



CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation
A member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

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So Much to Celebrate!

Happy Founders' Day!
All Faiths Celebrates 24 Years!
Sunday, February 16, 2025
\$10 Boxed Lunch from
Jason's Deli

Black History Month
This year's theme celebrates
African Americans
and Labor

Welcome New Members!
All Faiths is happy to
welcome 18 new members
to our beloved community

**Welcoming Congregation
Status Renewed**
Congratulations to the Rainbow
Connection Team



2024 has become yesterday, and we have arrived in 2025 whether we like it or not.

On February 3 I turn 65 and Medicare eligible, it's hard to believe.

Uncertainty looms before me, the heavy burden of its impact upon me, as I struggle to shake free. The weight of life is hard sometimes. How can we cope?

First find out why. I believe it is the election, January 6, January 20, and the subsequent executive orders. Suddenly I felt it strongly. The weight of it all. How can we cope?

Last month I shared about the safety of sanctuary. A sanctuary not of brick and mortar, but of tender loving care, given and received in Beloved Community, we call it All Faiths Unitarian Congregation.

January 20 was the inauguration of the President but more importantly it was Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Several of us marched and attended events at the park downtown. Some of us hosted our vendor table. Our Racial Equity Team members support the MLK Day events annually. This year was a joyful yet subdued event. Perhaps they too were burdened as so many are.

But there is something to celebrate right here at All Faiths. The All Faiths Beloved Community is growing. Our Sanctuary of hope, safety and peace is enlarging! Saturday, January 19 we hosted All Faiths New Member Orientation and nine new members were in attendance. January 26 is the New Members Ceremony, and February 16 we celebrate Founders' Day!

But mostly we celebrate each other and the loving sweet spirit that resides at All Faiths.

Every Sunday, we hear these words which is not only for visitors they are all of us:

Here you will find a diverse and inclusive spiritual commu-

nity, where we welcome people with many beliefs.

You can bring your whole self, your full identity, your questioning mind, and expansive heart.

We have more than one way of experiencing the world and understanding the sacred.

No matter who you are, wherever you are on your spiritual journey, and no matter whom you love, you are truly welcome here.

At All Faiths, we are each other's keepers.

This is why we are growing. The Persian Poet and Mystic Jalal ad-Din Muhammad ar-Rumi said it like this: "Come, come whoever you are, wanderers, worshippers, lovers of leaving...ours is no caravan of despair, come yet again come."

As we grow let us remember and embrace these words as we continue Widening the Circle of Concern, love and support, while looking to our Mission and Vision statements.

Mission Statement

All Faiths Unitarian Congre-

gation is committed to Justice, Equity and Compassion.

Vision Statement

Recognizing our role as each other's keepers, we strive to be an inclusive, loving, spiritual community working to bring harmony to the world.

Beloveds, our Mission and Vision statements reflect our Unitarian Universalists Values. Last month my article closed with the following, I believe it continues to be relevant.

None of us know what will happen, or where this nation is headed, but if the writing on the wall is correct. Our beloved nation is headed for dramatic change from a great leading nation to one of isolation and authoritarian rule.

The lines are being drawn, where will you stand? As Unitarian Universalists we know we stand on the side of love. We lean into our values that reflect our ways of Being.

*We are Interdependent
We are Justice makers
We adhere to Generosity*

(continued on page 3)

Mission Statement

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All Faiths Collection Schedule

Monthly Share-the-Plate & Special Collections

(Please write organization and amount in the memo line of your check.)

February - Special Collection - Minister's Discretionary Fund

March - Operation Joy

January Share the Plate raised \$305 for Quality Life Center - Scholarships!

Employee bonuses are taxed appropriately through payroll services.

*Your generosity directly benefits our community all year long!
We are grateful!*



DESTINATION JOY *continued from pg. 2*

We believe in Justice for all

We believe Equity is good and fair:

We believe diversity is good and fair and therefore we are people of Pluralism

As love is our source and center; and peace our guide, changes may come but we will not fear. Instead we will erase the lines of fear; anxiety and depression. And write a new chapter:

We are on this journey together, let us hold on tight.

All aboard...Destination Joy

Love, Minister Albie

SUNDAY MUSINGS

Theme: The Power of Inclusion

Join us Sunday Morning at 9:15AM for Newstalk and Sunday Musing, formerly Sunday Questions. Newstalk is open discussion related to current events and can include Sunday Musings..

