



Where you *belong!*

# CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, *where diversity is treasured.*  
A member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

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### Celebrate Passover & Easter at All Faiths

April 2 - "Clearing Out the Hamets"  
Guest Speaker, Rabbi Bruce Diamond

April 9 - "Resurrecting Jesus"  
by Joyce Ramay



### The Ultimate Yard Sale!

April 15, 2023

All Faiths Parking Lot

8:00 a.m.

(details on page 12)

### Bunny 101!

This informative workshop will dispell the myths and help raise awareness about these gentle creatures, their needs in the community, and as companions in the home. (Details on page ?)



*The Board of Directors met on March 15, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.*

After welcoming future incoming Secretary, Diane Chernow, and Barbara McFarlane, the Board was informed of the resignation of CYP Director Kathy Fanny effective March 10, 2023. Rachel Spiller has volunteered to manage the Child & Youth Program until a new director is hired. We will begin placing advertisements and interviewing for the position.

John Conrad proposed transferring some of All Faiths funds to other institutions, including Lake Michigan Credit Union, that have higher interest rates. The Board voted to move forward with Hallmark resurfacing our existing parking lot. The cost will be \$24,840. Waiting any longer will only increase the cost as building

materials prices are continuing to rise. We also agreed to update our Security System for \$1,200.

Carpet cleaning is scheduled for March 28. Frank Geltner generously donated a \$250 gift certificate for this purpose; we are grateful.

Chris Stotler would like to develop a way to recognize members who commit to leaving All Faiths a Legacy. This will need further discussion and planning. If anyone is interested in working on this or has any ideas please discuss with Chris.

Citizens Wind Insurance has renewed our policy for 2023 for \$5,059, a 27% increase.

After discussion about safety it was decided that the Board felt comfortable purchasing a new Black Lives Matter flag to fly out front with the Rainbow flag.

Lewis Robinson discussed ongoing concerns about the

Racial Justice Team. He is looking for people to participate with managing the team. Please see Lewis if you can provide assistance.

Our beautiful new street sign is in place and awaiting the lights to be reinstalled.

Fundraising is going to require additional assistance in the coming year to help make up for the budget shortfall. We need people to participate in the Junk-in-the-Trunk event on April 15. Please sign up to work with John Conrad on this event. We welcome any fundraising ideas you may have.

We did raise over \$1,000 with the presentation of Bible Bad Girls. This was a fun and informative show. We had a great turnout of over 60 people.

The Tamiami Tale Tellers, a longtime SWFL storytelling guild, has requested to use our building one day a

month for their meetings, which are open to the public. The Board approved this request. It will be good for community relations.

A Board Retreat will take place on April 7. Traditionally, this is where the outgoing board welcomes the incoming board and brings them up to date on the business of the congregation. We will say thank you to retiring board members Rachel Spiller, Ed Elrod, Peter Erickson and Judy Alberda, and welcome new members Diane Chernow, Secretary, Rosalie Kuehn, Barbara McFarlane and Greg Monk. The next Board Chair Person and Vice Chairperson will be elected.

*The next board meeting will be April 19, at which time a Board Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the board members.*

## 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.)*

**April** - SWFL RESET Center (Climate Action Team)

**May** - All Souls Episcopal Outreach (Heart for the Homeless Team)

**June** - Quality Life Center Scholarships (Racial Equity Team)

**March Share-the-Plate raised \$350 for Operation Joy!**

*Your generosity directly benefits our community!  
We are grateful!*



## BIBLE BAD GIRLS - A BIG HIT!



*Bible Bad Girls (from left) Mary Lou Williams, Marilyn Gragam, Joy Perez, Pamela Minton, Cece Simon and Lisa Leonhardt, and greeter Denise Merello (not pictured)*

All Faiths would like to express our sincere appreciation to Pam Minton and her troupe of actors for presenting the play "Bible Bad Girls" at All Faiths on March 11.

