



February 7, 2016

WEEKLY CONTACT

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota (UUCS)

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE FROM ROGER FRITTS

The Rev. Sue Phillips and the Rev. Alison Miller are the nominees of the Presidential Search Committee for election as Unitarian Universalist Association president. This is the first time in the history of our Association that a search committee has nominated candidates instead of people nominating themselves. This will be the first time candidates will run for one six-year term. (The old system was a four-year term with the possibility of reelection to a second four-year term.) This is the first time two women have run. In 1985, 1993, 2001 and 2009 a man and a woman ran against each other and four times in a row the man won. A woman has never been president of our Association or of the old American Unitarian Association.

Previously, UUA candidates for President have come from one of two communities--the Senior Ministers of large churches (congregations with 600 members or more) or ministers working at the UUA Boston headquarters. This is the first time neither candidate is a minister from a large church or a member of the UUA Boston Headquarters staff. While it is possible for a person to self-nominate by petition, this is unlikely. Most likely, delegates from all our congregations will vote to elect one of these two women as our next Association President.

This election will take place at our Association annual meeting in June 2017. This year the 2016 annual meeting will be in Columbus, Ohio, June 22-26. If you would like to be a delegate from our church, let our Board know. Registration opens March 1, and on that day the cheaper hotels on the UUA website fill up.

See <http://www.uua.org/ga/registration>

If you are interested in getting involved in our association, "the Florida Spring Gathering" will be March 12, 2016, in Clearwater. More information is available at <http://www.uuasouthernregion.org/floridaspring2016.html>. This replaces the old district meetings. We are now part of the "UUA Southern Region," which includes twelve southern states.

Why is our larger association important? Why should you care? Some of the best ideas for our church come from talking to others about what is working well in *their* churches.

SUNDAY EVENTS, FEBRUARY 7

UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Road

*** 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. "From Unitarian to Anglican: T. S. Eliot," Sermon by Rev. Roger Fritts**

We are having retired Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong come to speak at our Unitarian Universalist Church February 12 and 13. This causes my mind to wander to the most famous poet of the 20th century, T. S. Eliot, who was raised Unitarian. His cousin, Thomas Lamb Eliot, was my friend and an important leader in the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda where I was a minister. We normally think that people journey from more traditional religion to Unitarian Universalism. However, T. S. Eliot traveled the other direction from Unitarianism to the English Anglican Church (Episcopal in the United States). We can learn from his story.

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

* **Religious Education (RE)**

Nursery: Loving care for infants and toddlers is available during the 9 am Service, Forum and 11 am Service.

Child Care for children 10 and under is available during the 9 am Service & Forum.

RE Classes are available during the 11 am service.

* **10:05 Forum: "The Real Government in the United States"**

Does what we learn in school about how the U. S. Government works miss the real story of who is in charge and how they govern? A discussion of who they are and how they do it. Presenter, John Stinespring; Moderator, Don Diddams.

Lakewood Ranch, driving directions on our website

* **10:00 a.m. "Walking Together," Sermon by Rev. Margaret Beard**

Universalist Hosea Ballou once said, "If we agree in love, there is no disagreement that can do us any injury, but if we do not, no other agreement will do us any good." As a creed-free religious tradition we are enriched and at times frustrated by our differences. We are a gathered and covenantal people. What is at the center of this gathered people that is worthy of our love and faithfulness?

* **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)

* **RE Classes are available during the 11am Service:**

Tapestry of Faith, Sunday February 7th - Children will be in classes for their age groups for Tapestry of Faith programs.

Valentine Day Party - Sunday, February 14th. Save the Date! We will be celebrating Valentine Day with special treats!

* **Parent Night Out** - The RE Committee is hosting a Parents Night Out on Saturday, February 20th. This night is

for the parents to enjoy, whether it is for a movie, quiet dinner , or just some "me" time. Children will enjoy a fun evening together with dinner, games and a movie. Sign up in the RE Department.

OTHER SUNDAY EVENTS

* SERENDIPITY AUCTION PICKUP AND PAY SUNDAY

Sunday, February 7 is Pickup and Pay Sunday. It's time to pay for that amazing purchase you made at the Auction. We take check, cash, or credit cards. Look for us in the Lexow Room. Did you miss out on that special item? While you're there, check out the List of Unsold Items. We will still take add-ons through February 7.