Sunday Musing will include various prompts to stimulate thoughts and interest in our monthly themes reflecting Unitarian Universalist values and sources of our faith.

February Musing is expressed in poems. Please check on FB and the Weekly for links to the poems, listen and let them wash over you.

Sunday Poems on the Power & Practice of Inclusion

First Sunday "To the Fig Tree on 9th and Christian" Ross Gay

Ross Gay's To the Fig Tree on
9th and Christian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aT0A28IW7E&list=PLvXOKgOQVYP7Rxv7fhqhaDCTOI5UIhbV&index=1>

Second Sunday "Your Life" Andrea Gibson

Andrea Gibson's Your Life:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsUp6Wd_o8I&list=PLvXOKgOQVYP7Rxv7fhqhaDCTOI5UIhbV&index=3

Third Sunday "We Never Did This To Be Beautiful" Ariana Brown

Ariana Brown's We Never Did
This To Be Beautiful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZacdD5IHQUg&list=PLvXOKgOQVYP7Rxv7fhqhaDCTOI5UIhbV&index=8>

Fourth Sunday "Gate A-4" Naomi Shihab Nye

Naomi Shihab Nye, Gate A-4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwDXJ50U22o&list=PLvXOKgOQVYP7Rxv7fhqhaDCTOI5UIhbV&index=16>

BOARD NOTES *by Frank Geltner, Board Chair*

The Board meeting was held on January 15, 2025, at 1pm.

Welcome to our new members.

I look forward to the 24th Anniversary of Founders' Day on Sunday, February 16.

The congregational bylaws have been reviewed and recommendations have been made by the Bylaws Review Committee (Jack Kennedy, Ken Malkin, Sharon Gray and Frank Geltner) to amend several sections. These will be presented to members and brought to a vote at our Annual Meeting before our Sunday Service on Sunday, March 16.

Congratulations Diane and Doug Cartwright, our newest Flamekeeper Award recipients — an honor up to their many contributions to this congregation over the years.

The Congregational Manual is in the final stages of its review and recommended changes will be brought to the Board of Directors at its next meeting on February 19.

I want to personally thank Dan DeShon and Brian Bigelow for shepherding our several garden areas and bringing new plantings to fit with the goal of having our grounds filled with Florida native plants.

Thanks to all members who helped put a face on All Faiths Unitarian Congregation to the community in attendance for the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration on January 20. I am confident that the booth was worth staffing for the day.

I encourage all members to do what they can to fulfill our congregations' purpose in the Social Justice arena. Thanks to David Donovan for helping to articulate a meaningful Social Justice agenda.

The next board meeting is Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 1pm.

CELEBRATING FOUNDERS' DAY

In 2001, our beloved founding minister, the Rev. Wayne A. Robinson (1937-2024), formed a new congregation, one that would reflect our values and desires to work together in community, with a particular emphasis on respect for shared but varied spiritual pursuits of truth, harmony, justice, peace and benevolence.

Twenty-four years later, we celebrate the day approximately 100 founding members met with Rev. Robinson and created All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, the free, liberal religious organization we all know and love today.

Come celebrate with us on Sunday, February 16, 2025. Order forms available on Sunday February 2 & 9, or call the office before Feb. 12 at 239-226-0900. \$10/person - kids free

Happening at All Faiths

*Happy February
Birthday to you!*



- Feb 3 Albie Johnson
- Feb 14 Jolene Jeranson
- Feb 15 Linda Arthur
- Feb 17 Carol Sommer
- Feb 18 Howard Silverman
- Feb 26 Nita Flores

And Coming Up...

- March 1 Eileen Moran
- March 3 Charlotte Blitt
- March 4 Frankie Jennings

If you are missing or see someone who is missing from the birthday roster, please let Regina know.

Be Kind to Groundhogs!



Solos Luncheon

**Saturday, February 1, 2024
1:00 p.m.**

AZUCAR RESTAURANT & BAKERY

3326 Del Prado Blvd S,
Cape Coral, FL 33904

check your email for details.

**RSVP to: Annelly Hudanick,
annelyblue@hotmail.com**

The All Voices Choir Practice

Meeting on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m.

