



November 15, 2015

WEEKLY CONTACT

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota (UUCS)

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Weekly Contact

The print edition of the Weekly Contact will soon be phased out, in keeping with our Green Sanctuary Program. Please make sure the office knows your preferred address for the Friday email. Beginning December 1, a limited number of copies will be available at the Welcome Table for visitors.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE BY ROGER FRITTS

The *Unitarian Universalist World*, our association's journal, has a passage that fits with this Sunday's sermon. UUA President Peter Morales writes,

"When we witness brutality, injustice, the stupidity of our politics, heartless human exploitation by the economically powerful, and the wanton devastation of nature - when we find ourselves becoming bitter, we need to remind ourselves of our most treasured experiences. Actually, we need to do more than remember. We need to experience life's gifts and possibilities once more. Renewing contact with what is most precious in life is really a spiritual practice. It is an essential practice. If we do not feed our spirits, they will wither. Even the good deeds we strive to do will become acts of anger and joyless obligation rather than efforts to share and to heal. We all need to ask ourselves, 'What does my spirit need right now?' Perhaps it is quiet time in nature. Maybe a visit to a new exhibition in a museum. How about some time in the garden? Why not attend a concert by a favorite artist, or take a walk with an old friend? The possibilities go on and on."

SUNDAY EVENTS, NOVEMBER 15

Sermon at both Sarasota (10:30 a.m.) and Lakewood Ranch (9:00 a.m.)

"What Are Unitarian Universalist Views on Spirituality?" by Rev. Roger Fritts

A few years ago, I asked twenty Unitarian Universalist ministers to write out their definition of spirituality. I created a composite definition, bringing together the common elements in the twenty definitions of spirituality. "Unitarian Universalist spirituality is going into the depth of the inner core of our being, the place within us beyond words, the place that is our center. There we find connection to the whole of reality; we are in touch with ourselves, with others, with nature, and with God. We realize we are part of a wondrous whole." What does this mean in everyday practice? The sermon will attempt to answer that question.

UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Rd, Sarasota 34232

* **10:30 a.m. Music:** Choir; Don Bryn, Piano

* **10:30 a.m. Religious Education Classes: Thankful Tree** - Let's share with the congregation what we're thankful for this Thanksgiving. Following the service, the children will be in the courtyard handing out paper leaves. Write on the leaf what you are thankful for and add it to our Thankful Tree on the West Wing wall.

The children will also be collecting donations to support the UUSC's work supporting Syrian refugees seeking safe havens.

* **9:30 a.m. Forum: "Saving Our Wild Places: Pasturing Cows at Myakka."** The people of Florida and Sarasota have repeatedly voted to support acquiring and sustaining environmentally sensitive lands. These precious resources have not gone unnoticed by those who could profit from them! A battle is going on right now which wages private profit against public parks. Presenter, Darryl Saffer (who will show and discuss his video, "Not Long Ago"); Moderator, DeeAnna Dowdle.

Darryl Saffer, a musician, filmmaker and educator, produces his own TV series called "The Florida Field Journal," found on Youtube and shown locally on the Education Channel at Comcast Ch. 20 and Verizon Ch. 33. He films and produces the "The Wild Orchid Man" film series (including composing the music) with internationally renowned orchid expert Stig Dalstrom. His passion for the environment and its protection has been radically challenged by Governor Scott's administration's disregard for voter intent regarding the use of Amendment 1 funds, state sanctioned bear hunts, and plans to graze cattle on Myakka State Park lands.

LAKEWOOD RANCH, The River Club, 6600 River Club Blvd, Bradenton, 34202

* **9:00 a.m. Music: Mindy Simmons, guitar and vocals**

* **We have volunteers on hand to make sure your children are supervised and happy while you enjoy the service.**

* **10:00 a.m. We invite you to stay after the service for brunch and fellowship. Order off the menu. The breakfast special is only \$2.99.**

OTHER SUNDAY EVENTS

* **PARTNER CHURCH WEEKEND A SUCCESS!**

Thanks to everyone on the Partner Church Committee and to the entire church congregation for a wonderful Partner Church weekend. The Hungarian-style dinner on Friday, November 6th, and the lovely church service on Sunday raised over \$2,600 for the Korond Scholarship Fund.

* **Church Family Thanksgiving**

Come to church for a traditional or "veg" Thanksgiving dinner on Thanksgiving Day. Turkey, stuffing and gravy provided. Veg entrees too. Bring a family favorite side dish or dessert to share. Appetizers, wine and beverages start at 1 p.m., dinner at 2 p.m.