The group shares their talents with local churches to help them raise money -- asking for nothing in return. They do it because they love to act, tell stories, and help their community.

The fundraiser for All Faiths was a big hit and raised over \$1,000! Thank you!

## TAMIAMI TALE TELLERS COME TO ALL FAITHS

Not all, but many of the Bible Bad Girls actors are part of The Tamiami Tale Tellers (TTT), a longtime storytelling guild in Southwest Florida. And, of course, our own Lisa Leonhardt is a long-time member and fantastic storyteller. The guild is a member of the Florida Storytelling Association. They are a small group of storytellers who enjoy performing and sharing all kinds of stories! They encourage others to discover the joys of storytelling!

### Meetings

Beginning April 20, 2023, the Tamiami Tale Tellers will meet in-person on the third Thursday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, 2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33901. If you would like to receive reminders of meetings and events, please send an email to [Marilyn@tttellers.org](mailto:Marilyn@tttellers.org)

The meeting starts with brief self-introductions and announcements. Then anyone who wants to tell a story calls out "Kric" and the rest respond "Krac," a Haitian storytelling tradition. In this method, we take turns telling stories - all kinds of stories. Folktales, personal stories, historical stories, original stories, even poetry. Some tellers are practicing a story for performance; others may read a newly written story; others may just want to share a recent experience. Stories should be about 10 minutes. If time permits, a longer story is OK or a teller may share more than one story.

## JOYS & SORROWS

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

**Greg Alberda**, Judy's husband, had back surgery. We hope that he has a good recovery.

**Bill Bartholet** passed away. We extend our sympathy to his widow, Carolyn Bartholet. They shared 65 years together.

**Charlotte Blitt** had COVID. We hope she has a full recovery.

**Janet Goen** is in assisted living and appreciates visits and hearing from friends.

**David Hauenstein** moved to the Larsen Health Care at Shell Point. He welcomes visitors.

**Joan Marshall** had COVID. We hope she has a full recovery.

**Rev. Emily Palmer** fell and broke her pelvis. She is in skilled nursing facility at Shell Point. Keep her in your healing thoughts.

Some of our people are not able to attend services and other activities. Please reach out to them so that they know that they are not alone.

*Joyce Ramay,  
Care & Support Coordinator*

# Happening at All Faiths

*Happy April  
Birthday to you!*



- April 1 Carol Heilsberg
- April 3 Bill Snider
- April 4 Barbara Goolsby
- April 10 Diana Camp
- April 14 Jack Kennedy
- April 19 Diane Cartwright
- April 20 Joy Reinhart
- April 24 Ann Batal
- April 24 Louise "Weezie" Close
- April 27 Kathleen Weber
- April 30 Ray Ellis

*And Coming Up...*

May 7 Ed Kleinow



## Solos Monthly Lunch!

**Saturday, April 1, 2023**

**1:00 p.m.**

### Mel's Dinner

Special request for Barbara Goolsby's

90th Birthday!

**4820 S. Cleveland Ave.**

Fort Myers, FL 33907

*check your email for details.*

**RSVP to: Annelly Hudanick,  
[annelyblue@hotmail.com](mailto:annelyblue@hotmail.com)**

Everyone is welcome to join the Solos for outings and lunches.

## The Epicureous Group

*New Social Dinner Group - All Are Welcome!*

*Saturday, April 22 - 5:00 p.m.*

The EPICUREOUS DINNER GROUP will meet for dinner and conversation at **5pm, Saturday, April 22, 2023 at NINJA THAI AND SUSHI, 13350 Reflection Parkway, Ft Myers, FL.**

Please text, call or email John E Fischer to RSVP at 267 992 6566 or [SilverFischStudios@Gmail.Com](mailto:SilverFischStudios@Gmail.Com) with your name, contact information and the number in your party by Monday, April 17th. The restaurant needs exact numbers and reservations. Please tell the Host or Hostess you are from ALL FAITHS when you arrive.

PLEASE, if you must cancel, contact John by 4/17.