The choir welcomes new members. You do not have to be a professional singer or read sheet music to join. Go ahead, give it a try. Contact: Carlos Garcia, ceegeefm@gmail.com.

McGregor Clinic Collection

Every 3rd Sunday of the Month at Service

The McGregor Clinic is a non-profit health care clinic designed to provide an integrated and holistic approach to patient and community care. Your donations of *men's and women's clothing, and non-perishable foods*, benefit people with HIV/AIDS and their families. Contact: David Donovan, ddonovan722@gmail.com

Book Club

Meeting on the 3rd Monday of the Month at 12 p.m.

The book club is casual and fun. No assigned books, just show up and be prepared to talk about an interesting book you've read or are reading. Contact: Diane Chernow, dianecher@comcast.net

Tuesday Discussion Group

Meeting on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Join the discussion. Facilitated by Frank Stephens, the group will discuss different aspects from the book, *A Course in Miracles*. All are welcome. Contact Frank Stephens at fdinfla99@gmail.com.

Mexican Train Dominoes

Meeting on the 2nd & 4th Friday of the Month at 2 p.m.

Join in on this fun and popular dominoes game. Don't know how to play? Come and we'll teach you -- it's easy. Contact Ken Malkin at kennethmmalkin@gmail.com to get on email distribution list.

ACMA Songwriters Circle

Meeting on Sundays 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

The circle is for Acoustic Songwriters of all levels. Songs and experiences are shared in a non-judgmental, casual atmosphere. All are welcome to come and play or just listen. ACMA is secular and is all about original music. No Membership required. We support Americana/Folk, Singer/Songwriters and provide a venue for performing original music.

FEBRUARY 2025 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 11am Choir Practice 1pm Solos Lunch (Pg. 4) 7pm ACMA Concert (Pg. 9)
2 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP Groundhog Day!	3	4 10am Sun. Service Mtg. 1:30pm Climate Action Team Zoom Mtg. 6:30pm Miracles Discussion Grp.	5 6:30pm Fort Myers Camera Club 7pm Vespers via Zoom (pg. 6)	6	7	8 11am Choir Practice 7pm ACMA Concert (Pg. 9)
9 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 12 pm Rainbow Connection	10	11 10am Racial Equity Meeting 6:30pm Miracles Discussion Grp.	12 10 am Finance Mtg. (rescheduled from 2-13)	13 3pm ACMA Members Party	 2pm Dominoes	15 11pm Choir Practice Founders' Day Setup Bldg. Reserved
16 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 24th Founders' Day! McGregor Clinic Collection	17 President's Day Office Closed 12pm Book Club @McGregor Cafe	18 10am Ministerial Support Mtg. 6:30pm Miracles Discussion Grp.	19 1pm Board Meeting 6:30pm Fort Myers Camera Club	20 1pm Homeless Team Mtg. 7pm Tamiami Tale Tellers	21	22 10:30am Beth O'Brien Celebration of Life at Whiskey Creek (pg. 8) 11am Choir Practice 7pm ACMA Concert (Pg. 9)
23 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP	24	25 6:30pm Miracles Discussion Grp.	26	27	28 2pm Dominoes 	

Check the online calendar at: www.allfaithsuu.org for post-printing updates

FEBRUARY 2025
SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES
THEME: THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSION

In-House & Live on Facebook at 10:30 a.m.
Recorded services can be viewed at www.allfaithsuu.org
or on our YouTube channel.

February 2 - *Somebody Will Be First*

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Michelle Gemma
Music by Carlos Garcia
Life of Congregation Report – Dick Scudder

February 9 - *Why Black History is Important*

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Reflection – Vanessa Gilyard
Worship Associate – Helen Dixon
Music by Carlos Garcia
Stewardship Testimonial by Annely Hudanick
Second Collection- Minister's Discretionary Fund

February 16 - *Founders' Day*

Celebrating Love and Commitment
Speakers - Alberita Johnson, Charlotte Blitt, Frankie
Jennings, Joyce Ramay & Joyce Schaffer
Worship Associate – Joyce Ramay
Music by Carlos Garcia
McGregor Clinic Collection
Founders' Day Lunch

February 23 - *The Sweetness of Blackness:*
From Pain to Power, From Tragedy to Triumph

Guest Speaker – Rev. Dr. Ronaldo Archer
Worship Associate – Alberita Johnson
Music by Carlos Garcia

News Talk - 9:15am in the Sanctuary
News Talk is a facilitated group that offers a time and
space for you to discuss the weekly headlines.

