



December 27, 2015

# **WEEKLY CONTACT**

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota (UUCS)

3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota FL 34232

(941) 371-4974

Fax (941) 377-4897

[www.uusarasota.org](http://www.uusarasota.org)

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## **MINISTER'S MESSAGE BY ROGER FRITTS**

Once at Christmas I asked a group to write about the important gifts they had received. Some of the responses:

"The morning after I had a tooth pulled, I found a shiny 50-cent piece which my daughter had put under my pillow."

"The nicest gift I ever received was from an elderly couple who, when I was stranded in a sudden 10-inch snowstorm, invited me into their home. They fed me and were generous in their hospitality. Before this kindness, I felt alone and helpless, knowing no one in the area."

"The last conversation I had with my father before his death, when he explained his idea of love, was my favorite gift."

"My wife stretching in the morning."

Clark Wells writes: "May I suggest that you, too, draw up your list of the nicest gifts, you have ever received. I think it will give some perspective on the kind of gifts we really want to give to others, this Christmas or anytime."

We give that which is alive in us; our joy, our interest, our understanding, our humor, our sadness. We receive that which is alive in others; their happiness, their excitement, their knowledge, their laughter, their pain. In the moment of sharing, something is brought to life, something is born.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES, Thursday, December 24**

\* **5:30 p.m. Children's Service.** This service is designed for young children and will end at about 6:00. The service will last about 35 minutes and families will be invited to come up to the front of the church to sing some familiar Christmas songs. Everyone is invited to participate and we will be gathering to have a brief rehearsal at 5:00 pm before the service. Please feel free to wear your Santa hats, reindeer antlers or other seasonal attire! Following the service, join us for refreshments.

\* **Share the Plate on Christmas Eve. Our Christmas Eve collections will support the church's Public Housing Fund to prevent homelessness.**

Through the Social Justice committee, our church works closely with the Sarasota Housing Authority to provide one-time assistance to public housing families that are at immediate risk of homelessness due to work, medical or family emergencies.

The Housing Authority relies on nonprofits and the Season of Sharing campaign for emergency funds. However, throughout the year, **need outstrips available funds**. That's when our Public Housing Fund steps in on a case-by-case basis as a reliable, behind-the-scenes resource.

In the new year we can continue to help families make a critical rent or utility payment that prevents eviction, homelessness and certain family disruption. The least expensive solution to homelessness - for distressed families and for the Sarasota community - is prevention. Thank you, everyone, for your generosity of spirit and purse, by the Social Justice Committee.

\* **6:00 p.m. Wassailing.** There will be food and drink to celebrate the season, thanks to Catherine and Chris Bonner. Please bring a finger food or dessert to share.

\* **7:00 p.m. Our choir will be singing at our traditional Unitarian Universalist service.** Designed for children over the age of 8.

\* **8:00 p.m. Wassailing.** Come join the celebration.

## **SUNDAY EVENTS, DECEMBER 27**

### **UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Rd**

#### **There will be no 9 am service this Sunday.**

\* **11 a.m. "Woman Spirit Rising for Justice," sermon by Bridget Mary Meehan**

Bridget Mary Meehan is an activist in the Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests. She leads a local Catholic mass which has women priests and married priests. The local Catholic hierarchy has threatened excommunication for anyone attending her services. Bridget Mary answers:

"In response to the Spirit's call in our time for a more just church and world, we are following our consciences and ordaining women in prophetic obedience to the Spirit who created women and men as spiritual equals. According to Galatians 3:28, In Christ there is neither male nor female, all are one. Therefore, in our movement we disobey an unjust law, canon 1024, that prohibits women's ordination. In order to change an unjust law, we must break the law. We are leading the [Catholic] church, not leaving the church. Women priests are needed in church to give women voice and vote in church decisions in all areas of church life. Women priests at altars are visible reminders that women are equal images of God."

Come hear this courageous woman tell her story.

