty Covid-19 has prevented this often important step.



The members of the Board of Trustees have a covenant which reads:

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of this congregation. It represents and acts for the congregation in setting policy and conducting church business and to advocate the values of UUCOV and Unitarian Universalism.

To that end we pledge to:

Respect our congregation by:

- Listening to the concerns of the congregation
- Expecting a respecting confidentiality
- Speaking with one voice once a board decision is made

We all want a healthy and happy UUCOV

Pamela Palmer, *President*

### Treasurer's Report

This is the busiest time of the year for your Treasurer!

Trying to wrap-up pledges for this year....notifying many by email.

Working with the Stewardship Committee for pledges for the coming year. I currently have 75 pledges; last year there were 154 total pledges.

And I have been notified that our provider for wind insurance has dropped us "in order to reduce their risk in Florida". So I am soliciting wind insurance quotes. In addition I am reviewing our commercial liability insurance, our umbrella insurance and our workman's compensation package. If any of you have experience and knowledge in the insurance field, I could use your help.



Please continue your financial support for UUCOV.....what a great caring community, encouraging spiritual growth, seeking meaning and pursuing justice.

Dave Lyon, *Treasurer*

## From the Stewardship Committee

***"Giving is not just about making a donation, it's about making a difference."***

Kathy Calvin

The Stewardship Committee thanks those who have completed their pledge cards during February, our pledge month. As of February 20th, we have had 83 pledge unit donors pledge \$205,350 to enable UUCOV continue its work this coming year 2021/22. Thank you notes are being sent out in a joint effort with the Stewardship Committee and our President, Pam Palmer. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

If you have not yet completed your pledge form and do wish to support your congregation, please return via email or mail your pledge card. If you have not received a pledge card, please contact Pat Franks at and she will supply you with a form. A timely response is important as our Finance Committee needs to complete our budget allocations for our Teams to do their work.

The Finance Committee is busy completing the current fiscal 2020/2021 year and continuing to plan for 2021/22. If you have not sent in your pledge for 2020/21 please do so.

Our congregation is able to be here for you and to do our work in the greater community only through your generosity.



## Meeting Minutes

### Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

Click here for the minutes of the January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting -

<https://uucov.org/images/phocadownload/UUCOV%20BOT%20January%202021.pdf>

Claire Harrison, *Secretary*

### Minutes of the Coordinating Council Meeting

Click here for the minutes of the February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 meeting -

<https://uucov.org/images/phocadownload/Coordinating%20Council%20Meeting%20February%202021.pdf>

Jack Head, *VP and Chair of Coordinating Council*

## From the COVID-19 Task Force

***Want to increase your chances of getting COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible?***

Register on surrounding counties health department website.

SARASOTA COUNTY – Go to [www.Sarasota.floridahealth.gov](http://www.Sarasota.floridahealth.gov) website to complete application for an Everbridge account or call 941-861-8297 (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for assistance).



MANATEE COUNTY – Go to [www.mymanatee.org](http://www.mymanatee.org) website to register for the standby pool on [www.vax.mymanatee.org](http://www.vax.mymanatee.org) or call 311 (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for assistance).

CHARLOTTE COUNTY – Go to [www.Charlotte.floridahealth.gov](http://www.Charlotte.floridahealth.gov) website or call 866-200-9160 (no time listed for assistance).

## Congregational Life

### Chalice Circles

Would you like to join a few of your fellow congregants in exploring topics of spiritual importance from the weekly sermon? If you can commit to attending at least four of the five sessions on either of the weekly meeting days in March, come be a part of an online gathering based on the Chalice Circle concept of small-group ministry where, following a brief check-in, we'll propose some questions and see where 'the spirit' leads us.



Please register for either the Monday or Tuesday Zoom meetings by emailing the Minister, Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, at .

Monday Group: Mondays in March (1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th) from 10 to 11am

Tuesday Group: Tuesdays in March (2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th) from 2 to 3pm

-- registration and commitment required -- (A separate series may run in April.)