The Rainbow Connection
Meeting every 2nd Sunday at Noon
Contact Frank Stephens – fdinfla99@gmail.com

A space for the LGBTQ community and allies to
gather in fellowship, plan activities and offer support.

CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM NOTES

by Sharon Heinrich, CYP Director

This month “Inclusion” is the faith practice that we will explore. Practicing inclusion and recognizing ways that people, stories, ideas and religions are left out allows us to live our love by valuing and including others. Each session will lift up a different way that inclusion helps us to understand ourselves, each other and the world.

Opening: We are here together with love at our center. We will think with our minds, love with our hearts, create with our hands.

February 2: Not leaving out people. “The Fox and the Stork”. Discuss how certain factors may exclude others and what you can do to include them.

February 9: Not leaving out stories. “Milk and Sugar”. Less known stories. Make Valentines.

February 16: Not leaving out love for ourselves. “The Ugly Duckling” Celebrate your uniqueness.

February 23: Not leaving out religions. “The Edict of Torda”. Explore different faiths.

Closing: As we make our choices each day, may we make them with love at our center.

I would like to encourage our congregation to share talent, skill and knowledge with our young people. Please let me know if you would like me to schedule a short time on a Sunday morning for you to share with the young ones.

Sharon, CYP Director

REGISTER AT: www.allfaithsuu.org



ALL FAITHS' VESPERS

1st Wednesday Monthly 7:00
A time of evening prayer,
meditation and contemplation

Zoom Meeting ID: 852 1697 7661

Passcode: 485483

What to Expect: We may experience sacred readings, crystal and Tibetan bowls, flute, violin, harp, lite drumming, poetry, quotes, testimonials, storytelling, chanting and movement. Each service is different but will always include prayer, meditation and contemplation.

For more information email: office@allfaithsuu.org

RAINBOW CONNECTION NEWS

by David Donovan and Carole Latino, Co-Chair

The Rainbow Connection Team is pleased to announce Carole Latino as its new Co-Chair. Together, we are looking forward to guiding our team into 2025 and are pleased to welcome our snowbirds back along with the talents and energy that they bring.

All Faiths renewal application to maintain its Welcoming Congregation status was submitted in early December. We hope to have our official re-certification document in the coming months. This was a huge accomplishment and only happened through the hard work of both the Rainbow Connection team and our Minister. All Faiths will be formally recognized during the UUA General Assembly for this accomplishment. We have already begun development on the renewal process for 2025. The first Day of Observance for the year will be to honor National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on February 2nd. A speaker from The McGregor Clinic has been invited to talk about statistics in Lee County and the disparity between races, genders etc.

I want to give a big shout out to all of you who attended the Rainbow Connection Lasagna Luncheon in December. We raised over \$800 for Cape Coral Pride and had a lot of fun in the process. It was so well received and so successful that the team wants to make it an annual event. Thank You ALL.

All Faiths raised approx. \$1500 that will be donated to Cape Coral Pride again this year. We are proud to be included in such an inclusive and worthy cause. This year's Pride Event will be on March 1st and 2nd. All Faiths will have a booth at the event like we did last year, however, we are also hoping to include an actual float in the parade as well. We would need someone with a pickup truck or trailer that can spare it for a couple of days and volunteers to design/build a fixture to hold our banner and decorate the float. Let's think BIG!!

Congratulations and a great big thank you to *David Donovan* and the Rainbow Connection Team for their diligent efforts to renew All Faiths Welcoming Congregation Status. As you can see from the renewal letter (right), a lot of planning and organizing went into the project. David dove right into the challenge, and we are grateful for his hard work and perseverance, and to all who helped him in this wonderful achievement.

WELCOMING CONGREGATION STATUS RENEWED!

Letter from LGBTQ & Multicultural Program Director

Dear David and Members of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation,

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for 2024. Sincere congratulations on your ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ welcome and inclusion in and beyond Fort Myers.

