



CONNECTIONS

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

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by Alberita Johnson, CL Minister

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*A Winter's Night
 by Candlelight*
An Evening of Song with Joseph Brauer
 Friday, December 12, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
 \$25/person - partial proceeds benefit All Faiths

Mano a Mano Craft Sale
 Sunday, December 7 & 14 at Service
 Get you hand-crafted Bolivian crafts
 for the holidays!

Annual Lasagna Luncheon
 Sponsored by the Rainbow Connection
 Sunday, December 14, 2025 - \$20/person
 This is a fundraiser for All Faiths!

Special Congregational Meeting
 to be held in January
 (see pg. 7 for details)



Can you believe we've reached the final month of 2025? It's been a year for the history books, marked by escalating global conflicts, political shifts in our country leading to far-reaching policy changes, and devastating natural disasters that challenge our relationship with the environment. Yet, it hasn't been all dark. Inspiring breakthroughs in science, medicine, and technology remind us of humanity's incredible potential. From moments of crisis to flashes of peace, 2025 has been complex.

As we look toward an uncertain 2026, I remain hopeful, trusting that "this too shall pass." We look for guidance in our faith, our dreams, and our reflections. This brings to mind

the tradition of **Watch Night**, a service I deeply valued for many years, particularly significant in African American communities on New Year's Eve. Since moving to Florida, I've missed this tradition, as it seems few congregations in Lee County observe it. Perhaps the county's namesake—a Confederate General—has historically fueled fears, limiting its observance this far south.

Many in Fort Myers are unfamiliar with Watch Night, but its history is profound. It commemorates the **Emancipation Proclamation**, which declared enslaved people in Confederate states legally free at midnight on January 1, 1863. Historically, African Americans gathered on December 31, 1862, often in secret, to await the news of freedom.

Watch Night services typically run from around 7 PM until midnight, offering a time for prayer, singing, and reflection on faith and community. The tradition often includes a

meal believed to bring good fortune, sometimes called "Hoppin' John," and frequently celebrated as a potluck feast in many congregations.

This final month is a vital time to reflect on the past and look forward with faith. In times of uncertainty, we must be vigilant not to repeat the mistakes of history by allowing old prejudices to resurface.

Our theme for the coming year's first month, January, will be Practicing Resistance. When confronted with bigotry, racism, or irrational phobias—such as those directed at LGBTQ+ people, immigrants, speakers of foreign languages, or people of color—let us be the first to resist. This requires a "woke" awareness of the harm caused by irrational fears when combined with a desire to control marginalized groups.

At midnight on December 31, 2025, we will cross the bridge into 2026. Just before the clock strikes 12:00 AM, I will kneel in my living room,

thanking the divine mystery and praying with gratitude for another year of life. When I rise, I will offer another prayer for resilience: to continue the fight when necessary, to rest when I must, and to never accept codes of inferiority or external control over myself or you.

Each month, we will highlight our theme through Sunday Service music, Children and Youth Programming, Social Media, and Small Groups. I urge you to meditate on these themes; they are designed to inspire personal growth and external action that positively impacts the Beloved Community both within and outside our doors.

Our current theme is "Choosing Hope." As the writer Rebecca Solnit observes, the grounds for hope are often found "in the shadows," among those "inventing the world while no one looks,"

(continued on page 7)

Mission Statement

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation 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.

All Faiths Collection Schedule

Monthly Share-the-Plate & Special Collections

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

December - Special Collection: Employee Bonuses

January - Quality Life Center - Scholarships (Racial Equity Team)

February - Special Collection: Minister's Discretionary Fund

November Share the Plate raised \$1011 for Operation Joy!

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



"Let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future."

– Robert H. Schuller

I can't believe that 2025 is coming to a close already. Time flies when you are working hard! As I write this article, I know that we are all busy this time of the year with the upcoming Holiday season and some of us still recovering from Thanksgiving. However, we still have important work to do.