#### Mondays

##### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/99721821536?pwd=NU90U0JsY2tlcFhjVW9SNk5XUVd6UT09>

Meeting ID: 997 2182 1536

**Passcode: Chalice**

#### Tuesdays

##### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81182024166>

Meeting ID: 811 8202 4166

**Passcode: Chalice**

### Question & Answer Session for ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 01:00pm - 03:00pm

##### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84530848018>

Meeting ID: 845 3084 8018

**Passcode: Questions**



For further information contact – Pamela Palmer

### ATTENTION!

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF VENICE**

**\*\*\*ANNUAL MEETING\*\*\***

**SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2020 @ 10:00 AM**

VIA ZOOM

Please plan to attend. - **Your vote is important.** It is vital that we have quorum to enable us to conduct the business of the Congregation. You are needed at this virtual meeting.

1. 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda
2. Nominations for Board positions and Nominating Committee for 2021/22
3. Motion regarding Special Offering Proposal for 2021/22
4. Proposed 2021/2022 Budget

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81969809558>

Meeting ID: 819 6980 9558

**Passcode: Annual**

**Please Note: You will receive information, including an online ballot, March 4<sup>th</sup>**



## Virtual Office Hours

'Virtual Office Hours' are every Monday and Wednesday, **8:30am – 9:30**. You may enter the ZOOM session at any time during the hour to speak with Salli regarding questions, requests, assistance, UUCOV publications, etc. **If you need to speak with her at another time or one-to-one, email her and she will set up a private Zoom meeting.**

**Oct 1st thru April 30<sup>th</sup>** Any email received after 3:00pm Mon-Thurs will be answered the next day. Any email received after 3:00pm Friday will be answered Monday.

**May 1st – Sept 30<sup>th</sup>** Any email received after 12:00pm Mon-Thurs will be answered the next day. Any email received after 12:00pm Friday will be answered Monday.

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84352749746>

Meeting ID: 843 5274 9746

**Password = office**



## News from the Caring Team

The Caring Team would like to thank the many team members who have been helping our UUCOV friends in need. You are very much appreciated!

The Caring Team is always on the lookout for UUCOV members and friends who would like to be added to our list to be called when a meal, a phone call, or a ride to a doctor appointment is needed. You may not be called often, but when the need arises, it is comforting to know we have a group of caring, concerned people to call on. Please contact Eileen Leapley at to be included on the list.



Please remember that all UUCOV members and friends can keep their personal data stored in a **Confidential Ministerial File**, to be used only in case of emergency. The file includes who should be called in case of emergency, your health and professional services providers, your personal wishes, and final arrangements.



Contact Caring Team leader Eileen Leapley at for a copy of the form, which will be kept in a sealed envelope in the minister's confidential file.

If you are interested in pre-purchasing a plaque for the **UUCOV Memorial Wall**, located in our beautiful Memorial Garden, please contact Eileen Leapley. If you have any questions about the Memorial Wall, Eileen will be glad to talk with you.

During these trying times, your UUCOV **Pastoral Care Team** stands ready to provide a listening ear, as a representative of our congregation, to support you regarding any concerns you may have. Please don't hesitate to email ; someone from our team will contact you.

Occasionally, members of our UUCOV family need a **ride to a doctor's appointment**. Although this service is not needed often, our UUCOV Caring Team has a small roster of people who provides these rides. The team would very much like to add to their list, so if you are interested in very occasionally driving one of our members to an appointment, please send an email to Francie Storey, rides coordinator, at



***During this time of isolation, it is more important than ever to keep the lines of communication open among the members of our congregation. When you have a few minutes, go through the UUCOV directory and make a call to someone, even if you don't know them. You may be surprised at the interesting conversation you will have, and you just may make a new friend. We don't want anyone in our congregation to feel alone, and we all have a lot of love to share.***

## Fellowship Groups

**Fellowship Groups** are still going strong, despite this time of lengthy isolation. Many of our groups are meeting via **Zoom**, and even though our congregants are spread out over various parts of the country, they can participate in lively virtual discussions. This contact is more important now than ever. If you are not presently in a UUCOV Fellowship group, you are urged to contact Wendy Voigt at .



## Meet Our Congregants

***This column is to introduce both new and not so new members, friends and visitors to each other. During this pandemic when we can't be together it just seemed like a good idea to introduce each other to each other.***



**Nancy Ryder and Dick Pastore** - Dick grew up in Eastchester, NY. He and his twin brothers graduated from Trinity College (Conn.), and all went on to get graduate degrees. Dick received an MA from Columbia and his Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology from Purdue. His 40-year career was as a professor in the psychology dept. at SUNY Binghamton. Dick was divorced and has no children.

