



WEEKLY CONTACT

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota

Email Submissions to Sunday@uusarasota.org

Deadline: Tuesday, 12 noon

MINISTER'S MESSAGE FROM ROGER FRITTS

The key to enjoying Christmas is in my expectations. If I expect that I should always be joyful, if I expect that I should send many cards, if I expect that I should find the perfect gifts to give, if I expect that I should have the perfect meal on Christmas day, I prepare myself for a big disappointment when things do not go as anticipated.

However, I have also discovered that I have control over these expectations. I can choose to remember that Christmas, like all parts of life, has both frustrations and joys. I can remember that it makes little sense either to ignore the frustrations (and pretend that everything is perfect) or to focus on the frustrations (and pretend that everything is miserable).

I gain peace of mind in admitting to myself that a festive and happy experience can also be annoying and imperfect. When I admit this to myself, I open myself up to the beauty and power of Christmas--the celebration of birth at the beginning of winter.

SUNDAY EVENTS, DECEMBER 23

10:00 and 11:30 A Short History of Christmas – Roger Fritts

Our Guest Musicians:

Tatev Varoyan was born in Yerevan, Armenia. At age five, she entered the Tchaikovsky Music School of Yerevan for gifted piano students, her mother being a professional pianist. In 2007, she came to the United States to study music and go to school in Sarasota. At Riverview High School, she was in the choir and was the student accompanist. She studied singing with various distinguished vocal teachers including our own Robert Lischetti. Her beautiful voice and terrific sense of style brought her to a professional career becoming part of the Apprentice Artist Program for the Sarasota Opera and she is scheduled to sing the role of Papagena in *The Magic Flute* in 2019. She also returns periodically to Armenia where she continues to study and take roles in operas there.

Zaruhi Baroyan, Tatev's mother has been the company pianist of the Sarasota Ballet since 2004. Before that, she worked as a ballet accompanist in Armenia and other locations. In 1999, she was invited to take part in Andrew Lloyd Webber's Music Nationwide Tour starring Michael Bolton, which began her career in the United States as a ballet pianist. In that role, she has worked with such luminaries as Mikhail Barishnikov and the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, DC.

Forum Holiday Party 10:15 --Y'All Come!

It's the Forum Holiday Party. With Fred Sirasky on the ukulele, we always have a jolly time singing and enjoying each other and some spirits of the season. You're encouraged to bring goodies; we supply the spirits.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) 10:00 and 11:30 (child care)

Catherine Bonner, DRE@UUSarasota.org

PRE K - YOUTH will start in the Service for a story for All Ages then will return to the West Wing where we will have a joint class learning the songs and parts for the Family Christmas Eve service, decorating Christmas cookies and making a Rice Krispies igloo to be served after the Christmas Eve Service. Fun to be had by all!

Please remember to bring a goodie or finger food to share during the wassail and

refreshments gathering after each of the **Christmas Eve Services**. The Bonners will be hosting the refreshment table and as usual will be bringing the Christmas Cheer with mulled Cider (wassail), holiday punch, and Catherine's famous rum cake. Looking for two volunteers each refreshment period to help with serving the punch and wassail. Please let Catherine know if you can help at Catherine.bonner914@gmail.com

Discovery and Discussion: "A Lesson on Looking." 11:30 – Reeb Room. Essen est percipi? Are you looking closely? Visual educator Amy Herman explains how to use art to enhance your powers of perception and find connections where they may not be apparent. Learn the techniques Herman uses to train Navy SEALs, doctors and crime scene investigators to convert observable details into actionable knowledge with this insightful talk. Coordinator: Dave Nelson. Moderator: Susan Eisman.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF LAKEWOOD RANCH 10:00 at the Lakewood Ranch Hyatt Place

<https://www.uulakewoodranch.org/>

John Yoder: "Contemplating Life and Death, An Opportunity for Learning and Sharing". As important as it is to think about the event of death, the real heavy lifting comes in thinking about the process that leads up to it. Thinking and talking openly about our fears and aspirations with our spouse and children is a good place to start in planning what some have called the fourth quarter of our lives. Richard Herring will be the Worship Leader and Jan Dorsett will be our Guest Musician.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Personal Growth and Renewal: A new workshop series begins Sunday, January 6, at 2:00 in the Reeb Room with: "Purpose, Passion & Possibilities *for You, Others and the World.*" Join human potential expert Michael Kline in this highly interactive experience. Connect with your life's purpose, live life more fully, and explore possibilities for yourself, others and the world. Series continues the first Sunday of each month. To join the notification list email Phyllis Mufson at pmufson@comcast.net.