It was a pleasure to read about all you have accomplished and the powerful work you have done to ensure that All Faiths is meeting the needs of queer and trans congregants and the wider community in the following ways:

Becoming a Welcoming Congregation – 2019

Welcoming Worship

- Celebrating Pride – Three Reflections – 6/9/2024
- National Coming Out Day – 10/20/2024

Welcoming Days of Observance

- Day of Silence
- Lesbian Day of Visibility
- Pulse Night of Remembrance
- Celebrate Bisexuality Day
- National Coming Out Day
- World AIDS Day
- LGBTQ+ Pride Month (June)

Welcoming Religious Education

- Preparing for Pride by Side With Love – 1/14/2024

Support a Welcoming Project

- Donated to Cape Coral, FL Pride

For more information on all of our LGBTQ programs and activities, please visit: The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal, subscribe to the quarterly UPLIFT newsletter, and read the UPLIFT blog. We also invite you to join the new Welcoming Congregations of Unitarian Universalism Facebook Group and follow UPLIFT Twitter and Instagram @uua_lgbtq.

You can expect to receive two newly designed Welcoming Congregation posters in the mail. In the meantime, you have approval to use the attached new Welcoming Congregation logo on your website and other materials.

Thanks again for your congregation's life-giving, essential work!

With appreciation,

Michael

Rev. Michael J. Crumpler :: He/Him/His
LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director

JOYS & SORROWS

With our apologies for any omissions, here are the joys & sorrows expressed by our members in January.

Doug and Diane Cartwright were presented with the All Faiths Flamekeepers Award in recognition of their many years of love and service. We appreciate all that they do for us.

Kath Conti was hospitalized with a broken arm. We hope that her arm heals and that she has a good recovery.

Janet Falk was hospitalized with a massive stroke. She was in hospice care when she died at the age of 89. Janet was a founding member of All Faiths. We extend our sympathy to her family and friends.

Jan Guardiano was hospitalized again, but was able to return to her home for the holidays. We hope that she continues to improve.

Carole Latino suffered from a serious case of Influenza A which required a trip to the ER. We hope that she has a good recovery.

Eileen and Jeff Moran's grandson Jeffrey is a firefighter, who was deployed to the wildfires in Pacific Palisades. We hope that he remains safe.

Pam Pfalzer's partner, **Beth O'Brien**, passed away in hospice care after an extended illness. We extend our sympathy to Pam, and Beth's family and friends.

Michael Pierre is improving and will continue to receive treatments for esophageal cancer. We hope that they are effective.

Carol Siferd is improving at a rehab center, and was able to celebrate her 86th birthday. We hope she has a good recovery.

Bill Snider's son's condition has deteriorated and he has been placed in a group home for care. We hold them in our hearts.

*Joyce Ramay,
Care & Support Coordinator*



Celebration of Life Elizabeth "Beth" O'Brien

A Celebration of Elizabeth O'Brien's life will be held on February 22, 2025, Saturday, from 10:30 – 1:30 at Whiskey Creek County Club, 1449 Whiskey Creek Dr., Fort Myers.

RSVP Pam by text at 267-446-9582 by February 17. Celebration will include a lunch buffet. Dress is casual. Obituary can be found at Neptune Society Webpage.

<https://neptunesociety.com/obituaries/ft-myers-fl/elizabeth-o-brien-12148470>

♥ FOR THE HOMELESS TEAM

by Barb McFarlane, Co-Chair

January saw a small crew work on a Habitat for Humanity home. Five who intended to help were sidelined with illness or unexpected family responsibilities. We will do this again next January.

The documentary *Razing Liberty Square* was shown at All Faiths on January 24. Thanks to our outreach efforts, 36 people attended many from other LIFE congregations. Unfortunately, Paul Leingang from Fort Myers Housing Authority became ill and couldn't attend. Audience members from LIFE congregations, and the Collaboratory reminded us of the need for citizen engagement with the city over development decisions. We are encouraged to attend the March 3 City Council meeting which is scheduled to discuss housing.

We used money from this team to purchase 190 pairs of gloves and hats and 30 sets of hand warmers that were given to Matt Wallace's outreach team. They were distributed to people living on the street; especially needed during this unusually cold weather.

The bicycle collection continues thanks to Brian Bigelow who transports them to North Shore Alliance Church for repair and distribution to people experiencing homelessness. We have collected close to 280 bikes since starting this project.