I have been your Board Chair now for almost 9 months!! I am so PROUD of what we have done in such a short time! We have welcomed approximately 26 new members into the Congregation this year. This is only possible because visitors feel welcomed and loved when they enter our doors. This is a testament to the inspiring messages, amazing music and the love of our wonderful members and staff.

A recent visitor said that during his travels around the country, he has visited over 100 Unitarian Universalist Churches in that time. All Faiths was one of the most welcoming experiences he has had. Keep up the GREAT WORK!

As a result of our continued growth and limited parking, the Board is considering returning to having two services on Sundays. This will be the first time since COVID that we have had the need. Services would be at 9:00 and 11:00 am, with the early service being abbreviated. Any educational programs or meetings will be held at 10am between services.

Timing on this is TBD.

Board Meeting Updates

The Board is finalizing the proposed budget for the 2026/2027 fiscal year, which starts in April 2026. The Stewardship Committee has begun developing a Pledge Drive to present to members kicking off a campaign to solicit the funds needed to keep the Congregation going for another year.

There are no updates currently on the Building Expansion project, however, we have finished installing solar lights for the outdoor sign and flag. We have also finished repairs to the patio which included power washing and clear coating the surface. The team also replaced the uneven sidewalk between the outside wall of the office and the memorial garden as it was a safety concern.

Recent Events:

1. All Faiths members actively supported Quality Life Center's recent events like their Fall Festival in October, as well as their Annual Gala held at FGCU in November. They are an inspiring organization, and their mission is critical.

2. We continue to become more involved in the program called Compassionate Fort Myers. Several members have now attended their 4th event, and are currently working in individual teams to find ways to bring more compassion to subjects like Education, Mental Health, Racial Equity, Housing, etc. The next meeting is on December 9th.

3. The Lee County Sheriff's Office conducted an active

shooter training class at All Faiths in November, followed by a review of our facility and current safety procedures and protocols. We had 16 people in attendance. A written report will be available soon.

Upcoming Events:

1. All Faiths will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of our founding on Saturday, February 21st, 2026. We call it Founders' Day, and it will be a major event in the life of the congregation.

2. The Rainbow Connection Team will host its 2nd Annual Lasagna Luncheon on Sunday, December 14th right after service. It will benefit Cape Coral Pride. Come Hungry!

3. The All Faiths Fall Festival had to be postponed due

to timing conflicts; however, it is being "Re-Imagined" as a Spring Spectacular. Timing is TBD, but probably sometime in the 1st quarter of 2026.

4. All Faiths' previous Music Director, Joseph Brauer, will be conducting a Holiday Concert fundraising event for All Faiths on Friday, December 12 at 6:00 p.m.

If you are interested in anything listed above, please see the Bulletin Board or contact me personally. We look forward to celebrating with you.

PLEASE NOTE: All Faiths does have a No Smoking Policy that prohibits smoking in the building and on the grounds.

A Special Opportunity to show Appreciation for our Staff

As we approach the end of 2025, we are reminded of the countless ways our dedicated Staff have poured their hearts into serving our congregation all year long. We take this time to express our gratitude in a tangible way — by Sharing the Plate for Bonuses during the month of December. This 2nd collection is our way of saying "Thank you" for the long hours, all the work behind the scenes, and the steadfast commitment they have shown throughout the year.

We invite you to contribute to this special collection. No gift is too small — every contribution is a blessing that will go directly toward supporting our employees. The money collected will be distributed on a percentage basis as determined by the Board of Directors.

Please make checks payable to *All Faiths* and write *Bonuses* in the memo line.

- Alberita Johnson, Commissioned Lay Minister
- Regina Kilmartin, Congregational Administrator,
- Carlos Garcia, Music Director
- Sharon Heinrich, Child & Youth Program Director
- Joe Gayton, Sexton

Happening at All Faiths

Happy December Birthday to you!



- December 6 Sharon Gray
- December 9 Nancy Clark
- December 14 Jeff Moran
- December 17 Frank Stephens
- December 30 Linda Bigelow
- December 31 Nishanta Linkhart

And Coming Up...