Nancy grew up in DeWitt, NY and was an only child. In her late teens, after her parents died, Nancy's took over the family Sand and Gravel business and real estate properties. During the next 20+ years, she married and had two sons. In her early forties, she divorced, divested herself of the business holdings and started on the long journey of self-discovery.

At LeMoyne College, a Jesuit School, she took the mind and soul opening major - Religion. "Christianity was a myth" - what a shock! As an MSW major at Syracuse Univ. she was opened to the overwhelming need for social justice reform. During a long search for a new physical home and spiritual home, Nancy moved to Sedona, AZ where a friend introduced her to UU - what a fit!

After a few twists and turns, we both landed in Venice. We met six years ago. Nancy never had to join a dating website because UUCOV had the on-site Yentyl extraordinaire Edna Robinson. Edna insisted that we meet. She knew Nancy from UUCOV and Dick as a close friend and neighbor. Her words were, "You're perfect for each other." And we believe we are!

Our first date was to an excellent, local Italian Restaurant. Dick expressed that he had traveled extensively to exotic places. Nancy told him a little about her life living, working and traveling in Europe during her stint at

managing a guest house with her 2nd husband in the Austrian Alps. At the end of the evening, we both knew we had mutual interests in travel, dining (fine and otherwise,) and a thirst for knowledge.

Khleber married us in Dick's living room on Dec. 8, 2017. Since then, we squeezed in some travel together and have sampled kangaroo tail in Australia, pizza in Naples, Italy and baklava in Greece!

Along with the fun stuff, in three short years, we have suffered more than our share of major health problems. Nancy's SFG, UUCOV friends, and the UUCOV Caring Team have been a constant source of support. They brought food, organized rides for Dick to his Dr's appts, made encouraging phone calls and social visits and were generally there for us in every way. Dick was so impressed with the kind, caring, compassionate members who did so much for us, he started to attend the men's SFG and joined UUCOV last fall. Now UUCOV is "our" spiritual home. It means the world to us in so many ways. Thank you UUCOV for being there for us!

**Eileen and Steve Leapley** – Eileen moved from Queens, New York to Florida in 1976 with her first husband, settling in Venice where her parents had retired. She raised her two children, worked as an administrative assistant for several schools in Sarasota County, and divorced her husband when the children both reached adulthood.



Steve worked as a police lieutenant in Hamden and New Haven, Connecticut while he and his wife raised their three children. Upon his retirement, they traveled most of North America in an RV, until his wife's health declined. They then moved to Florida, where they enjoyed retirement until her death.

Eileen and Steve met at UUCOV in 2012, and after a whirlwind courtship were married by the Rev. Mike Young at a ceremony on the beach. Both are very involved in UUCOV; Eileen is presently team leader of the Caring and Remembrance Team, while Steve is on the Board of Trustees and provides security to the UUCOV campus.

Steve's passion is golf. He plays three days a week, and recently got his first hole-in-one! He also serves on the Board of Directors of their condo association. Eileen enjoys Zumba on the beach twice a week, raises Monarch butterflies, and tends their small patio garden. Together they enjoy biking, hiking, and kayaking. They've been able to share their love of travel, which they look forward to resuming in the not-too-distant future.

They are both quite proud of their 14 combined grandchildren. All of Eileen's reside in Venice; she loves babysitting the little ones and cheering on the older ones at their sports activities. Steve misses his family greatly since he was unable to visit them in Connecticut this summer. Hopefully, they will be able to return to Old Saybrook this coming summer.

Eileen and Steve are very much looking forward to the time when their UUCOV family can come together again, both on Sundays and at gatherings during the week.

## Pathways



Are you interested in hearing more about Unitarian Universalism and UUCOV? Are you interested in becoming a member? Join us for a two-session group meeting to learn more.

You will also meet and get to know other newcomers, the Minister, and Membership Team.

Future meeting dates and times will be scheduled to accommodate participants. To register, email Jan Lemoine and Nancy Wilson at

## UUCOV Congregants Volunteer in the Community

Reflecting on our 2nd Principle - "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;" Unitarian Universalists do not have a specific list of laws of behavior to follow. They are encouraged to personally consider the nature of ethical choices rather than adhere to strict doctrine.

Yet, they do agree that ethical behavior should include the notions of justice, equity, and compassion. Countless UUs are known for social activism and charitable giving, and the majority have a general kindness and respect



toward others.”