\* **Music: 11 a.m. Mindy Simmons, guitar, Darren Server, piano**

\* **There will be no Religious Education Classes today. Childcare will be available for children 10 and under.**

\* **10:05 Forum: 10:05 am Forum: "Boundaries: Finding Your Personal Balance"** What are boundaries in relationships? How do we establish and maintain them? How do we communicate this in a caring and consistent way? If setting boundaries leads to self-empowerment, how can we communicate our truth and risk disappointing others? Practical approaches that make a difference in the quality of personal and work relationships. Presenter, Linda Williams.

Linda Williams has an MA in Group Dynamics and for more than 35 years has been a facilitator and consultant to organizations and individuals nationwide. She is founder of *RelationShape*, President of Linda Williams Consulting LLC and Communications Director for the *Living in Community Network*.

### **Lakewood Ranch**

Because of historically low attendance on the Sunday after Christmas, **there will be no service December 27 in Lakewood Ranch.** Please join us in Sarasota for the 11 am service, described above.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

#### \* **Gifts that Keep Giving**

This holiday season, the children & youth in RE went gift shopping. Not for ordinary gifts that you can pick up at the mall, but for gifts that make a difference. Gifts that promote what the season is really all about: helping others.

While sipping hot chocolate and munching gingerbread cookies, we debated between blankets or water treatment tablets, thought about whether we liked pigs or cows better and what is the value of an education? Our gifts were picked from high rated charities such as UNICEF with donated funds. Some will be used for emergency situations; others are to help change a family's financial situation in rural communities where some of the world's poorest reside.

\* **So, from everyone in RE - Happy Holidays!** We picked up a few things to share with you:

The gifts of Beehives; a Piglet; Family Emergency Kit (tarp, blankets, mats); Library Books for a Refugee Camp; 2 Rabbits; 4 Water Treatment Kits and a Scholarship for a Girl in Malawi to attend Secondary School.

\* **RE Family Meeting** - Please join us in the West Wing on Sunday, **January 10th** following the 11 am Service. This is Pot Luck Sunday, so bring your lunch and ideas for our RE Program. Child care will be available.

\* **Camp Out - January 23rd.** It's back! Join us for a night under the stars in the UUCS East Parking Lot. Save the date - you don't want to miss the fun.

## **OTHER SUNDAY EVENTS**

### **\* The SERENDIPITY AUCTION Information Table starts Sunday, December 27 in the courtyard.**

Want to meet people and be part of the most fun event of the year? Stop by and sign up to be one of our volunteers. Sunday is also the day we're starting to take renewals. Are you lying awake at night thinking "Omigosh, new donations start January 3, and I just don't know what to donate this year?" Well, fear not - we're here to help. You can also see last year's catalog for ideas. Starting January 3, we'll be selling tickets and taking new donations. So don't forget to mark your calendar for that special event - The SERENDIPITY AUCTION - on **January 31**, right after the second service. In the meanwhile, if you have any questions, contact Anne McFarlane at [Auction@uusarasota.org](mailto:Auction@uusarasota.org).

### **\* Adult Programs for Winter:**

This Sunday find the updated Winter Program List in two places in the courtyard - on the Bulletin Board and at the Adult Programs table (and within the week to be added to the website). Many of your favorite ongoing programs are continuing... be sure to visit the Adult Programs table if you have questions and also to register.

### **Ring in the New Year with these programs which start very early in January:**

All Things Computer with DeeAnna Dowdle: Smart Phone starts 1/5, Computers and You starts 1/6, and I-Phone and I-Pad starts 1/7.

Getting in shape: Exercise with Dr. Bob, starts 1/12; Tai Chi for Health, starts 1/12; Qigong starts 1/18 (Monday class) and 1/21 (Thursday class).

Climate Information and Discussions: Sixth Extinction Book Discussion, starts 1/6, Moral Ground in the Changing Climate, starts 1/10.