## The Rainbow Connection

**Meeting on the 2nd Sunday of the Month at 12 p.m.**

The Rainbow Connection is a new addition to All Faiths' social justice teams. This group will support the LGBTQ+ community and Allies. All are welcome.

## Racial Equity Team Meeting

**Meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of the Month at 10 a.m.**

The Racial Equity Team is regrouping. As we seek to live into the 8th Principle, we look forward to ideas and engagement with the congregation. All are welcome.

## All Voices Choir Practice

**Meeting Every Thursday at 2 p.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](mailto:ceegeefm@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. Contacts: Diane Chernow, [dianecher@comcast.net](mailto:dianecher@comcast.net)

## McGregor Clinic Collection

**Collection is on the 3rd Sunday of Every Month**

This month the clinic is in need of new socks. Coordinator: Joyce Schaffer, [joycelschaffer@gmail.com](mailto:joycelschaffer@gmail.com)

# April 2023 Calendar

						Saturday
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
						<b>1</b>  <b>1pm</b> Solos Lunch (see pg. 4)
<b>2</b> <b>9:15am</b> News Talk w. Ray Ellis  <b>10:30am</b> Service  <b>2pm</b> ACMA Song- writer's Circle Open Mic	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  <b>1:30pm</b> Climate Action Team Mtg. via Zoom	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>  <b>2pm</b> Choir Practice	<b>7</b>  <b>10am</b> Board Retreat	<b>8</b>  <b>7pm</b> ACMA Concert (see pg. 8)
<b>9</b> <b>9:15am</b> News Talk  <b>10:30am</b> Service & CYP  <b>12 pm</b> Rainbow Connection Easter	<b>10</b>  <b>10am</b> Sun. Service Mtg.	<b>11</b>  <b>10am</b> Racial Equity Meeting at All Faiths	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>  <b>10 am</b> Finance Mtg.  <b>2pm</b> Choir Practice	<b>14</b>  <b>12pm</b> Bunny 101 (see pg. 8)	<b>15</b> <b>7am-Setup</b> <b>8am-Sale</b>  
<b>16</b> <b>9:15am</b> News Talk w. Ray Ellis  <b>10:30am</b> Service & CYP	<b>17</b>  <b>12pm</b> Book Club	<b>18</b> <b>10am</b> Care & Support  <b>2pm</b> CAT Movie & Discussion <i>Current            Revolution</i>	<b>19</b>  <b>1pm</b> Board Meeting	<b>20</b> <b>1pm</b> Homeless Team @ All Faiths  <b>2pm</b> Choir Practice  <b>7pm</b> Tamiami Tale Tellers	<b>21</b>  <b>2pm</b> Dominoes	<b>22</b> EARTH DAY  <b>5pm</b> The Epicureous Dinner Group (see pg. 4)  <b>7pm</b> ACMA Concert (see pg. 8)
<b>23</b> Service Schedule same as above No CYP	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>  <b>6:30pm</b> LIFE Gathering at Unity Church	<b>26</b> <b>10 am</b> Ten O'clock Scholar Five Wishes with Susan Meissner	<b>27</b>  <b>2pm</b> Choir Practice	<b>28</b>  <b>2pm</b> Dominoes	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> Service Schedule same as above  Animal Shelter Collection						

## APRIL 2023 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES "SHARED SENCE OF THE SACRED "

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

Recorded services can be viewed at [www.allfaithsuu.org](http://www.allfaithsuu.org)  
or on our YouTube channel.

### April 2 (Passover) - Clearing Out the Hamets, *by Rabbi Bruce Diamond*

The Torah commands that we remove the *hamets* from our premises before the Passover in anticipation of the new grain harvest. The word means "rancid/yeasty/souring." How do we now remove the *hamets*?

*Worship Associate – Susan Meissner*

*Music by Carlos Garcia*

### April 9 (Easter) - Resurrecting Jesus, by Joyce Ramay

How do we live by following the message and example of Jesus?