As announced Sunday, January 19, after five years as chair and two as secretary of this team, I will be stepping down. We hope someone who has an interest will step up to lead the team. Without a new leader, the Heart for Homeless Team will disband on March 31, 2025.

We will meet again Thursday, February 20 at 1:00 p.m. If you have questions, ideas, suggestions, please stop by.

The team meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m.

RACIAL EQUITY TEAM NEWS

by Frank Geltner, Co-Chair

We look forward to having the Executive Director of the SWFL Quality Life Center, Julian Ramirez, join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, February 11 at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome to become members of the Racial Equity Team.

Meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome **NEW MEMBERS!**

by Alberita Johnson, Minister

It is time to celebrate!

Sunday, January 26 All Faiths may have set a record. We are expected to welcome 18 new members! I am writing this before the New Members Ceremony so my numbers may be incorrect, but I expect I am close. We had orientation on January 18 and it was well attended.


Our Membership Co-Chairs have done an excellent job and the results are evident.

Thank You Carole Latino and Dottie Mayol. The warmth and genuine friendliness of All Faiths was noted several times on the Connections Cards, thanks to all of you.

Welcome New Members:

Cathy Banks	Deborah Vehab
Penny Baylor	Jane Levin
Nan Clark	Alan Levin
Sheryll Dahlke	Nishanta Linkhart
Dr. Vanessa Gilyard	Lorene Noe
Ruth King-Fotovat	Greg Madsen
Cynthia Pulman	Teroy Renato
Wayne Reese	Amanda Mejias
Susan Snow	Josh Newcomer

In case you missed it, Orientation covers UU History and Theology, All Faiths History and Structure and learn about the Chalice, go over member perks and responsibilities, share opportunities for participation and how to get involved. There's time for Q&A. A continental breakfast is provided. Please check the bulletin board for the next Orientation all are welcome.



Ice Cream Social

After Service
 Sunday, February 28, 2025
 Sponsored by Lewis Robinson

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Co-Chair



Unfortunately, President Trump has already begun to undo the Federal government's efforts to address climate change. We all knew this would happen. Just as we know that Florida's state government will most likely follow suit. Essentially, the failure of our governments to take action makes it even more imperative that we examine what we can do in our own lives to help mitigate our impact on the environment.

Climate Action Team member, Bob Moore, shared this webpage with the new SWFL EcoAlliance members. It is a comprehensive guide we can each use to help us make a difference. Just click on this link: yaleclimateconnections.org. On the website, click on Articles and then on Solutions and Climate Action. There are so many ways that you can help make a difference.

Your Climate Action Team is looking for ways to build a strong local movement of climate activism and we are asking our congregants to join us in these efforts. We must counteract the climate change denialism in our current administration and reach out to the community with encouragement and optimism that together we can meet the very real challenges facing us. Come...help us. We need you.



ACMA LIVE MUSIC SCHEDULE!

Saturday, February 1 - 7:00pm Concert

Verlon Thompson in Concert
 Ray Cerbone opening

Saturday, February 8 - 7:00pm

Lipbone Redding in Concert
 Andy Getch opening

Saturday, February 22 - 7:00pm

Darren Nicholson Band in Concert
 Ralph Leeseburg opening

The Listening Room at All Faiths

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida
*General public \$18/Member discount \$12
 Donations at the Door*

TREASURER'S REPORT

by John Conrad, Treasurer

Cash Assets – December 2024

First Horizon Checking	\$ 17,623
Raymond James Legacy	5,232
Live Oak Operating Reserve (CD)	22,907
First Horizon Capital Reserve	4,867
Live Oak Capital Reserve (S)	29,706
Live Oak Operating Reserve (S)	42,568
Live Oak Legacy (CD)	21,650

Total	\$144,552
Prior Month	<u>144,689</u>
Net Gain/Loss	(-\$ 137)

December 2024 Profit & Loss

Operating Income	\$ 18,939
Operating Expense	<u>16,724</u>
Net Gain/Loss	\$ 2,216

Revenue/Operating Income and Expenses:

As we entered the 2024-2025 fiscal year on April 1, 2024, All Faiths budgeted \$200,200 for pledge giving; to date, actual pledges have totaled \$185,160 (92.5%). This current fiscal year ends on March 31, 2025.