Paid reservations required by November 22th: \$10 per person, \$8 age 12-under. **Look for the Thanksgiving table on Sunday in the courtyard.**

Volunteers are invited to help set up on Wednesday afternoon or serve as Table Escorts during dinner on Thursday. Contact Suzie Brucklacher at susan.tbliss@gmail.com.

***** See Sarasota and More - December 20 *****

"A Christmas Carol" - Venice Theatre

The holiday offering for See Sarasota and More this year is the 2:00 matinee on **Sunday, December 20** of the Dickens classic "A Christmas Carol" at the Venice Theatre. Come to our table in the courtyard before or after the Sunday services on **November 15 and 22** to sign up. We have reserved 26 tickets. \$23 covers the ticket price, transportation and lunch. Please pay when you sign up; checks should be made out to Lois Lee. We will have a Pizza or Veggie Wrap lunch immediately after the 11:00 service and plan to leave in carpools at 1:00.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

* **CAMP-OUT! November 21st, 5:30-??**

UU Church, east parking lot

Come pitch a tent and stay overnight or just come for the campfire camaraderie Saturday

evening! This is a potluck so bring food to share, and food to grill or roast over the fire pit. Tea, water, juice provided. Ice-cream for dessert. BYOB. No need to RSVP, just come! (Need camping gear? Call Catherine at 720-8437)

FLEA MARKET

* **To all the many volunteers and members who donated, sorted, staged, priced, counted cash, prepared food, carried heavy books, repaired delicate jewelry, set-up, cleaned up and purchased our wonderful Flea Market treasures . . . THANK YOU!**

We worked together to support our church and its many socially conscious activities.

We needed every act of service, every kind word and every helping hand. We are a better community of UUs because of it!

CARING

* **The Hearing Loss Group of America is collecting unwanted hearing aids. They recycle them for deaf children.** There will be a collection box on the welcome table. They are very grateful.

* **Does the Minister have your Memorial Form on file?** Has your emergency contact information changed since you filled out the form? Update and submit your form for a memorial service and have peace of mind knowing you've made choices easier for your loved ones. The form can be found online at www.uusarasota.org or in the church office.

* **The Caring Committee** offers short term help with rides, meals and companionship. If you are ill or having surgery and would like us to be in touch, please contact Dee Widder at 377-9028 or DeanaWidder@gmail.com. If you can offer a ride to a doctor's appointment or to church or need a ride, please contact Marcia Ryan at 365-4027.

* **Would you like to honor a friend** who passed away or someone who made your day a little brighter or celebrate a birthday, anniversary or your grandchild's accomplishment? Make a Tribute donation today and send your check, with a Tribute form, to the office. Forms are available in the office and online. The Tribute will be acknowledged in the Contact.

UPCOMING EVENTS

* **Interweave Film:** "Gen Silent" will be shown at UUCS on **Wednesday, November 18** at 7:00 PM in the Jefferson Room. Filmed in Boston over a one-year period, this documentary follows six LGBT seniors as they decide whether to stay open about their sexuality or return to the closet so they can survive in long-term care facilities. Regardless of your age, sexuality, or degree of being "out," this film will resonate with you. After all, each of us loves someone who is, or has, or will, make this decision. A day-time showing at the Venice UU will be announced at a later date.

* **Interweave Potluck:** Join us for an organizational meeting and potluck at Wilda's house on **Saturday, November 21 at 11:00 AM**. We will plan events for the coming season and discuss how to help local long-term care facilities become more welcoming. Bring a dish to share. Contact Wilda at WQMeier@aol.com or 924-0706.

* **Friday Movie moved to Saturday**

The second in our series of outstanding movies will be shown on **Saturday, November 21**, at 6 pm in the Sanctuary. The *King of Masks* is about an elderly Chinese street performer who has no family but wants to pass on his skills. He purchases an orphan boy to be his successor, and several crises occur as their relationship develops. The movie offers beautiful photography and insight into the Chinese culture of that time. Bring a friend and enjoy a great movie!

* **Come to our UU Artists Market in the Lexow Wing on November 22 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm.** We will have UU artists selling fused glass items, jewelry including contemporary pearl jewelry, paintings including pet portraits and pottery. The Wednesday morning Artisans will be selling items that they have made. We will have snacks provided by the artists.

* **Save the Date: On Sunday, November 22** at 7:00 p.m. there will be an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service held at the First Presbyterian Church on 2050 Oak Street in Sarasota. Our church choir will be joining the chorales of other churches of our community for a gathering "to celebrate our unity as people of faith." Connect with us as we promote our third UU principle: "acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations."