Jan 13 Joyce Schaffer

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



Solos Holiday Extravaganza!



Saturday,
December 6, 2025
1:00 p.m.

ORIGAMI
8911 Daniels Pkwy.

All are welcome,
funny or useless
gift exchange
(under \$6.49)

MUST RSVP to: Annely Hudanick
before December 4th
annelyblue@hotmail.com

The All Voices Choir Practice

Thursdays 5:00 - 6:30pm

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

Sunday Adult Ed. Workshops

Sundays at 9:15 a.m. - through December 7

Join us for an exploration of dignity, its role in human conflict, and its power to improve relationships. Joyce Ramay will lead nine weeks of discussions on the book, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*, by Donna Hicks,

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.

December 2025

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1:30pm-Zoom Climate Action Team Mtg.</p>	<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>5pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1pm Solos Holiday Lunch</p> <p>2pm ACMA Workshop</p> <p>7pm ACMA Concert (see pg. 9)</p>
<p>7</p> <p>9:15am Sunday Workshop 10:30am Service</p> <p>Hanukkah Begins</p> <p>2-5pm ACMA Circle</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Mano a Mano Craft Sale</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>10am Racial Equity Team Mtg.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>5-8pm Alliance for the Arts Night Market</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10am Finance Mtg.</p> <p>5pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>12</p> <p>2pm Dominoes</p>	<p>13</p> 
<p>14</p> <p>9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service</p> <p>12 pm Rainbow Connection</p> <p>2-5pm ACMA Circle</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Mano a Mano Craft Sale</p>  <p>12pm Book Club</p>	<p>16</p> <p>1pm Board Meeting</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>5pm Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30pm Sunday Srvs. Team Zoom Mtg.</p> <p>7pm Tamiami Tale Tellers</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>10am Worship Asso- ciate Mtg. via Zoom</p> <p>7pm ACMA Concert (see pg. 9)</p>
<p>21</p> <p>9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service</p> <p>2-5pm ACMA Circle</p> <p>McGregor Clinic Collection</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>6:30pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</p>	<p>25</p>  <p>Merry Christmas</p>	<p>26</p> <p>2pm Dominoes</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service</p> <p>Ice Cream Social</p> 	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> 	<p>31</p> <p>New Year's Eve</p>	<p>Visit our website for information on events and programs www.allfaithsuu.org</p>		

DECEMBER 2025 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES THEME: CHOOSING HOPE

In-House & Live on Facebook at 10:30 a.m.

Recorded services can be viewed at www.allfaithsuu.org
or on our YouTube channel.

Dec. 7 – Advent: A Time of Hope!

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Nicole Racine
Music by Carlos Garcia

Dec. 14 – Hanukkah: When Hope is Lost

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate -
Music by Carlos Garcia & Choir
Second Collection: Employee Bonuses

Dec. 21 – Winter Solstice: Yule and You

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Helen Dixon
Music by Carlos Garcia

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 6:30pm

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Music by Carlos Garcia & Choir

Dec. 28 – Kwanzaa and Unitarian Universalists

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Ken Malkin
Music by Carlos Garcia

JOYS & SORROWS

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

Rev. Ronaldo Archer suffered a leg injury when a hit-and-run driver struck him while riding his bicycle. We hope that he has a good recovery.

Doug Cartwright had surgery to remove his big right toe which had a bone infection. We hope he has a good recovery.

Vanessa Gilyard reported that her long-time friend from early childhood, Allison, has cancer. We hope that she will receive successful treatment.

Nathalie Hahn passed away at the age of 93. She had been suffering with loss of vision and hearing in recent years. She and her husband, Tom, were active founding members of All Faiths. A Memorial Service and Bricklaying Ceremony were held on November 23rd.

Eileen and Jeff Moran's daughter has been receiving immunotherapy, but it is not working. We hope that she will receive alternative successful treatment.