Passionate about Poetry: New Class: starts Monday January 7th – 1:00 to 3:00 - West Wing. Poetry lovers wanted! Please join us for fun and conversation. You don't have to be the poet—you can be the poem, if you like. Bring your favorite poems to read and discuss. If possible, please bring some extra copies to share. All are welcome. 1st and 3rd Mondays ongoing. Contact: Laura Bagby lbagby6688@yahoo.com or Dave Nelson 2ndrow2@gmail.com (941) 251-4635.

Death Café: Saturday, January 5 - 2:00 to 3:30 in the James Reeb Room. An opportunity to gather and share thoughts and feelings about death in an open and respectful environment; free of any doctrine or desire to lead anyone to any particular conclusion, course of action, merchandise, or anything like that. All are welcome. Please register early. A \$5 donation is requested to cover cost of use of space. For questions and to RSVP, contact Risa Marlen—risa@lovingheartceremonies.com.

PLEASE NOTE: our FreeThinkers lecture for January 4 has been postponed. A new date will be announced in the near future.

Get Together Dinners: Now is the time to sign up for our Winter 2019 Get Together Dinners. The dates are January 26, February 23, and March 23. 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. See the Participant Letter on the Church website for additional information. **Registration forms are available at the Get Together Dinner table in the courtyard in December or save paper and register online www.uusarasota.org.** Deadline for registering is December 23. Please consider being a host one of the months if possible. If you are not sure of your plans, we are encouraging you to sign up for our Wait List.

CARING

Caring helps members and friends of our UU community with short term needs such as meals, transportation and visitations. Let me know if you would like to have or be a "buddy." Check out the wall rack in the Lexow for resource information in Sarasota. If you or someone you know needs assistance, please contact Dee Widder at 377-9028 or deanawidder@gmail.com.

OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome to new member **Bev Godwin!**

A service for **Verna Safran**, who died in November 2017, will be held in the Memorial Garden on **Wednesday January 2 at 10:30**. The family will be interring the ashes. Verna's family has asked that her friends join them at the service and for a luncheon afterward at the Columbia Restaurant on St. Armand's Key. If you would like to attend the luncheon, please notify Melissa Bates before December 27 at melissa-bates@uIowa.edu.



To conserve resources, the Board has agreed with a request from Rev. Fritts to no longer include an abridged printed copy of the church newsletter in every copy of the Order of Service. We will have printed, unabridged copies of the full e-mail newsletter available at the Welcome Table for anyone who would like a printed copy. If you would like to receive the e-mail newsletter sent out Friday mornings, send your e-mail address to the church office at auuucs@gmail.com.

SEE SARASOTA

See Sarasota and More, Thursday, January 10

Join us on our next adventure with See Sarasota and More when we go to the new Imagine Museum in St. Petersburg on Thursday, January 10. Imagine Museum represents the history of the studio glass movement from the 1950's to the present. We will also see an exhibit of Paul Stankard's botanical glass works. After the docent tour at the museum, we will be having lunch at Ferg's Sports Bar and Grill. We will meet at church at 9:30 and be carpooling to St. Petersburg and will be back at church around 3:30. The cost of the trip is \$28.00 which includes the entrance to the museum, lunch, the tip and gas money for the driver. If you have a NARM membership (reciprocal pass) to a museum, the cost is \$18. You may pay with cash or a check made out to Kathy Cook. We will have sign-up sheets available after the first and second service on December 23 and 30.