* **UU Artists! Are you ready for the UUCS Members Art Show?** The Arts Council will be receiving UUCS members' work on Friday, December 4th from 9 to 11:30 AM. Each member is invited to submit up to two of their own artworks to be exhibited in the Lexow Wing Gallery through the month of December. It is an all-media show, including sculpture, pottery, fabric art and more. So don't be shy! Bring us your work on December 4th, and mark your calendar for the opening reception on Sunday, December 6th. Contact Cathy Cyrus at cyr603@yahoo.com with any questions.

* **What are YOU doing between Christmas and New Year? Attend a UU Winter Gathering at 4-H Camp Cloverleaf at Lake Placid, Florida.** Mindy Simmons is the Artist-in-Residence and our former intern Katie Culbert is the Chaplain-in-Residence. For more information go to www.swimuu.org.

* **"Theism, as a way of defining God, is dead."** So said Bishop John Shelby Spong before retiring as Episcopal Bishop of Newark in 2000.

Those were the opening words of the first of twelve theses that Bishop Spong drew from his 1998 book, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*.

The rest of his first thesis was "God can no longer be understood with credibility as a Being, supernatural in power, dwelling above the sky and prepared to invade human history periodically to enforce the divine will. So, most theological God-talk today is meaningless unless we find a new way to speak of God."

Curious about his meaning and the reactions? Ask him! Bishop Spong will speak in our sanctuary on February 12 and 13. See the UUCS website <http://www.uucsarasota.com/spong.html> for details, fee, and registration info.

OUR COMMITMENTS - SOCIAL JUSTICE

The UUCS Social Justice Committee addresses issues of homelessness and hunger, economic justice, human rights and the health of our planet. To learn more, attend our noon meeting on the second Tuesday of the month, join the mailing list at justice@uucsarasota.org or stop by the Social Justice table on Sunday.

* **Thank You For 91 lbs of Food.** Bethesda House, the beneficiary of our every-Sunday food collection reports that we gave 91 pounds of food in September. We were thanked for helping to fill their pantry every Monday - the day before their regular food delivery. **Thank you!**

* **Bravo! \$1,818 for Planned Parenthood's Teen Theatre.** The October Share-The-Plate collection for this highly regarded educational theatre was a big success. There will be no special collection in November as we focus on the UU Service Committee's annual appeal.

* **UU Service Committee's 75th Year.** Do you know UUSC's first project launched in 1940? We helped Jews and other Europeans escape Nazi persecution. On **November 22** the Social Justice Committee will kick off the UU Service Committee's annual Membership campaign - **Guest At Your Table** - to support international relief and advocacy. Membership envelopes will be included in the order of service or you can become a member online.

* **Used Bicycles for Turning Points.** El Parent will pick up your used bicycle and deliver it to Turning Points, the one-stop homelessness prevention center in Manatee County. Contact him at 813-507-8735 or elparentjekp@gmail.com.

* **Sign the Solar Energy and Voting Rights Petitions.** These petitions for state constitutional amendments - to expand solar energy development and to restore voting rights to former felons - are available at the Social Justice

table. Only with enough petition signatures before February will these amendments will appear on the November 2016 ballot.

* **Backpack Volunteers.** Help pack food bags for low income students in Sarasota. For more information about our congregation's largest hunger project or to schedule your time, look for Don or Sara on Sunday or email dsslate@comcast.net.

Also at our courtyard table today: Organic, Fair Trade coffees, teas, chocolate bars, cocoa, olive oil; collection box for school points labels from food boxes; collection jug for non-recyclable plastic caps to benefit a local school.

COMING NEXT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

Sermon at both Sarasota (10:30 a.m.) and Lakewood Ranch (9:00 a.m.)

"What Are Unitarian Universalist Views on Prayer?" by Rev. Roger Fritts

Many Unitarian Universalists are uncomfortable with prayer. We're more at home with the word meditation, particularly the silent part. As we approach Thanksgiving, is there a way to understand prayer that may make the word meaningful to us?

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* **10:30 a.m. Music:** Joshua Horne, Horn; Don Bryn, Piano

* **9:30 a.m. Forum: "Low-Literacy: Why Solutions Are Important."** Nearly 1 in 5 local adults have debilitating low-literacy levels. It impacts themselves, their families, and, indeed, all of us. Since 1978, the Literacy Council of Sarasota (LCS) has been focused on Basic Adult Education, GED, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and digital literacy. LCS depends on the almost 200 local ProLiteracy-certified tutors and instructors that they have trained, and who have helped over 1,500 local adults in the last 5 years reach their goals. Presenter, Tom Melville, Executive Director, LCS; Moderator, Linda Jones.