No unusual expenses incurred in the General Fund Operating Account during December.

The Board approved the consolidation of several accounts to streamline accounting and to further increase interest income. These changes were made before the end of March 2024 and are reflected in the figures listed above. December's Interest Income was \$405.

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, several new accounts were created at Live Oak to generate increased interest income. The 1-Year CD rate is 5.0%. And the Savings rate is currently at 3.7%.

The December monthly transfer/deposit of \$1,530 to the Live Oak Capital Reserve account was made. No Capital Reserve expenses were incurred. However, planning is underway to repair the fence on the west side of the property and to replace the sign; both were damaged during Hurricane Milton.

In December, \$5,220 for Employee Bonuses.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

by Ken Malkin, Stewardship Chair

We are well on our way to meeting our goal. Have you turned in your 2025/2026 pledge form? The deadline is February 8. You can fill out a pledge form, which you should have received at service, online, or via U.S. Postal Service, or you can call your pledge in to the office at 239-226-0900.

As of January 28, we are at **\$145,528** of our pledge goal of **\$202,068**. Your pledges directly impact All Faiths' budget for the upcoming fiscal year. All Faiths' goal budget is **\$237,488**. We rely on a commitment of \$202,068 in pledges; the balance of the funds are raised through rental income, fundraisers and other subsidized expenses.

Your donations pay for All Faiths' day-to-day expenses: staff salaries, benefits, workers comp., worship services, wind, flood and liability insurance, utilities, lawncare, building maintenance and janitorial supplies.

We are grateful for your continuing support of All Faiths. We could not exist without your generosity. Thank you.

2023/24 FINANCIAL REVIEW

by Diane Cartwright & Helen Dixon

A review for the fiscal year (April 2023 - March 2024) for All Faiths Unitarian Congregation is complete. The financial systems, processes and documentation were reviewed by the team and found to be accurate and well-managed. The Congregational Administrator, Finance Committee, and Treasurer work well as a team to ensure that the congregational finances are well-managed with complete and accurate record keeping. Financial processes were found to be appropriate and well-documented. Both Regina Kilmartin and John Conrad are commended for their willingness and professionalism in providing all records and answering all questions throughout the review.

The review included: Cash receipts and bank deposits processes; proper authorization and processes for expenditures; bank statements; payroll procedures; invoice filing systems; budgetary controls; year-end income statement and balance sheet.

The only unusual financial change is the transfer of our financial accounts to Liveoak Bank. The transfer is a positive move because the move brought higher interest return to All Faiths.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Cartwright and Helen Dixon

SPRING FORWARD WITH PHOTOGRAPHY!

Photo Exhibit and Sale hosted by the Fort Myers Camera Club

Saturday, March 8, 2025 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. - Save the Date!

The Fort Myers Camera Club (FMCC) is thrilled to present a photo exhibit at All Faiths Unitarian Congregation. The Exhibit titled “*Spring Forward with Photography*” will be on display Saturday, March 8, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the community room of the church. Everyone is welcome to celebrate this Exhibit that will also include wine and cookies as refreshments.



The club’s diverse range of activities caters to a variety of interests, from landscape and wildlife photography to portraits and experimental techniques. Whether capturing the beauty of Southwest Florida’s natural landscape or delving into the realm of digital manipulation, FMCC provides a supportive and inspiring space for photographers to grow and thrive. Through regular meetings, workshops, and photo out-

The Fort Myers Camera Club was founded in 1954 and stands as a beacon for photography enthusiasts in the vibrant community of Fort Myers, Florida. Throughout its history, FMCC has cultivated a welcoming environment where members of all skill levels come together to share their passion for photography. This common bond of photography is nourished by members attending meetings that take place at 7:00 pm on the first and third Wednesday of the month at the All Faiths Unitarian Congregation.

ings, members refine their techniques and explore new horizons that is sure to enhance their photographic creativity. Members not only have the opportunity to learn from each other but through our one-on-one mentoring program, guest speakers, photographic outings, and workshops.

The FMCC extends an invitation to all to join us at the Exhibit “*Spring Forward with Photography*” and see for yourself the array of talent of the FMCC members!

celebrate BLACK history MONTH

Every February, people in the United States celebrate the achievements and history of African Americans as part of Black History Month.