***This month, we recognize our congregants who volunteer in the SWFL area – they are a gift to their communities and are living their principles.***

**Sharyl and Dave Lyon** have volunteered at Venice Regional Bayfront Health for many years. Prior to COVID, Sharyl was an Emergency Room greeter while Dave was an escort transporting discharged patients. Dave also volunteers at All Faiths Food Bank mobile pantries where he distributes food to needy clients. The volunteer activity which consumes the most hours for Dave and is as UUCOV's Treasurer.

**Volunteering** teaches you to be **grateful** for the things you have in life, and **widens your perspective** on how lucky you are to be you.

**Ruth Boysworth** – I volunteer at the Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County - one to one English as a second language. When I teach a new (usually potential) American citizen to communicate, to be able to get a job, pass the citizenship exam, get a driver's license, I feel as though I am handing them the keys to their future here. I also work with Busy Fingers Crochet and Knit Group- make hats, baby stuff, laphgans and other things for homeless, hospitalized, and the elderly of the Church whose room we use.

## Lifespan Education

### Message from the Director

Welcome March! Almost a third of our way into 2021. I am excited about some new RE opportunities that are coming to a zoom meeting near you! Check out our calendar and pop in.

If you have any suggestions about another meeting you'd like to see offered, please attend out ARE moderators meeting, send an email or text.

Kathy Avery  
Director of Lifespan Religious Education  
Ph: 941-270-6187



### Youth Religious Education



On Sundays at 10:00 am through Zoom, we breakout into groups and use the 'Soul Matters' curriculum. If you are interested in attending, have a topic you'd like to share or know a kid who would like to join, please contact Kathy Avery at or 941-270-6187.

### ARE Moderator Meeting

**Tuesday, March 9th, 11:00am – 12:00pm**

Come join us to get comfortable with the zoom platform, talk about possible RE offerings or volunteer to teach a class. Currently we are looking for zoom moderators, we will provide the tech help of a host! Moderators meet the second Tuesday of the month. Contact Kathy Avery at or 941-270-6187.

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/97023905366?pwd=c1N1QnUxaG1VRHg3RVlYQlQzaGUyUT09>

Meeting ID: 970 2390 5366

**Passcode: ARE**

### Adult Exploration

**Afternoons to Ascertain**

**March 25th 2pm – 4pm**

Come learn something new and interesting. Afternoons to Ascertain meet on the 4th Thursday of the month from 2-4pm.

**Join Zoom Meeting**



<https://zoom.us/j/93279697315?pwd=SGILaEQyQXRJeW43Z25qL04xK0IRQT09>

Meeting ID: 932 7969 7315

**Password: learn**

## Telling Your Tale: Following the Oral Tradition

**Monday, March 22nd 2:00pm - 4:00pm**

Take part in a Zoom Meeting using the Ancient Art of the Oral Tradition of Storytelling. Each session will have a spark to get you started in telling about who you are and how you got here. Remember everyone's story is interesting and another's story might bring back a memory. Contact Pamela Palmer (MacFarlane) 631 413-5775.



***"Tell of a time you were surprised at how well you did something."***

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82719658344>

Meeting ID: 827 1965 8344

**Passcode: Stories**

## The Spoken Word - Poetry Alive

**Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm - 4:00pm**

Join the poetry salon – much more fun than obsessing about politics!



The next meeting of the poetry seminar will examine the poem **"Life Story"** by Tennessee Williams. Life Story is a clever and wonderful poem that you will remember for a long time.

Here is a link to the poem: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50045/life-story-56d22cc476c2b>

Here is a link to Williams reading his poem:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/podcasts/76696/tennessee-williams-on-a-one-night-stand>

I expect to discuss the poem, listen to any poems people bring to the meeting, and work with me to setup a format for the next meeting.

Any Questions – Richard Palmer - or (508) 982-7266.

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84648682548>

Meeting ID: 846 4868 2548

**Passcode: Poetry**

## Questions on the Afterlife

**Tuesday, March 16, 2021 1pm-2:30pm**

Join Dick Smith to watch a video entitled "Questions on the Afterlife." After the video, we will have discussion.