Lisa Scroggins reported that she had two family members who lost their food benefits. She asked us to keep in mind all those who have lost their food and health benefits.

Claudia Shanahan's younger sister passed away. We extend our sympathy to her and her family.,

Kathleen Weber shared that 31 years ago a friend gave her a journal and told her to write down 5 things that she is grateful for every day. She has been doing that and recommends the practice.

*Joyce Ramay
Care and Support Coordinator*

DECEMBER CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

by Sharon Heinrich, CYP Director

Our theme in December is “Choosing Hope”. Through stories, songs and activities we will explore hope and what helps us to choose hope.

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

Dec.7: Hope and Choosing to Create the Light for Each Other: “The Light of Hope: The Story of Lewis Latimer” We will make Hope Lamps and Quick Spark Relay

Dec. 14: Hope and Choosing to Trust That it Will Work Out : “The Hanukkah Story and the Light of Hope” Hope

bracelets and the Dreidel game

Dec. 21: Hope and Choosing to Look in Unexpected Places: “A Christmas Story” Holiday crafts and games

Dec. 28: No CYP

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.

DESTINATION JOY *(continued from pg. 2)*

who may not yet know their own influence. She encourages us to hope for the "anonymous, the unseen, the officially powerless, the visionaries and subversives in the shadows"—the potential next Cesar Chavez, Noam Chomsky, or Cindy Sheehan, or even something we cannot yet imagine. In the epic struggle between light and dark, we look to the unseen for hope.

Listen closely to the call of hope; it challenges us to change our lives and embrace uncertainty. As we navigate this month, let us carry the question, "What do I need to do a better job of remaining hopeful?"

All Faiths is a place of love, joy, and hope. May we look forward to sharing and embodying these themes, letting them call us to self-reflection and inspire positive action.

Our Love Train will keep rolling.

All aboard... Destination Joy.

Love, Minister Albie

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

Sunday Workshop

9:15am in the Sanctuary

Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict

Facilitated by Joyce Ramay

Rainbow Connection

Every 2nd Sunday at Noon

David Donovan – ddonovan722@gmail.com

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



All Faiths' Book Club meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 12:00! Unlike most book clubs, All Faiths' Book Club is an open forum, facilitated by Diane Chernow, where participants read a book of their own choosing and then critiques the book to the group. It is a fun, relaxing atmosphere, and you can bring a bag lunch if you like. New Members are welcome to join the fun!

Contact: Diane Chernow dianecher@comcast.net.

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY

In the first step towards Ordination of our Commissioned Lay Minister, Alberita Johnson, the Board of Directors has called for a Special Meeting so that the Bylaws can be amended to include the following:

Change the Bylaw Article XI: MINISTER to add the following new section:

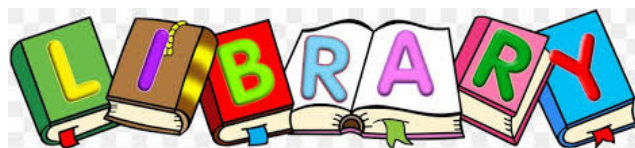
Section 7. ORDINATION OF LAY, INTERIM OR DEVELOPMENTAL MINISTER

If the Board of Directors or the Members of the Congregation, via a petition, desire to consider Ordination of the Lay, Interim, or Developmental Minister, the following process is to be followed:

- A specially called congregational meeting for this purpose is scheduled.
- A quorum for the meeting is the majority of the official membership on record at the time and shall be required.
- The Ordination must be approved by no less than 75% of those members making up the quorum.
- Voting will be done consistent with Article VI Congregational Meetings, Section 4 Voting and Section 5 Proxy. Absentee ballots will be permitted.

Meeting to be held on Sunday, January 11th at 9:30am BEFORE SERVICE.

Official Notice will be published in the January newsletter.



SPEAKING OF BOOKS...

Good news! Thanks to our resident bookworm, Judy Alberda, All Faiths has its own library! Most of you know, but some new and old members have let me know that they were still unaware. Take a look. It's on two shelves in a closet across from the coffee pots. Good reading. Enjoy!