Black History Month was created to focus attention on the contributions of African Americans to the United States. It honors all Black people from all periods of U.S. history, from the enslaved people first brought over from Africa in the early 17th century to African

Americans living in the United States today.

Among the notable figures often spotlighted during Black History Month are Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who fought for equal rights for Blacks during the 1950s and '60s; Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American justice appointed to the United States Supreme Court in 1967; Mae Jemison, who became the first female African-American astronaut to travel to space in 1992; and Barack Obama, who was elected the first-ever African-American president of the United States in 2008.

Since the first Negro History Week in 1926, other countries have joined the United States in celebrating Black people and their contribution to history and culture, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Today Black History Month continues the discussion of Black people and their contributions through activities such as museum exhibits and film screenings, and by encouraging the study of achievements by African Americans year-round.



2024 FLAMEKEEPER AWARD RECIPIENTS DIANE & DOUG CARTWRIGHT

Congratulations to Diane and Doug Cartwright, the 2024 recipients of the *Joyce Ramay Flamekeeper Award*. On January 12, we surprised Diane and Doug Cartwright after they made their Pledge Drive Testimonial in our Service. We presented to them our Flamekeeper Award for their many years of devoted service to All Faiths.

Their delightful testimonial included all the ways that Doug Cartwright (I) served All Faiths, and Diane Cartwright (We) served All Faiths over the years since they joined in 2002. So we did not have to recite all of their contributions of Time, Talent and Treasure when we presented the Award. In a wonderful display of synchronicity, Joan Marshall and Carlos Garcia sang “I Can Do Anything Better than You!”

Diane served as President and Doug served as Treasurer. Doug also served as Stewardship Chair, and serves on the Finance Committee. Both of them are Worship Associates. They have conducted fundraising events by presenting plays – including *Oreos* which they wrote themselves, and *Vagina Monologues*. They are superb role models and we are truly blessed to have the benefit of their service and leadership through the years.

Joyce Ramay



All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

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Phone: (239) 226-0900 – Email: office@allfaithsuu.org – Website: www.allfaithsuu.org

Executive Board: Frank Geltner, Chair; Dick Scudder, Vice Chair; John Conrad, Treasurer; Barb McFarlane, Secretary.

Directors: David Donovan, Carol Heilsberg, Rosalie Kuehn, Ken Malkin, Lewis Robinson.

Ex-Officio, Non Voting: Marge DiGalbo, Past Chair; Alberita Johnson, Minister; Regina Kilmartin, Cong. Admin.

Staff: Regina Kilmartin, Administrator; Sharon Heinrich, CYP Director; Carlos Garcia, Music Director; Joe Gayton, Sexton.

Commissioned Lay Minister: Alberita (Albie) Johnson

Communications

Newsletter

Regina Kilmartin

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Regina Kilmartin/Becky Ross

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Joyce Ramay

Hospitality

Frank Stephens

Program Support

Michelle Gemma/Barb McFarlane

Member Services

Dottie Mayol/Carole Latino

Greeters

Dick Scudder

Care and Support

Joyce Ramay

Finance

Joyce Ramay

Stewardship Committee

Ken Malkin

Nominating Committee

Sharon Gray

Sound Technician

Brad Davidson

Livestreaming

Regina Kilmartin/Sharon Gray

Brad Davidson

Building and Grounds

Frank Geltner/Brian Bigelow

Social Action & Outreach

Climate Action Team

Joan Marshall/Carol Heilsberg

Heart for the Homeless

Barb McFarlane

Racial Equity Team

Nicole Racine/Frank Geltner

L.I.F.E.

Robert Bennett,

Barb McFarlane

JoAnn Hilliard

Mano a Mano

Charlotte Blitt

Operation Joy & Solos Group

Annelly Hudanick

Animal Ministry

Sharon Gray

Rainbow Connection

David Donovan

Founding Minister: The Late Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Robinson



Deadline for the **March** Issue of *Connections* is **February 18**

(Brief announcements may be accepted later, and will be included *if* space and time permit.)



OFFICE HOURS: 9am to 4pm, Monday–Thurs;
9am to 12pm, Friday & Sunday.

Congregational Administrator: Regina Kilmartin