



WEEKLY CONTACT

January 24, 2016

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota (UUCS)

3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota FL 34232

(941) 371-4974

Fax (941) 377-4897

www.uusarasota.org

MINISTER'S MESSAGE FROM ROGER FRITTS

I will be visiting family, celebrating my 65th birthday and shoveling snow near Washington D.C. this weekend. I am sorry to miss Rev. Barry W. Lynn at the Sunday service. He has served for more than two decades as Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Senator Sam Ervin wrote, "If any provision of the constitution can be said to be more precious than the others, it is the provision of the First Amendment which undertakes to separate Church and State by keeping government's hands out of religion and by denying to any and all religious denominations any advantage from getting control of public policy or the public purse."

Rev. Lynn is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, and the leader in our nation when it comes to the issues of separation of church and state. It is an honor to have him in our pulpit.

As always, there will be more parking at our first service, so I encourage you to come at 9:00 A.M.

SATURDAY EVENT, COOK OUT, JANUARY 23

COOK OUT / CAMP OUT – Saturday 23rd

EVERYONE IS INVITED

UUCS East Parking Lot - 4:30pm

Join the RE Families for an evening under the stars! No need to stay overnight, just come and share some campfire camaraderie. This is a potluck event so bring a dish to share and food to grill or roast over the fire pit. Tea, water and juice are provided. (Bring a beach chair if you can). We will also have marshmallows and s'mores for dessert. We hope to see you there! Any questions, email Susan at: dre@uusarasota.com.

SUNDAY EVENTS, JANUARY 24

UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Road

*** 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. "Separation Anxiety: God and Government in 2016," Sermon by: Rev. Barry Lynn, Americans United for Separation of Church and State**

* **Music: 9 a.m. Mindy Simmons; 11 a.m. Choir, Don Bryn, piano**

* **11 a.m. Religious Education (RE):** Classes are offered during the service for children and youth.

* **10:05 Forum: "Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis,"** Income disparity and its effect on our children. A discussion of the book by Robert Putnam. Presenter, Verna Safran, Moderator, DeeAnna Dowdle.

Lakewood Ranch, The River Club, 6660 River Club Blvd, Bradenton 34202

* **10:00 a.m. "Insights Drawn from Creation Spirituality," sermon by Rev. Charles J. Stephens**

Rev. Charles Stephens has a strong interest in interfaith dialogue. Ordained as a Lutheran minister in 1973, Stephens later studied other faiths and became a Unitarian Universalist minister in 1980, serving congregations in Maine, New Hampshire and New Jersey.

* **10:00 a.m. Music: Ed Kinder, Keyboard**

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

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

* **"Operation 100 Sandwiches" was a great success.** We made over 110 sandwiches and filled 100 lunch bags with chips, fruit and granola bars for the homeless at Resurrection House. Thanks to all the children, youth & parents who worked hard getting this project done. Thanks also to everyone who donated to the purchase of the lunch fixings.

OTHER SUNDAY EVENTS

* **Share the Plate with All Faiths Food Bank's summer program.** While our congregation's Backpack program provides weekend food for students at Wilkinson elementary, when school ends, hunger begins for half of Sarasota families.

Recent research on child hunger in Sarasota and DeSoto counties reveals that alarming numbers of children are food insecure and worry about the source and quality of their next meal. From the report: "The most shocking information we learned is that third-graders are the most concerned about going hungry, worry about the next time they might eat, and what kind of food it will be. We think third-graders should be playing not worrying."

Our Backpack program is fully funded for the current school year. This Share-the-Plate collection will help support the Food Bank's Campaign Against Summer Hunger program which provided 288,000 meals to 3,000 children last year. **Please give generously.**

* **This Sunday, January 24th -- The Arts Council reception for UUCS member Donald Diddams' exhibit, "Layers," will be at 12 noon**, immediately following the second service in the Lexow Wing Gallery. Don says, "The world is filled with layers of meaning. What will we do with the mysteries and the beauty that surround us?" Be sure to stop in after the service to see Don's work and say hello!

* **Auction Catalogs--Get'em While They're Hot!**

Pick up your jam-packed **January 31 Serendipity Auction** catalog at church on Sunday -- no mailings this year except on request. It's the green thing to do! You can also see all the Auction listings online, go to uusarasota.org and click on Members Corner. And when you purchase your bid ticket this Sunday, you keep more green in your wallet because Auction Sunday -- next week -- the price goes up.

* **The Writing Your Life Story classes are proud to present the publication of their shared stories.** The book is called "UU Musings" and represents fourteen of our members and friends. Books will be on sale for the next few Sundays for \$12, and all profits will go to the church Transition House Project. If you wish to buy a copy at other times, you may contact June Braggalla at: juneb22@comcast.net. The book is also available via Amazon.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

UUCS is in full "Season" and there is a lot going on. I hope you are all ready for the **Serendipity Auction** that takes place on **January 31**. Outside of the Stewardship Drive, the Auction is our major fundraiser and it is a great opportunity to support UUCS while getting so much in return. I'll see you there.