RAINBOW CONNECTION NEWS

David Donovan, Chair

Happy Holidays. This will be a busy time for the Rainbow Connection Team, as we have many activities coming up soon that will keep us busy. I want to say that I am so happy that we have a thriving team that's full of energy and is so engaged in social outreach. It is a pleasure to work with you all.

I am sad to announce that Carole Latino has accepted a position as co-chair of the Racial Equity Team, so she will be relinquishing her position as co-chair on the Rainbow Connection Team. She will continue to be a part of the team and its activities but needs to concentrate on her new endeavors. I am looking for a new co-chair, if anyone is interested.

Here are some updates on current activities and things coming soon.

- We honored Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 23rd by lighting a candle and sharing some of those who lost their lives to transgender violence. During my research, I was horrified by all the stories of our dead brothers and sisters who struggle to exist and live in peace.

- We have officially completed all the requirements for the 2025 Welcoming Congregation program and can now apply for re-certification. We will now begin working to finalize the 2026 Welcoming calendar.

- Pride events are sprouting up all around SWFL!! They include Cape Coral, Naples, Binita Springs, and Charlotte County (Punta Gorda) as well as a resurgence in downtown Fort Myers. Visuality has submitted a permit to host a Pride event AND parade for June 13, 2026, in front of the Sidney & Berne David Art Center. The team agreed to find a way to have a Float for the Cape Coral Pride parade event in March.

- St John the Apostle Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which is just down the street from us, unveiled a 100-foot-long pride flag painted on their property to protest the removal of rainbow cross walks in various Florida communities, including Key West, St Petersburg and the one outside the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando. During the event, the names of the 49 victims of the attack on Pulse were painted on the flag. This event was featured in local papers and news programs. Several of us attended.

- Our Lasagna Luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, December 14th after service. It was so successful that we are doing it again to raise money for Cape Coral Pride.

- The team is also looking to host a T-Dance fundraiser, possibly at Cruisers bar in Cape Coral to raise money for Cape Coral Pride.

I encourage anyone interested in helping or joining the Rainbow Connection team to come to a meeting or see David or Carole. Our next meeting is scheduled for December 14th.

David J Donovan

Rainbow Connection - Chair

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Co-Chair



From November 10th to the 21st, the United Nations climate summit, COP 30, took place in Brazil. Notably absent from the conference was a delegation from the world's wealthiest nation, the United States of America.

However, though our federal government was absent, U.S. citizens were not. Community leaders, including governors, mayors, business executives and environmental leaders actively participated. The fact that our President is in climate denial makes it even more imperative that we the people take action in our own communities.

At our December 2nd meeting, your Climate Action Team will review what was accomplished at COP30 and how our efforts in 2026 can best help our congregation and our community address the challenges inherent in climate change. Our meetings are held on Zoom and are open to any who wish to participate. We will be looking for ways to take meaningful action locally to help transition to renewable energy.

ACMA LIVE MUSIC SCHEDULE!

Saturday, December 6 - 7:00pm

Joe Crookston in Concert!

J. Michael Opens



The Listening Room at All Faiths

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida

General public \$20/Member discount \$15

Donations at the Door

RACIAL EQUITY TEAM NEWS

A Call to Action & Community

by Alberita Johnson, Minister

The Imperative for Racial Equity

The All Faiths Racial Equity Team acknowledges with profound seriousness the crucial nature and pressing need for a strong, active, and well-supported team dedicated to dismantling systemic racism within our community and beyond. Our commitment is unwavering: to diligently work toward embodying the sacred call to "love our neighbors," recognizing and embracing the magnificent diversity of all people. We strive to be a guiding force, leading our community through essential processes of deep listening, continuous learning, courageous dialogue, and concrete action. Our ultimate goal is the realization of a truly just and compassionate "Beloved Community" where every individual can flourish.