Discovering UUCS – A Newcomer Orientation; Saturday, January 12, 9:30 – 12:30 Lexow Wing

If you are considering membership, this workshop is for you. Reverend Fritts will discuss our history and explore what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist and a member of this church. Later some of our church leaders will join us for lunch to talk about the many activities here and answer questions. The Membership Committee provides lunch. It's always an informative and interesting morning. Be sure to sign up at the Welcome Center!

SAVE THE DATE

Donations and Volunteers Needed!

Our Serendipity Auction takes place January 27 after the 10:00 service and we need your donations! Host what you donated last year or try something new. We'll be taking donations and signing up volunteers January 6 at the Auction Table in the courtyard. Dinners, lunches, teas, vacation rentals, day trips, golf outings and homemade goodies - let's make this year's offerings better than ever. The Serendipity Auction is the most fun you'll have all year and it all depends on you! Questions? Need donation ideas? Want to volunteer? Email us at auktion@uusarasota.org.



Happy Birthday – December 21 through December 30:

21 June Brady

23 Lisa Ellis

24 Katherine Isabelle, Joyce Schneider, Ward Pallotta, Mary Maldonado

26 Dale Anderson
27 David Kee
28 Carol Ewert, Nancy Janus
29 Irene Holleran, JoAnn Kelly, Betty Thorner
30 Rona Gahr, Brock Leach, Vic Mahler, Sharon Seager

If you're a member with a birthday this week that is not listed, please inform the office.

OUR COMMITMENTS - SOCIAL JUSTICE

The December Share the Plate offering will take place at the Christmas Eve services. The offering will replenish the Social Justice Public Housing Fund. The fund assists with rent or utility payments for residents with a short-term financial need. This assistance prevents eviction and reduces homelessness. Please give generously. If you wish your check to be designated to your Pledge, please write that on the memo line.

Justice Advocacy is now part of the Social Justice Committee's efforts. Over 15,000 Sarasota families spend more than 50% of their income on housing, severely restricting their ability to care for their children and pay their everyday bills. Both Sarasota City and Sarasota County can implement policies or enforce existing ones that support workforce or affordable housing. The recently approved Siesta Promenade project is going to provide just 25 units of "affordable" rentals. The Sarasota bed tax collected \$1 million in October alone, none of which goes to work force housing, but 10% goes to the Benderson Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center. Sarasota got just \$600,000 of \$4.5 million that should have come from the state via the Sadowski Housing Trust, but our legislature raids this fund every year for other purposes. If you want to be heard on this justice issue, contact your legislators and commissioners, write letters to the editor, and speak up at city and county commission meetings to let them know that there must be affordable housing as much as roads and recreational facilities.

Looking for social justice information? Stop by the Social Justice table in the courtyard to learn about volunteer opportunities and to purchase fair trade items including chocolate, coffees, teas and olive oil. Also check out the Social Justice web pages on the church's website, go to uucarasota.com and click the Social Justice tab. For fair trade special orders, contact Suzie Brucklacher at justice@uucarasota.org, subject line, Fair Trade Special Order.

Upcoming Service

December 30 (one service only at 10:00)

John Brackett What is the role of the female goddess in different world cultures. Why do we in Western religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) not have a female goddess? What is it about our culture that not only deprecates the goddess but now also seems replete with abusive exploitation of women? The sermon seeks to investigate the possible correlation between the ancient loss of the Western Goddess and the struggles of modern women.

John Brackett has been a Unitarian Universalist since 1988 and is one of the charter Unitarian Universalists of Lakewood Ranch. He was raised Catholic and attended minor seminary in high school. Although he spent his career in information technology, primarily as a database manager, he has a lifelong passion for history, philosophy and psychology. He is also a writer and is pursuing that interest in retirement. -

Please note that there will be no Forum or Discovery and Discussion today.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF LAKEWOOD RANCH 10:00 at the Lakewood Ranch Hyatt Place

www.uulakewoodranch.org

Rev. Rick Stackhouse will speak to us on The Theology of Wonder. The premise of the sermon is to embrace the different and unknown with wisdom and excitement.

Happy Holidays! The church will be closed on December 25, December 26 and January 1.