We had a new member recognition this past Sunday and "Wow!" We have so many new members that we couldn't welcome them all at one time. Isn't that a great problem to have? Forty new members have signed the book since November 1st and you should all take this as a compliment. You are the ones welcoming and offering this community for like-minded people.

The Lakewood Ranch (LWR) satellite is also on target for our first year projections and I look forward to more from this future "Mega" church. The services at Lakewood Ranch start at 10:00 so if the UUCS services at 9:00 or 11:00 don't work out for you on any given Sunday, LWR will be happy to welcome you.

Congratulations to you for voting to ordain Katie Culbert, our former intern minister. In doing so you have demonstrated our congratulations to Katie. I am sure the ordination will be a delightful event.

By now you have heard that UUCS will be hosting a very special lecture series Honoring the Courage of Progressive Pastors led by the Right Reverend John Shelby Spong. Appearing with Bishop Spong will be his friend, Rev. Dr. Roger Ray, the pastor of the Community Christian Church of Springfield, Missouri. This is an event that will add to the prestige of our church and demonstrates another way that we contribute to the community.

And, by the way, there are all the usual activities of various committees, volunteers, adult programs and rentals.

None of this prosperity is possible without the many volunteers who so selflessly give of their time and talent and, of course, the leadership of Rev. Fritts and his very professional staff who make everything look so seamless.

To all of you, thank you for your contributions.

See you at UUCS,

Bill Payton

President of the Board of Trustees

CARING

* **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 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.

* **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

* **PHOTO DIRECTORY** - because we have a shortage of signups for next week's photos, LifeTouch has cut back our days to Monday through Wednesday. Please sign up at our website now. If you already signed up for other days, please reschedule your appointment. We're sorry for the inconvenience. We especially want newcomers to know WE WANT YOU. . .email DeanaWidder@gmail.com with questions.

* **Equal Exchange Special Order:** Need a case of your favorite coffee? Want a dozen bars of your favorite chocolate? Contact Justice@uusarasota.org NOW with your request!

UPCOMING EVENTS

* **Religious Literacy Dialog**

Exploring Select Books by John Shelby Spong will be the theme of our dialogs through February 10 in preparation for Bishop Spong's program on February 12 and 13 as described at uucsarasota.com/spong. *A New Christianity for a New World: Why Traditional Faith is Dying and How a New Faith is Being Born* will be our book for **Wednesday, January 27**, from 3:30-5:00 pm in the West Wing followed by *Jesus for the Non-Religious*:

Recovering the Divine at the Heart of the Human on **February 3**. 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 or 365-4027.

* **The UU Vegetarian Lunch Group** will meet at Infuzion Restaurant, 6090 N. Lockwood Ridge Road, Sarasota, on Friday, **February 5**, at 1:00 pm. For further information, and to make reservations, please contact Jean Wieloch at jeanw972@yahoo.com or via phone: 929-3845.

* **SAVE THE DATES, FreeThinkers Series - Fridays at 10 a.m.:**

January 22 - An Act of Civil Disobedience, Douglas Hughes

February 5 - Shade in the Sunshine State, Liz Coursen

March 4 - Daughters of Susan B Anthony, Gayle Williams

March 18 - She-Roes of Africa, Debi Frock

April 1 - Compassion & Choices, Winnie Downes

May 6 - Topic Pending, Dr. Robin Shapiro

June 3 - Pending

*Speakers and/or Topics Subject to Change

* **Church Life 5.5 - In Celebration of our Free Religion.** You are invited to the West Central Cluster day of workshops at the UU Church of Tampa on **Saturday, February 6**, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Five workshops will be led by experts in congregational life. The Keynote Address will be presented by the Rev. Kenn Hurto, "Our Name Should Have Been: The Free Church in America." Find details and the registration form in the church office. Jeff Harper, President of the West Central Cluster of UU Congregations says, "This promises to be a good day for area UUs to get together."

* **HONORING THE COURAGE OF PROGRESSIVE PASTORS**

On February 12 and 13, the Church will host a special Rose Frank lecture series led by the Right Reverend John Shelby Spong, the retired Episcopal Bishop of Newark and one of the world's leading progressive theologians. He sharply opposes biblical literalism and much of traditional Christian dogma. He rails against racism and discrimination against women, supports gay marriage and the LGBT communities, and advocates separation of church and state. He lectures widely and his books have sold well over one million copies. His online columns reach thousands worldwide. His latest book, *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy*, will go on sale in the week following his UUCS appearance.