Our Mission and Focus: Centering the Marginalized

The core work of the Racial Equity Team is focused on building bridges of trust and establishing clear, authentic engagement both internally and externally. This engagement is foundational to establishing robust and sustained support for marginalized groups. We place a strong and necessary emphasis on people of color, who historically and contemporarily continue to disproportionately bear the burden of racial injustices, prejudice, and systemic inequalities. Our efforts are targeted at identifying and challenging the structures that perpetuate these harms, and advocating for genuine equity.

Join Our Efforts: Participation and Expansion

We extend a heartfelt invitation to all members of our community to join us in this vital work.

Meeting Schedule and Access:

The Racial Equity Team convenes regularly on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 10:00 AM at All Faiths. We understand the importance of accessibility and offer a remote option for participation; interested members may call in and join the dialogue via telephone.

Expanding Our Membership:

We are actively seeking to expand our membership and welcome your unique views, innovative ideas, and full participation. We recognize that an expanded team, rich with diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and professional skills, is essential for the depth and breadth of our mission. Specifically, it is our heartfelt desire to reflect:

Different Age Groups: Bringing intergenerational wisdom and energy to our strategies.

Diverse Committee Representation: Ensuring racial equity principles are woven into the fabric of all community initiatives.

Varied Cultural Backgrounds: Deepening our understanding and responsiveness to the nuances of diverse human experiences.

A Commitment to Respectful Engagement:

For all new members, we provide a comprehensive orientation grounded in core racial equity principles. We foster a secure and productive environment through a shared commitment to confidentiality and respectful, constructive dialogue. This foundation ensures that all voices can be heard, and all contributions can advance our shared purpose.

Moving Forward: Reorganization and Welcome

The team is currently undertaking a process of internal reorganization to ensure our structure and processes are maximally effective in serving our established purpose and vision. We are energized by this opportunity to refine our work and deepen our impact. We warmly welcome your voice, your presence, and your commitment as we move forward together to make the vision of racial equity a tangible reality for all.

Coming in January

NEWCOMERS ORIENTATION

Hosted by Alberita Johnson

and the Membership Committee

Saturday, January 17, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

How much do you know about your congregation? How much do you know about Unitarian Universalism? Did you know that UU congregations are self-governing, and that authority and responsibility are vested in the membership of the congregation, or that we adopt our own bylaws, elect our own officers and approve our own budgets?

At All Faiths we want our members to understand what we believe in, what we strive for and what we celebrate. We encourage every member to participate actively in their faith community.

If you are a relatively new member and have joined All Faiths in the past two or three years, or maybe you're just thinking about becoming a member, we invite you to join us on Saturday, January 17, from 10-12pm for a fun and informative workshop that will bring you up to speed on the community you chose to become a part of. Contact: Carole Latino, Membership Co-Chair, at carolelatino@gmail.com. ***Sign up on the bulletin board.***

TREASURER'S REPORT

by John Conrad, Treasurer

Cash Assets – October 2025

First Horizon Checking	\$ 7,144
Raymond James Legacy	5,188
Live Oak Operating Reserve (CD)	23,785
First Horizon Capital Reserve	1,726
Live Oak Capital Reserve (S)	30,169
Live Oak Operating Reserve (S)	37,415
Live Oak Legacy (CD)	22,460
Live Oak Legacy Savings	30,268

Total	\$158,154
Prior Month	<u>168,343</u>
Net Gain/Loss	(\$ -10,189)

October 2025 Profit & Loss

Operating Income	\$ 11,280
Operating Expense	<u>17,185</u>
Net Gain/Loss	(\$ 676)

Revenue/Operating Income and Expenses:

As we entered the new 2025-2026 fiscal year on April 1, All Faiths budgeted \$202,086 for pledge giving; to date, actual Not Alone pledges totaled \$185,160 (86.9%).

In October, we received \$9,029 in pledge giving towards our Not Alone Pledge Drive. And in the last fiscal year, \$28,413 was received for the Not Alone pledge drive.