**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/95328797101?pwd=cnNUVThvOU41VVFwWDBaUHpDaStaUT09>

Meeting ID: 953 2879 7101

**Passcode: 685432**

## Interest Groups

**Plato's Circle**

**March 3rd, 1:30pm - 3:00pm**

A gathering where people of different backgrounds discuss important ideas and issues. Each 90-minute session begins with a topic that forms the basis for thoughtful discussion reflecting participants' unique experiences and perspectives. The gathering provides an opportunity to have an intelligent and stimulating conversation in an atmosphere of support and respect. All are welcome! Contact: Bill Dowling - or Linda Underwood -



Topic for March Plato's Circle will be: ***Truth. Is truth an absolute? Some philosophers say truth is absolute and, preferably, objectively and scientifically proven. For others, truth is relative and is based on experience, rather than facts. What say you? Can you think of a time when truth or untruth had an impact on you? How do you seek truth? Are untruths ever required?***

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86551017426>

Meeting ID: 865 5101 7426

**No passcode required.**

## Socrates Café

**March 17th, 1:30pm – 3:00pm**

A gathering where people of different backgrounds discuss important ideas and issues. Each 90-minute session begins with a topic that forms the basis for thoughtful discussion reflecting participants' unique experiences and perspectives. The gathering provides an opportunity to have an intelligent and stimulating conversation in an atmosphere of support and respect. All are welcome! For more information contact Kathy Avery at



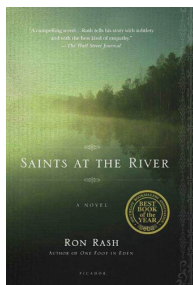
### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97047078103?pwd=NniEMGhVSUVESkxoZUxIMENGeGNKdz09>

Meeting ID: 477 531 7382

**Passcode: socrates**

## UUCOV Book Club



**Thursday, March 11th, 1:00 pm**

The book selection for March is **Saints at the River**, by Ron Rash.

*“Ron Rash has written a book about the deepest human themes: the love of the land, the hold of the dead on the living, and the need to dive beneath the surface to arrive at a deeper truth.”*  
A beautifully written story of a town divided by a tragedy.

All are welcome. It is understood that our chalice is lit and we are in covenant with each other. Patience is needed. Join us, a few minutes early if possible, so that we can all get set up. In the spirit of getting comfy with zoom. we will try to all stay muted and raise our hands to speak. I will try to call on you and you can break in and remind me that you are ready to speak if I don't. We will begin with a very short bio of the author then will go around the circle to quickly tell our names - we have some newer members - and what we thought of the book. Then we'll have a general discussion.

For more information speak to Barbara Smith at 941-786-8559 or . Book Club meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of the month.

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85216887362>

Meeting ID: 852 1688 7362

**No password required**

## Mat-making for the Homeless

**Saturdays March 6th and 20th, 10:00 a.m.**

Mat-making continues to meet and socialize via ZOOM on the first and third Saturdays of each month from 10:00am – 12:00pm. Salli is delivering finished mats to the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition. Finished mats

can be left at Waters Hall with her name on them. If you'd like to join us for a friendly chat, contact Janet Knudsen at or 781-424-0660 to request the ZOOM link.

(Photo: Completed sleeping mat, made by John Mohler, for the homeless. The mats are crocheted from 'plarn' [plastic yarn] made from recycled grocery bags.)



## Social Justice

### Special Offerings Proposal 2021 – 2022

At the upcoming annual meeting, members will be asked to vote on Special Offerings for the following year. The Social Justice Team has voted to keep the three charitable organizations presently receiving Special Offerings from the congregation and to add two new ones. The five charities are:



**All Faiths Food Bank** - The economic impact of COVID-19 has increased food insecurity in our community. Business closures have affected lower-income families and people with hourly wages in particular. For every \$1 given the food bank can purchase 5 meals.

**CHAPS (Charlotte HIV/AIDS People Support)** - is a 501(c)3, all volunteer agency that provides supplemental food and hygiene products at no cost to persons in need living with HIV/AIDS and their dependents in North Port, Venice, Englewood, Nokomis and Laurel. Hygiene products cannot be purchased with food stamps, and they can be vital to a person with a compromised immune system. All monetary donations from UUCOV are directed to purchases for clients residing in South Sarasota County.

**Family Promise of South Sarasota County's Open-Door Program** - gives families with children that are facing homelessness a chance to get back on their feet. They do this by helping with rent payment if the family falls behind, or by helping pay 1st, last, and security deposit on a rental home, or by paying for 1-3 days of emergency shelter in a motel while housing is being secured.