Appearing with Bishop Spong will be his friend, Rev. Dr. Roger Ray, the pastor of the Community Christian Church of Springfield, MO, a very unusual non-denominational progressive church that he founded almost a decade ago after departing a Disciples of Christ ministry. Rev. Dr. Ray holds a doctorate from Vanderbilt Divinity School, was a 2004 Merrill Fellow at Harvard Divinity School, has authored two highly regarded books, and has recently delivered seminars on progressive faith in the U.S., Scotland and England. He has thousands of followers who watch and hear his weekly sermons on YouTube and iTunes.

Rev. Ray's church earns kudos for its radical compassion, care and advocacy for the poor, sick, and vulnerable. In his book, *Progressive Faith and Practice*, he argues that "a spiritual sense of connection to the poor, war refugees, the uninsured, the uneducated, and the hopeless is the best response we can give" to economic systems that favor the elite.

Some of the fine musicians who brilliantly perform the music that makes Rev. Ray's Sunday services so unique will also appear in our lecture series. They are led by Sean Spyres, the CCC's director of music, who is a seasoned opera vocalist with degrees in music and opera, who knows how to make the sanctuary "rock!"

Mark your calendar for Friday and Saturday, February 12-13, and make your reservations. For details, schedule, fee, and registration information see the UUCS website.

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@uusarasota.org or stop by the Social Justice table on Sunday.

UPCOMING EVENTS

* **Interfaith Climate Conference** January 28-30 at Northland Church in Longwood, Florida. The Paris Climate Talks challenged local communities to take the lead in mitigation, adaptation and compassion. More at UUJusticeFL.org.

* **Influence Florida's Legislature.** Learn how at the annual UU Justice Florida Legislative Day February 8-9 in Tallahassee. Learn about Florida's legislative process and how our UU values can influence it -- an educational and fun day. Training by League of Women Voters. Register at UUJusticeFL.org.

DOING JUSTICE

* **Backpack Volunteers** sign up now for March and April packing at the church. See Sara or Don Slate in the courtyard or email dsslate@comcast.net.

* **Single-Person Blankets,** backpacks, zippered bags, and men's pants waist 32 and 34 are still needed at Resurrection House. Bring your donations Sunday to the table just outside the sanctuary.

* **Bethesda House Food Donations.** 14-oz. canned food (pork-and-beans, ravioli are favorites), travel size toiletries, paper products (toilet paper and towels). Bring your donations on Sunday. Thank you!

* **Easier to Eat Healthy, When Eating Out.** Here are two guides for finding healthy restaurants. Both are local and one has a free phone app that is perfect when traveling, even out of the country. Also find them on the church website under Social Justice/Climate Change.

* **French Roast and Midnight Sun** coffees are back in stock now at the Sunday table!

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 31

UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Road

* **9 a.m. & 11 a.m. "What Would You Do If You Won the Lottery," Sermon by Rev. Roger Fritts**

The sermon is an exploration of human values. If you suddenly had access to a great deal of money, what would you do? Help fund a program to end global warming? Fund a free clinic for people who need health care? Endow your church?

* **Music: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Amanda Blaikie, flute; Don Bryn, piano**

Amanda Blaikie is the Principal Flutist of the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra at the Detroit Opera House and also the Principal Flutist of the Sarasota Opera in Florida. She is in Sarasota for the next 8 weeks rehearsing and performing with the Sarasota Opera.

Amanda has performed with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Miami City Ballet, the Orlando Philharmonic, and the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra. Passionate about teaching and sharing her love of music, Amanda is a Flute Instructor at Oakland University and maintains a private flute studio in Ferndale, Michigan.

Amanda earned a Professional Studies Degree in Orchestral Performance at Manhattan School of Music. She also received a MM in Flute Performance from the University of Miami and a BA in Music from Principia College.

* **11 a.m. Religious Education (RE):** Classes are offered during the service for children and youth.

* **10:05 Forum: "Dementia and Perceptions of Reality"**

During the progression of dementia, a person's perceptions of reality become confused and distorted. It is essential that care-givers, family and friends understand these perceptions of reality in order to maintain communication, create a bridge between the two worlds, strengthen emotional bonds, and improve our care of them.

Katya De Luisa is a Creativity Coach for Seniors specializing in working with people with dementia and their families. She is also a mixed media collage artist, exhibiting throughout the US and Central America (Costa Rica is her part time residence). In 2000, she developed a picture communication program for people with dementia while in partnership with the Sarasota/Manatee Alzheimer's Association and Tidewell. Funding from the Sarasota Community Foundation enabled her to develop a caregiver training program and conduct workshops throughout the tri-county area. This program has since been presented at several conferences on aging, been featured in numerous media publications and seminars conducted both nationally and internationally.

Lakewood Ranch, driving directions on our website

* **10:00 a.m. "Finding a Happy Life," video sermon by Rev. Roger Fritts**

* **10:00 a.m. Music: Ed Kinder, Keyboard**

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