* **The Arts Council invites you to see the new exhibit of paintings by UUCS member Bet Cummings, now on display in the Lexow Wing Gallery!** Bet says, "I'm interested in the way beauty can emerge from color, expressing things we can all understand, without words. No matter the subject, all of these paintings are about the effects of color." Spend a few minutes in the Lexow Wing Gallery to appreciate the beauty, then mark your calendar for the **artist's reception on Sunday, February 21st at 12 noon, immediately following the second service.**

CARING

* **Our best wishes to Lucille Wallace** who has moved into Harbor Chase, 5311 Proctor Road #100, Sarasota, 34233. Lucille is happy to be there and looks forward to having visitors.

* **Check the Caring Resource wall rack in the Lexow wing for helpful pamphlets.** Information on facilities, organizations and a massage therapist that makes house calls is available.

* **Safety Tip:** Add a taxi phone number into your cell phone. . . you never know when you might need it.

* **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

* **SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 10 AM - WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING - details to follow**

* **UUs in the News**

Books for Sale presents *UU Musings* published by June Brasgalla. The book represents stories by 14 members and friends of our church community who are enrolled in the "Writing Your Life Story" class. The book costs \$12 with the profits going to the Transition House. Copies may be purchased in our church bookstore, on Amazon, and from June Brasgalla.

* **If you were unable to have your UUCS Directory photo taken** during the recent sessions, please call

UPCOMING EVENTS

* **Next week, February 14, is Second Sunday Potluck.** Please bring food to serve 8 people: salads, sandwiches, desserts. Vegetarian and vegan dishes are encouraged. All are welcome.

* **EPISCOPAL BISHOP JOHN SHELBY SPONG WILL SPEAK AT UUCS ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12 & 13!**

Bishop Spong is among the most celebrated and influential living theologians.

His sharp criticism of biblical literalism and much of traditional Christian dogma, and his powerful support of liberal theology have gained him both avid fans and angry detractors. He has also been a tireless advocate of separation of church and state.

Retiring in 2000 after 24 years as the Bishop of Newark, he has lectured widely and has taught at Harvard, Drew, and the Berkeley Graduate Theological Union. His books have sold well over one million copies. His weekly online columns reach thousands worldwide.

Bishop Spong's latest book, *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy*, will go on sale worldwide in the week following his UUCS appearance, but HarperCollins has shipped us 75 copies of the new book for early sale and autographing.

Appearing with Bishop Spong will be his friend, Rev. Dr. Roger Ray, who holds a doctorate from Vanderbilt Divinity School, is a noted author and lecturer, and is pastor of the Community Christian Church of Springfield, MO, a very liberal non-denominational church that he founded almost a decade ago after departing a Disciples of Christ ministry. His church is noted for its radical compassion, care and advocacy for the poor, sick, and vulnerable. Thousands of his followers watch his weekly sermons on YouTube and iTunes.

Some of the fine musicians who brilliantly perform the music that help make Rev. Ray's Sunday services unique will also appear in our lecture series. They are led by Sean Spyles, 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!"

For details, schedule, fee, and registration information see the UUCS website – <http://www.uucsarasota.com/spong.html>.

In addition to appearing in the lecture series with Bishop Spong, Rev. Ray, Sean Spires, and the other musicians will be guest minister and musicians at the UU Lakewood Ranch Valentines Day service at 10 a.m. on Sunday!

*** 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. *Eternal Life: A New Vision Beyond Religion, Beyond Theism, Beyond Heaven and Hell* will be our book for Wednesday, **February 10**, from 3:30-5:00 pm **in the Library** followed by a Dialog about Bishop Spong's program on February 17. You do not need to read the books or attend Spong's program 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.

**** See Sarasota and More ****

Drum Circle Distillery and Early Dinner @ Sweet Tomatoes - University Parkway

Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 2:30 - 6:15

Award winning Siesta Key Rum, made from Florida ingredients, is produced at the Drum Circle Distillery in Sarasota. We have arranged a tour of their facility, tasting room, and gift shop for Wednesday, February 17. We will gather at the church at 2:30 for a 2:45 departure in carpools. Our tour is at 3:30 and we will then go for an early-bird dinner at the Sweet Tomatoes Restaurant on University Parkway. There is no charge for the tour and the price for dinner and a beverage is under \$10.00, which you will pay on your own. You may sign up for this trip on Sunday, February 7 and 14 in the courtyard after each service. Cheers!