Questions about a class? Do you have a class you'd like to offer? Call or email:

DeeAnna Dowdle, 941-350-3571 [DA@DeeAnnaDowdle.com](mailto:DA@DeeAnnaDowdle.com)

Nancy Saum, 703-297-1749 [nancy.saum@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.saum@gmail.com).

**\* Now is the time to sign up for our Winter Get Together Dinners.** The dates are January 23, February 27, and March 26. It is a great way to get to know new friends at the church and/or reacquaint with old friends. The dinners, usually 6 to 12 people, are held in people's homes. The host provides the main dish and guests bring the sides, hors d'oeuvres, and dessert. Registration forms are available at the Get Together Dinner table in the courtyard or save paper and register online [www.uusarasota.org](http://www.uusarasota.org)

### **Deadline for registering is December 27.**

Carole Malone, John Brackett, Alice Carden, and Jeanie Craig  
Get Together Dinners Committee

## ADULT PROGRAMS

### \* **Religious Literacy Dialog**

**Exploring Select Books by John Shelby Spong** will be the theme of our dialogs from January 6 through February 10 in preparation for Bishop Spong's program on **February 12 and 13** as described at [uucarasota.com/spong](http://uucarasota.com/spong). *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture* will be our book for Wednesday, January 6, from 3:30-5:00 pm in the West Wing followed by *Liberating the Gospels: Reading the Bible with Jewish Eyes* on January 13. You do not need to read the books to share in our dialog. To sign up for our Advocates email list, or for additional information, contact David Ryan at [d2mryan@verizon.net](mailto:d2mryan@verizon.net) or 365-4027.

\* **Ever read a book you could not put down?** Once you pick up Elizabeth Kolbert's "The Sixth Extinction," you may just stay up all night and forget to register for the discussion group starting in January. But don't miss the discussion, which happens every **Wednesday afternoon, 4:00-5:00 pm, in January** here at the church. Sign up by calling the discussion leader Diane Cirksena at 651-253-0552, or at the adult programs bulletin board. Come on Wednesday, January 6 with your copy of the book ... and the first three chapters complete.

\* **Moral Ground in the Changing Climate, an adult education class at Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota Sundays 9-10 a.m., West Wing, January 10-February 28, Co-leaders: Lea Hall and Roy Lauridsen**

We know about the fires, floods, and famines, climate injustice, the sixth extinction. Knowing this, what kind of people do we want to be? What virtues do we cultivate? Registration, limited to 25, is now open at the new Adult Programs bulletin board and by email to [climate@uucarasota.org](mailto:climate@uucarasota.org).

For more information, look for the announcement on our website's home page at [www.uucarasota.com](http://www.uucarasota.com) or go directly to the class's page at <http://www.uucarasota.com/moral>

\* **Join us for our end of year BICYCLING GROUP ride on Wednesday, December 30, 9:30 am**, at Robinson Preserve, 1704 99th St. W in Bradenton. Admission is free. We will enjoy a beautiful and leisurely ride (about an hour or so) and then have lunch at the Seafood Shack (on causeway on Cortez Rd.) Those who live in Sarasota can follow Gulf Drive back down to Sarasota if they would like a beautiful ride home. For questions or more information call Nancy Saum, 703-297-1749, or email [nancy.saum@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.saum@gmail.com).

\* **The Writing Your Life Story Groups** are hoping to form a new class in January, if there is enough interest. Class membership is limited to ten. Members are asked to write a story each time and read it to the class. John Yoder will be facilitator and the group will meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 1:30 p.m. Please contact June Brasgalla, 379-6071, to put your name on the waiting list.

## CARING

\* **A Tribute to celebrate the life of Boris Pundick: James M. Boozer and Sally Mauldin; W. A. Ryall; Lawrence Katz; Patricia Cohen.**

\* **A Tribute to celebrate the life of Jean Shoemaker: Robert and Kathryn Carr.**

\* **Our best wishes for a speedy recovery to David Ohlson who recently fell while playing tennis.**

\* **If you live alone, become injured or ill and have a pet,** be sure to have a notification card in your wallet letting emergency personnel know whom to contact to care for your pet.