Year to date (since April 1), our pledge giving has totaled \$93,007, while we budgeted \$117,886 (78.9%).

The only unusual expense incurred in the General Fund Operating Account during October was the \$1,075 downpayment to the caterer for the Founder's Day dinner on February 21, 2026.

October's Interest Income was \$405.31.

During September, \$5,000.00 was "borrowed" from our Operating Reserve savings account to ensure all expenses are covered. To date, this has not been repaid.

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 4.1%. And the Savings rate is currently at 3.00%.

The final payments for the sign were made, including the cost of the solar lights.

In October, \$375.00 was collected for the Cape Coral Pride (Rainbow Connection Team).

Rainbow Connection presents its
2nd ANNUAL



Lasagna Luncheon

Sunday, December 14, 2025

12:00pm NOON - Directly after Service

Tickets \$20 each

Dinner includes: lasagna, salad, rolls,
dessert and beverages

RESERVE YOUR SPOT BY DECEMBER 7

Tickets available after Sunday service until the event.

Contact David Donovan at 239-961-7086

or ddonovan722@gmail.com

Proceeds benefit Cape Coral Pride

SAVE THE DATES!

Sunday, December 14: RAINBOW CONNECTION LASAGNA LEONCHEON

The Rainbow Connection will host another lasagna luncheon to raise money for Cape Coral Pride. A huge success last year, we look forward to doing it again. Be sure to put it on your calendar!

Saturday, February 21: ALL FAITHS CELEBRATES ITS 25th ANNIVERSARY!

Mark your calendars for this one. We will host a super celebration at Tara Woods Club House in North Fort Myers. Stay tuned for more details. Tickets will go on sale beginning January 4th.

Saturday, March 14: JUNK-IN-THE-TRUNK

Start cleaning out your closets, garage and attics! We will hold another Junk-in-the-Trunk sale at All Faiths in March. Save the date.

ALL FAITHS HELPS BOLIVIANS!

by Charlotte Blitt

Craft Sale Before & After Service

Sunday, December 7 and 14

For many years All Faiths members have been buying Bolivian crafts provided by Segundo Velasquez, co-founder of Mano a Mano. He and his late wife, Joan (a past Peace Corp volunteer) have been members of All Faiths and have attended our services in the past.

Mano a Mano is based in St. Paul Minnesota. It was started by Joan and Segundo when Segundo's brother, a doctor in Bolivia, asked Segundo to bring medical supplies when he visited his family there. What started as a few items packed in a suitcase TO MAJOR SHIPMENTS of unused supplies from the hospitals in St. Paul and Minneapolis to Bolivia. In addition, construction and aviation equipment have been shipped to Bolivia.

In fact, in a few weeks the volunteers and staff in St. Paul will be filling FIVE CONTAINERS with assorted equipment and then shipped to Bolivia.



Donated items being picked up by rural Bolivians.

Mano a Mano has expanded its work from medical supplies to building small medical clinics (190 so far!), water reservoirs, schools and roads. They have expanded into garden & farming projects too.

These All Faiths members have visited the Mano a Mano projects in Bolivia under the guidance of Segundo: Charlotte Blitt, Sharon Gray and Joyce Schaffer. Segundo escorts groups from St Paul. Some are from his Unitarian congregation there as well as from schools and service clubs such as Rotary. He would be happy to include members from All Faiths in a group.

Mano a Mano's mission is: "Partnering together – Hand in Hand – to transform the health and well-being of Bolivian communities in need." Established in Minnesota in 1994, Mano a Mano has been guided by the simple, yet powerful premise that groups of committed individuals can reach across national boundaries to make a dramatic difference in the lives of others. The power of this premise has been demonstrated by the extent to which the organization has grown from a small, all-volunteer organization that distributed 500 pounds of medical supplies to Bolivia in 1994 to one that involves hundreds of Minnesotans and impacts the lives of hundreds of thousands of rural Bolivians.