*** Schedule Change**

This month's 5-star movie, *A Perfect World*, has been moved from Friday, February 12, to the **Wednesday, February 17 at 6:00 p.m.** A short discussion will follow for those who want to stay after the movie is shown.

*** When Irish Eyes Are Smiling: A St. Patrick's Day Celebration**

He's been called one of the true musical gems to come out of Ireland and on Sunday, March 6, vocalist/guitarist Paul Duffy will headline our largest concert of the year in "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," as a tribute to St. Patrick's Day.

Paul and his musical group will run through a repertoire of the greatest Irish folk songs ever sung, tunes like "Molly Malone," "Danny Boy," "Dirty Old Town," and "What Do You Do With a Drunken Sailor." A gifted musician, Duffy plays the saxophone, trumpet, flute, guitar, keyboards, drums, bass, tin whistle and bagpipes. He attended the Dublin Conservatory of Music to learn to read music. His concerts at UUCS draw audiences from all over Southwest Florida. Tickets are \$15. (Buy online in advance at <http://www.beachsun.org/concerts/tickets/> to be sure of getting a seat.)

*** The Southern Region of the UUA invites you to join them for the Florida Spring Gathering on Saturday, March 12 at the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater for fun, networking, cooperative learning, and covenant!** This is the gathering mentioned in the "Minister's Message" above.

The morning *Keynote on Covenant* will be presented by Connie Goodbread, Congregational Life Staff, and Margie Manning, Elder. Lunch will be served before an afternoon of topical workshops. The closing worship will make everyone feel connected and revitalized! A portion of the Unitarian Universalist film series "Long, Strange Trip" will be offered as an optional evening activity. Please feel free to stay over Saturday night and join in for worship on Sunday morning!

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.

*** Social Justice Committee Meets Tuesday, February 9 at noon in the Lexow Wing.** New members, friends and curiosity seekers, you are welcome to visit or join the committee. Just tell us who you are and where you're from.

*** Thank You for Supporting the Food Bank's** summer hunger program through our January Share-the-Plate. We gave \$2,548 to kick start this summer's community effort to feed families who run short of food. Thank you!

*** Want to Make A Difference?** [Sue Ladwig](#) summarized Volunteer Opportunities with several organizations that partner with the social justice committee. Looking for an opportunity to help children, families or adults? Stop by the social justice table for a flyer.

*** Sign the Solar Energy Petition.** The organizers of this petition have [renewed efforts](#) in 2016 to collect signatures. While this state constitutional amendment to expand solar energy in Florida will not appear on the November ballot, it will appear in 2018 with additional signatures. The petition is available to sign at the social justice table. Florida registered voters

*** Join The Brady Campaign Bayfront Witness** for gun background checks on Thursdays from 4-5 p.m. at the Kissing Statue. Signs provided. Wear white. Bring a friend or make a new one. For more information, contact Nancy or Dave Evans at nadaevans@comcast.net.

*** 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.

*** Bring A Food Donation for Bethesda House.** 14-oz. canned food (pork-and-beans, ravioli are favorites), travel size toiletries, paper products (toilet paper and towels). Bring your donation to the collection bin on Sunday. Thank you!

* **Whole Bean Coffee, Chocolate Bars and other Fair Trade items**, which are not available at the Sunday table, are available by special order. It is easy to place one. Just talk to Suzie Brucklacher or write to her at justice@uusarasota.org, subject line: Fair Trade Special Order.

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. Sorry, no chocolate bars - now special order only.

SUNDAY EVENTS, FEBRUARY 14

UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Road

* **9 a.m. & 11 a.m. "Love, a German American Perspective," Sermon by Rev. Roger Fritts**

* **Music: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Bharat Chandra, clarinet; Don Bryn, piano**

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

* **10:05 Forum: "Soaring Past 7 Billion: Population Challenges for a Crowded World."** A discussion of global population growth, its causes and impacts, and how we can meet those challenges. Presenter, John Seager, President, Population Connection (formerly Zero Population Growth); Moderator, DeeAnna Dowdle.

Lakewood Ranch, driving directions on our website

* **10:00 a.m. "Drunken Priests and Baby Talking Prophet," Sermon by Rev. Roger Ray**

Rev. Dr. Roger Ray is the pastor of the Community Christian Church (CCC) of Springfield, MO, a very unusual non-denominational progressive church that he founded almost a decade ago after leaving 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.

* **10:00 a.m. Music: Musicians from Rev. Roger Ray's Community Christian Church.**

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