\* **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](http://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](mailto:DeanaWidder@gmail.com).

\* **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.

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

\* **Holiday greetings were received from the Rev Don Vaughn-Foerster and his wife Peggy. Don served as our interim minister several years ago.**

\* **The UUCS photo directory is published every four years. We'd like to have EVERYONE participate.** Please go to our website, [uusarasota.org](http://uusarasota.org), scroll to the picture and sign up. Dates are January 25 - 29. It's always fun to have a memorabilia of your congregation. Along with your FREE 8 x 10 photo, you can order more pictures. Bring your pet or your favorite toy. SIGN UP NOW.

\* **Your holiday purchases from Amazon.com can contribute to our UUCS budget.** Just start your holiday purchases at <http://www.uusarasota.com/amazon.php> or by clicking our Amazon search box at "Quick Links" on the UUCS home page and enter a search term or click Go. Amazon will do the rest.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

\* **The UU Vegetarian Lunch Group** will meet at Isan Thai Restaurant, 5758 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, on Friday, **January 8**, at 1:00 pm. This restaurant has a separate room for groups that will only hold 20 people. Therefore, only the first 20 to RSVP will be able to attend this lunch. For further information or to make

reservations, please contact Jean Wieloch at [jeanw972@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanw972@yahoo.com) or 929-3845. Confirmations will be numbered and sent out as RSVPs are received.

**\* LADIES POTLUCK AND BOARD GAMES will be held Saturday, January 9 at noon in the West Wing.** Margie Henry and Dee Widder

**\* Now is the time to sign up for our Winter Get Together Dinners. The dates are January 23, February 27, and March 26.** It is a great way to get to know new friends at the church and/or reacquaint with old friends. The dinners, usually 6 to 12 people, are held in people's homes. The host provides the main dish and guests bring the sides, hors d'oeuvres, and dessert. Registration forms are available at the Get Together Dinner table in the courtyard or save paper and register online [www.uusarasota.org](http://www.uusarasota.org). Deadline for registering is January 3, 2016. Carole Malone, John Brackett, Alice Carden, and Jeanie Craig, Get Together Dinners Committee

**\* "Discovering UUCS" - A Newcomer Orientation  
Saturday, January 16, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
UUCS - Lexow Wing**

If you are considering membership, this workshop is for you. Reverend Fritts will discuss our history and explore with you what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist and a member of this church. Some of our church leaders will join us for lunch to talk about the many activities here and to get acquainted with you. The Membership Committee provides lunch. Be sure to sign up at the Welcome Center!

**\* Our Sanctuary Concert Series presents "Grande Piano: Chopin & Friends," with pianist Eleonora Lvov on Sunday, January 17, at 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary.** The celebrated Russian piano virtuoso will perform works by Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Ravel, and Gershwin. She has achieved acclaim as a performer and popular recording artist. She will play a broad spectrum of music from the Romantic and Impressionistic eras, offering personal impressions and historical remarks about each piece. Tickets are \$15 and are available at [www.uucsarasota.com/LVOV.html](http://www.uucsarasota.com/LVOV.html) or at the door.

**\* Bishop John Shelby Spong will speak at UUCS's Rose Frank Lecture Series on Friday and Saturday, February 12 & 13! Please attend!**

Spong's criticism of biblical literalism and rejection of much traditional Christian dogma have earned him a worldwide progressive following, and of course, a measure of harsh opposition.

Among the twelve theses that Bishop Spong drew from his 1998 book, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, are his fourth and fifth theses:

"The virgin birth, understood as literal biology, makes the divinity of Christ, as traditionally understood, impossible."

"The miracle stories of the New Testament can no longer be interpreted in a post-Newtonian world as supernatural events performed by an incarnate deity."

