



February 21, 2016

WEEKLY CONTACT

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota (UUCS)

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE FROM ROGER FRITTS

How do we pay the cost of maintaining our building, staff, and programs? The pledges of Members and Friends and a few special fund-raising activities support the church financially. Our fiscal year is April 1-March 31. We set these dates so that snowbirds can be involved in our yearly financial planning before they migrate north in the spring. We hold a "stewardship" or "pledge" campaign once a year (this year it will start Sunday, February 28) asking church members to pledge their financial support for the new fiscal year. The congregation approves a yearly budget at a congregational meeting (March 20 after the second service) based on our projected income from these sources.

The total proposed budget for next year is \$554,167. (We will adjust this based on the results of the pledge campaign.) We currently have 463 adult members. (This number changes from week to week.) If we charged a membership fee, it would be \$23 a week per person, about what you might spend at a restaurant for one meal.

Of course, some of us cannot afford to eat out once a week, or pledge \$23 a week to the church. Because we want everyone to feel welcome, we do not charge a membership fee. It pains me to watch those occasions when members suffer a reverse--illnesses, loss of a job, break up of marriage--and decide to drop out of the church because they can no longer carry what they believe to be their fair share of the fiscal burden. Just at the time when they need the church the most, they withdraw because they feel they cannot afford to support it. Please do not do this. As your minister, so that I treat everyone equally, I do not know how much you pledge.

To ensure that everyone is welcome, some of us **MUST** pledge more than \$23 a week per person. For example, I give 5 percent of my income, \$75 a week (the cost of three meals in a restaurant) to the church. I invite those of you who can, to join me.

SATURDAY EVENT, FEBRUARY 20

* **NEW! Now forming - UU Women's Group** - women of all ages are welcome to join us on **Saturday, February 20**, at 10 am in the West Wing, for coffee/tea, sweets, and a meeting with discussion. Come see what this is all about! Any questions? Contact Mary Fran Raynault at maryfran.raynault@gmail.com

SUNDAY EVENTS, FEBRUARY 21

UUCS, 3975 Fruitville Road

*** 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. "Creating Change Through Humanism," Mr. Roy Speckhardt, CEO of the American Humanist Association**

American Humanist Association Executive Director Roy Speckhardt will explore the modern state of humanism and how our forward-thinking outlook, with its emphasis on critical thinking and self-reflection, can be at the forefront of pressing social issues.

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

*** 11 a.m. Religious Education (RE):**

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

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

Classes are offered during the 11 am service for children and youth.

*** 10:05 Forum: "Visible Men Academy"**

Visible Men Academy or VMA is a tuition-free public charter school for boys in Bradenton that opened in 2013. It currently has boys from grades K-5, and adds a new class each year. The VMA vision is to lead boys toward a realization of their innate strong character -- boys who are family orientated, community conscious, globally aware, and equipped to meet the later challenges of high school and college environments. Presenter, Neil Phillips.

Neil Phillips is Founder, Executive Director and Principal of VMA. After receiving his B.A in English and American Literature from Harvard University, Neil went on to play professional basketball in Australia. He has been an educational administrator for the last eleven years, serving as the Assistant Headmaster at the Landon School for Boys in Bethesda, MD, and as Interim Head of Upper School at the Out-of-Door Academy in Sarasota. He is an Aspen Institute Educational Entrepreneurship Fellow; a member of the inaugural Echoing Green/Open Society Foundations Black Male Achievement Fellowship; a Nantucket Project Senior Fellow and was recently awarded the Nantucket Project Audience Award for his talk, "Race to Truth;" and serves on the Board of Directors of Washington Jesuit Academy in Washington, DC. He lives in Sarasota with his wife, Shannon Rohrer-Phillips and their two sons.

Lakewood Ranch, 6600 River Club Blvd, Bradenton 34202

*** 10:00 a.m. "Separation Anxiety: God and Government in 2016"**

Video Sermon by Rev. Barry Lynn

The Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and has been a long-time activist and lawyer in the civil liberties field.

*** 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.**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

* **Parents Night Out** - The RE Committee is hosting a Parents Night Out on Saturday, **February 20th** from 6 to 9:30 pm. This night is for parents to enjoy, whether it's for a movie, quiet dinner, or just some "me" time. Children will enjoy a fun evening together with dinner, games and a movie. Contact DRE, Susan Cook-Hallock, at dre@uusarasota.org or call 371-4974, ext. 7 for more information. Forgot to sign up? Not a problem, you can register that night.