**Good Samaritan Pharmacy & Health Services** - provides medical services to uninsured, financially needy members of our community. Over 30% of Sarasota families have income below 200% of the poverty line and can be devastated by one medical crisis. Good Samaritan Pharmacy & Health Services provides free access to prescription and over-the-counter medications as well as access to physician services, including diagnostic testing. Even during this pandemic, they continue to provide prescription medication and virtual doctor visits to both new and preexisting patients. They are a 501(c)(3) located in Nokomis, staffed almost entirely by volunteers. Our donations would be used to purchase medications.

**RIP Medical Debt** - is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2014 to raise money to be used to erase medical debt for poor individuals who earn less than two times the federal poverty level. So far it has raised enough to wipe out \$1.5 billion in debt for over 650,000 individuals. It purchases bundled debt portfolios at the rate of \$1-to-\$100 (so that every \$1 donated erases \$100 in debt.) UUCOV would join an ongoing campaign by Florida Humanists to help the campaign achieve its \$20,000 goal (thereby erasing \$2,000,000 in debt). The first goal is to wipe out debt in Charlotte, Collier (where Immokalee farmworkers live), and DeSoto Counties in Florida. To date \$19,150 has been raised. Any additional funds will be allocated to communities most in need in the state of Florida.

### shOUT

**The UUCOV donation wheelbarrow - 'No-Contact Donations!'**

**Tuesday, March 30th 11:00am – 1:00pm (only)**

Covid-19 has created a greater need than ever for our clients. The number of new clients has grown most notably in North Port and Venice – as South Sarasota County is now the largest area we service.

- Shampoo (especially dandruff shampoo)
- Women's Body Wash

Items of special need at this time:

- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Paper Towels
- Kleenex (Facial Tissues)
- Aluminum Foil
- Food Storage Bags (Hefty/Baggies/Ziploc etc.) Gallon & Quart Size
- Spray Cooking Oil
- Coffee (Ground, Regular – not Decaf)



Salli will be in front of Waters Hall so that members who so wish, can bring items intended for CHAPS,

(Charlotte HIV/AIDS People Support). Please place your donations in your trunk, remain in your vehicle when you arrive - and 'pop' the trunk open when you arrive - she will be happy to unload it for you! Checks will be gladly accepted and should be made out to UUCOV with 'CHAPS' in the memo line. Contact Salli at with any questions. Thank you!

## Community Outreach

### Volunteer Opportunities at the Laurel Civic Center

A small group of UUCOV members toured the Laurel Civic Center in early December. LCA has many opportunities for volunteers, whether in-person or remote. Volunteers from UUCOV

continue to provide homework assistance to students via Zoom. If you want to learn more, please contact Janet Knudsen at or 781-424-0660.



## Denominational Affairs

### UUA General Assembly June 23 - 27, 2021

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend. Congregations must certify annually to have voting delegates.



Last year, GA had more than 4,900 registered attendees participate from remote locations around the world. Although we give up the face-to-face interaction and hugs that are prevalent when we meet in-person, we retain our dedication to community and make our experience more accessible and more environmentally sustainable.

Registration is now open! Registration for virtual GA 2021 is \$200 per person. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, 'simulive', and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and a (new!) GA mobile app. <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>

The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolution making the 2021 UUA General Assembly a 100% virtual event. Let's reach record-breaking attendance June 23-27, 2021!

## Letters to the Editor

### Letters to the Editor

*Comments, questions, concerns, musings - all welcome. 325 word maximum.* Send yours to

### Publication Deadlines

**Connection:** Articles and announcements for the *Connection* are due on the 20th of each month for the next month's edition. Please email your submissions to .

**UUCOV Happenings:** Events submissions are due at Thursday 9:00am for inclusion in *UUCOV Happenings*. Please email your submissions to .

## UUCOV Mission and Covenant

---

A welcoming, caring congregation encouraging spiritual growth, seeking meaning and pursuing justice.

In a climate of joy, goodwill and trust this congregation covenants

- to treat one another with kindness and respect,
- to listen with openness and acceptance,
- to support and protect the environment of which we are all a part,
- to solve problems responsibly as we grow and change,
- to encourage learning and nurture the growth of diverse human spirits, and
- to dedicate time, talent and resources in an effort to make a difference in local and world communities.

In the spirit of our free religious heritage, we promise these to one another.

## UU Principles

---

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

## UU Sources

---

The Living Tradition we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

If you do not wish to receive the *Connection*, please [click here](#) to unsubscribe.