Would you like to know why he says such things? Come hear him speak to us on February 12 and 13. Those who register before January 16 get a discount! Details, fee, and registration info are on the UUCS website - <http://www.uucsarasota.com/spong.html>.

## **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](mailto:justice@uucsarasota.org) or stop by the Social Justice table on Sunday.**

\* **Resurrection House Winter Needs.** Resurrection House volunteers from our church have asked for donations of single-person blankets (not Q or K size), backpacks or zippered bags, and men's pants waist 32 and 34. For pick up, contact Sarah Risher at [sarahrisher@mac.com](mailto:sarahrisher@mac.com) or 781-367-8515 or bring them to church (drop off table next to the food donation bin).

\* **How To Eat Healthy Away From Home.** Dulled by convenient fast food? [Here are two guides](#) for finding healthy restaurants. One is perfect when you are traveling, even out of the country. Also find them on the church website under Social Justice/Climate Change.

\* **Bethesda House Food Donations.** Canned food (pork-and-beans, ravioli are favorites), travel size toiletries, paper products (TP and towels). Bring your donations any Sunday. Thank you!

\* **Chocolate Bars.** We will discontinue chocolate bar sales at the Sunday table due to the year round effects of heat. However chocolate bars will be available anytime through special orders, along with whole bean coffee and other Fair Trade items. For minimum order and other information, contact Suzie Brucklacher at [justice@uucsarasota.org](mailto:justice@uucsarasota.org). Subject line: Special Order.

\* **Sign the Solar Energy and Voting Rights Petitions.** Available at the Social Justice table until the February deadline. Florida voters only.

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

## **SUNDAY EVENTS, JANUARY 3**

### **UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Road**

\* **9 a.m. & 11 a.m. "Finding a Happy Life," sermon by Rev. Roger Fritts**

By "happy life," Dr. Robert Cloninger means a state of well-being. He defines happiness as "an inner state of calmness, self-awareness, and self-acceptance that arrives when we are physically, mentally, and spiritually integrated." This sermon was originally scheduled for June 21, 2015, but was postponed.

\* **Music: 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. Palm Strings Duo; Don Bryn, piano**

\* **11 a.m. Religious Education (RE): "Tapestry of Faith"**

\* **10:05 Forum: "When Lost, Consult a Moral Map."** How much is enough? Specifically, have any of us found a point of inner peace, where we feel we've done enough for social justice, for climate justice, for world peace? And even if we find it for a day, isn't it inevitably disrupted by current events? How can we construct a moral map, each for our own values? This Forum presents more questions than answers, in hopes of reigniting a conversation that supports our values and intentions. Presenter, Roy Lauridsen; Moderator, Fredric Sirasky.

For the last 18 years Roy Lauridsen worked at Harvard University as a construction project manager, energy engineer and finally as the Director of Operations at the Harvard Divinity School. HDS enthusiastically supported reducing the GHG profile and incorporating sustainable practices that now includes a school produce garden, landfill reduction of 80%, and organic landscaping. Three years ago he began a conference that addressed Religion and Sustainability that is ongoing today and has grown from a four-hour discussion to a two-day affair, this year centering on sustainable food.

### **Lakewood Ranch**

\* **10:00 a.m. "Three Simple Steps to Finding Your True Self," sermon by Stephen Gillum**

Stephen Gillum has been teaching meditation for more than 35 years. He started looking into Eastern thought in 1972, as his father was dying of cancer. Finding out who he was and what life was really about became his life's mission. He went to India and studied with Swami Laksmanjoo of Kashmir. He stayed in the Zen monastery Dia Bosatsu Zendo. He also studied with Dr. V. G. Kulkarni, a disciple of swami Rama of Hardwar, and taught classes with him in Cleveland, Pohio and Sarasota. He currently teaches at the Lifelong Learning Academy located at USF and at New College.

\* **10:00 a.m. Music: Claudia Holmes, Recorders**

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