* **Tapestry of Faith** classes will be held on Sunday, **February 21st**. The Pk-1st graders will continue with the "Wonderful Welcome" curriculum and be exploring the importance of acceptance. The 2-5th Graders will be working from the "Signs of Our Faith, Being UU Everyday" curriculum. Our Youth Group will be choosing the next world religion to explore from the curriculum "Neighboring Faiths."

* **Save the Date** - Join us on **March 12th** from 9:30 to 11:30 for a Volunteer Day at All Faiths Food Bank. All children (age 4 & older), youth & adults are invited to join us as we help sort and pack food for delivery to our community food pantries. We will meet at All Faiths Food Bank, 8171 Blaikie Ct, Sarasota. Need transportation? Have a question? Contact DRE, Susan Cook-Hallock, at dre@uusarasota.org or call 371-4974 ext. 7 for more information. Please note, closed toed-shoes are required.

OTHER SUNDAY EVENTS

* **Volunteer Opportunities at Turning Points**

Cheryl Hedger, Turning Points Volunteer Coordinator, will be at the Social Justice table Sunday morning, **February 21** along with Sue Ladwig, UU member. Turning Points is Manatee County's successful one-stop center that provides, facilitates and coordinates services to men, women and children who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. Volunteer opportunities are many and include medical, dental and administrative. If you are interested in Turning Points volunteer opportunities, Cheryl and Sue will be available to answer your questions about rewarding volunteer opportunities now available.

* **This Sunday, February 21st -- The Arts Council reception for UUCS member Bet Cummings** and her exhibit of paintings will be at 12 noon, immediately following the second service 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." Be sure to stop in after the service to see Bet's work and say hello!

* **Open Zen meditation takes place every Sunday night**

One of the few Zen meditation groups in Southwest Florida meets here every Sunday night at 7 pm in the Jefferson Room. Each session is marked by a reading from a famous Zen or Buddhist master and then a 25-minute meditation.

The group favors the Soto Zen tradition and this Sunday night will focus on teachings by the legendary Soto Zen master Shunryu Suzuki on breathing techniques and visualization.

Donations are welcome for the sessions, which are now in their 3rd year here and no special equipment is required. You may come and go as you please. If you are curious about Zen or looking to find a special peace in your life, you're invited to sit in on this Sunday's meditation.

CARING

* **Your FREE Lifetouch picture is now available for pickup.** These photos are available for members who did not order additional pictures. Please look on the bookcase in the Lexow Wing or on a table in the Courtyard.

* **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

* **Stewardship Drive Kick-Off**

We will kick off the annual Stewardship Drive on Sunday, February 28. Pledge cards for the church fiscal year 2016-17 will be made available in the Order of Service on that date. Between now and then, please think about your pledge amount, so you will be prepared to fill out your pledge card and sign it and drop it the box in the courtyard after the church service. If your current pledge is about 1% of your income, try to increase it to 2%. If you are already pledging 2% of your income, try to get closer to 3%, and so on. If you pledge 5% of your income, or more, like our Minister, we thank you!

A light luncheon will be provided for all on February 28, after the 11:00 AM service, to encourage members and friends to stay around, socialize at lunch and perhaps even take the time to fill out, sign and turn in your pledge cards. Those who turn in their pledge cards on that date will be eligible for a few prizes to be awarded to those whose cards are drawn from the box on that date only. We are encouraging early pledges of support so we can end the Stewardship Drive by **March 20**, when we will be voting on a budget for the coming Fiscal Year at our annual meeting.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Yours in the spirit of a loving community,

Dean Reger

Chair, Stewardship Committee

UPCOMING EVENTS

* **Religious Literacy Dialog**

Reimagining God: The Faith Journey of a Modern Heretic, a book by Lloyd Geering, will be the theme of our dialogs beginning Wednesday, **February 24**, from 3:30-5:00 pm in the West Wing. We also discuss contributions by individuals as well as articles from Westar Institute's Fourth R Magazine (westarinstitute.org). If you can't attend, you can participate by signing up for our email list. You can read the thoughts of others and share your own ideas if you so desire. No advanced reading is required. To sign up for the email list, or for additional information contact David Ryan at d2mryan@verizon.net or 365-4027.