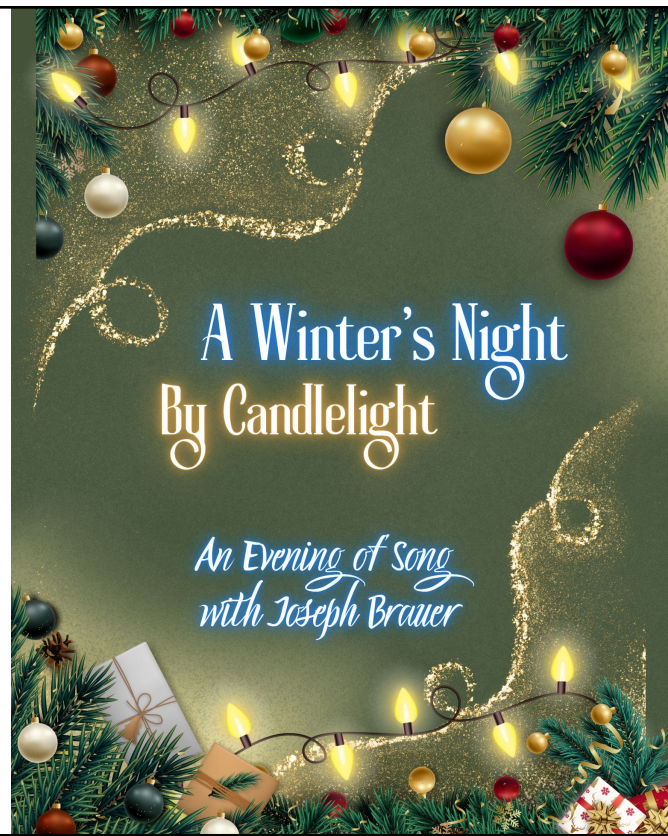
Visit the Mano a Mano website to learn more! (manoamano.org)

NURTURING GRATITUDE



(From the left), Marta Matias, Guatemalan Priestess, Minister Albie, and Maria Matias, Marta's daughter.

Nurturing Gratitude was the theme of our November services, and we are so grateful to *Marta Matias* who shared her personal stories and traditions living as an Indigenous person; her daughter Maria, translated her message, which she gave in her native tongue, as part of honoring Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month.



Joseph Brauer Concert

Friday, December 12 - 6:00 p.m.

Tickets \$25 - Students \$10

Partial Proceeds Benefit All Faiths!

Step into the warmth of candlelight and let the music carry you through a reflective winter evening. *Joseph Brauer*, acclaimed pianist and vocalist, presents a curated program of jazz standards, timeless carols, and evocative contemporary songs. From familiar melodies that stir the heart to contemplative pieces that linger in the mind, this intimate concert invites you to unwind, savor a glass of wine, and experience the season in music's gentle glow. **Tickets on sale at service and/or at the door.**

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida 33901

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

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

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

Directors: Helen Dixon, Frank Geltner, Carol Heilsberg, Ken Malkin, Lewis Robinson.

Ex-Officio, Non Voting: Marge DiGalbo, Past Chair; Alberita Johnson, Minister

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

Commissioned Lay Minister: Alberita (Albie) Johnson

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Regina Kilmartin

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Program Support

Michelle Gemma/Barb McFarlane

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Joyce Ramay

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Susan Snow

Finance

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Stewardship Committee

Ken Malkin

Nominating Committee

Sharon Gray

Sound Technicians

David Donovan/Brad Davidson

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Regina Kilmartin/Sharon Gray

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Building and Grounds

Frank Geltner/Brian Bigelow

Social Action & Outreach

Climate Action Team

Joan Marshall/Carol Heilsberg

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t/b/d

L.I.F.E.

Ken Malkin

Barb McFarlane

JoAnn Hilliard

Cindy Thompson

Mano a Mano

Charlotte Blitt

Operation Joy & Solos Group

Annelly Hudanick

Animal Ministry

Sharon Gray

Rainbow Connection

David Donovan



Deadline for the **January** Issue of *Connections* is **December 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