* The UU Vegetarian Lunch Group will meet at Flavors of India on Friday, **March 4**, at 1:00 pm. The restaurant is located at 7119 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Non-vegetarians are welcome. However, we ask that everyone have a "vegetarian" lunch. Reservations are necessary so that an exact count can be given to the restaurant on Thursday, **March 3**. For further information, or to make reservations, please contact Jean Wieloch at jeanw972@yahoo.com or via phone: 929-3845.

* **FreeThinkers presents: Daughters of Susan B: A History and Legacy of Women's Suffrage, Friday March 4 at 10 a.m. in the UUCS Sanctuary.** Not your stuffy history class, this presentation looks at the suffrage and women's equality movement through the eyes of Susan B. Anthony and how she might look upon the status of gender equality as it stands today.

* **MARK THESE DATES, FreeThinkers Series - Fridays at 10 a.m.:**

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 Pending

June 3 Pending

Speakers and/or Topics Subject to Change

* **"Discovering UUCS" - A Newcomer Orientation**

Saturday, March 5, 2016; 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!

*** *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**, at 3:00 p.m. 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 certain of getting a seat.)

*** CALLING ALL UUCS AUTHORS**

We are holding an Authors Showcase book sale and signing on **Sunday, April 3**, 9:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., in the Lexow Wing. Any UUCS member or friend who has authored a book and would like to participate in this event is welcome. We encourage books on a variety of subjects and genres - fiction, non-fiction, poetry, children's books. The church receives 15% of the total sales collected for each book. The deadline for signing up is: **March 13**. For further information, please contact: Jim Keeney at jim.keeney@gmail.com or 928-3378, or Lynne Singer at lynnes500@gmail.com or 726-7463.

*** UUWomenspirit Spring Retreat - May 11-15, 2016**

UUWomenspirit is a non-profit, volunteer-run organization that has hosted all-women retreats since 1987. Our retreats emphasize and celebrate the Divine Feminine in her many forms. Our next retreat will be held on May 11-15 at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC. Our theme for this event is *We Walk With HER, as One* and will emphasize our connection to Mother Earth. For more information about UUWomenspirit, please visit their website, www.uuwomenspirit.org.

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.

*** Last Chance To Bring Food for Bethesda House.** Bring a donation to the collection bin this Sunday. The next opportunity will be March 13. During the 2-week break, social justice will support a special project by the RE kids. Watch for more information from RE.

* **Encourage Pediatricians to ASK.** Volunteers are needed to help the local chapter of the Brady Campaign write Sarasota county pediatricians about ASK "Asking Saves Kids." The personal letter will include informed consent and fliers for patient waiting rooms. The project encourages discussion about the danger to children of unlocked guns in friends' homes. To learn more about volunteering, contact Nancy or Dave Evans at nadaevans@comcast.net. Or talk with them on Thursday 4-5 p.m. at the weekly Bayfront Witness for Gun Control, near the Kissing Statue.

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

* **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. Talk to Suzie Brucklacher or write to her at justice@uusarasota.org, subject line: Fair Trade Special Order. The table does have a fresh box of Fruit & Nut bars (\$1) and small chocolates (5/\$1).

* **Thank you For Donating Blankets,** backpacks, zippered bags, and men's pants to Resurrection House. Immediate needs have been met. Thank you!

* **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 on the 2018 ballot with additional signatures. The petition is available to sign at the social justice table. Florida registered 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, FEBRUARY 28

UUCS Sarasota, 3975 Fruitville Rd, Sarasota

* **9:00 and 11:00 a.m. "Welcome to Sarasota, Fellow Baby Boomers," sermon by Rev. Roger Fritts**

People born between the years 1946 and 1964, ranging in age between 51 and 70 are retiring. Some are retiring to Sarasota. Some are joining our church! This sermon, by our Baby Boomer minister, is a way of saying welcome.

* **Music: 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Joe Martinez, trumpet; Don Bryn, piano**

* **10:05 Forum: TBA**

Lakewood Ranch, The River Club, 6600 River Club Blvd, Bradenton 34202

* **10:00 am Sermon by Katie Romano Griffin, Ministerial Intern serving in Ft. Myers**

* **Music: Ed Kinder, keyboard**

*** 10:00 am Nursery and Childcare provided**

*** 11:00 am Food and Fellowship**

We invite you to stay after the service for brunch and fellowship. Order off the menu.