*Worship Associate – Diane Cartwright*

*Music by Carlos Garcia*

*Share the Plate with Climate Action Team*

### April 16 (Eid) - Empowering Youth to Address Their Mental Health Challenges, by Peggy JSingh

Embarrassment, financial costs and limited services are barriers to accessing needed support and assistance.

*Worship Associate - Michelle Gemma*

*Music by Carlos Garcia*

[McGregor Clinic Collection]

### April 23 (Earth Day) - Celebrating the Earth - Past, Present and Future, by Joan Marshall

Exploring the contrast between the indigenous way of relating to the Earth and that of our industrialized society.

*Worship Associate – Bob Moore*

*Music by Carlos Garcia*

### April 30 (Natn'l Honesty Day) - The Miracle of Oil of Olay and Other Lies Told to Me, by Annely Hudanick

Are we programmed to accept lying from childhood on? Is it even possible to live with nothing but the truth, and is that even desirable?

*Worship Associate – Susan Meissner*

*Music by Carlos Garcia & Choir*

[Pet Shelter Collection]

## CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM NOTES

*by Rachel Spiller, Acting Director*

Just because we are in an interim time in our Children and Youth Religious Exploration program doesn't mean we have to slow down! In my first week of stepping into this role temporarily, the children made a covenant for our time together. We learned that covenant is part of what keeps UU congregations together, and that making a covenant will make sure everyone feels comfortable and heard. We learned about what UUs mean when we say "revelation is not sealed." In the month of April, we'll be deep diving into our 8 principles, learning about proposed changes to these principles, and exploring the different faith holidays in the spring.

We need YOU for the CYP Committee! It's important for the youth director to have a variety of voices advising them to make sure our children receive diverse religious education. You do not have to have an education or religious professional background to be part of this committee. All you need is an interest in the future of our children and youth, a willingness to meet in person once per quarter to approve the direction of the program, and willingness to commit to the occasional zoom meeting or email approval of actions. See Rachel Spiller if interested.

We have some wonderful actions we are exploring to encourage intergenerational relationships within our congregation, so make sure to be looking for those opportunities to be in deeper relationship with our children and youth as they arise.

Thank you for your trust in us.

## MINISTERIAL SEARCH UPDATE

*by Marsha Bates, Chair*

Due to the limited response received via the UUA's Ministerial Transition portal, your Search Team has posted an on-line ad in the UU World magazine's classified advertisement section. When you open the classified ads, our notice appears at the top of the list under the "Employment" heading.

We have been told that the season for ministers to search in earnest for alternative positions starts in April. We are hopeful we will see more activity in the upcoming months. You will be kept informed as the search progresses.

## CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Co-Chair



On April 22nd, people around the planet will celebrate EARTH DAY. Here at All Faiths, your Climate Action Team kicked off that celebration on March 22nd, World Water Day, with a screening of the Leonardo DiCaprio film *Before the Flood*. Following the screening we discussed the fact that in the intervening years since the film was produced in 2015 the world's response to the climate crisis has been woefully inadequate. Clearly, not enough has been done to realize the United Nations Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming this century to 1.5 degrees Centigrade. The recently released IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report indicates the probability that we will reach that level of warming in the early 2030's. The three young children who attended the *Before the Flood* screening challenged us to find ways to do more. For the sake of future generations, that is a challenge we must all embrace.

This month we invite you all to join us at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18th for a screening of *Current Revolution*. This is a series of short films from the American Resilience Project which explores the transition from fossil fuels to renewables with a focus on national security, economic prosperity, and environmental justice. Perhaps nowhere is it more evident than in the Florida legislature that it will indeed take a revolution to accomplish this essential transition here in the Sunshine State. We urge you to join us in exploring the climate challenges facing us and how we can best respond to them both individually and as a congregation.

The Climate Action Team will meet on Zoom at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4th. Our meetings are open to all who wish to attend. We hope you will be able to join us as we discuss our plans for EARTH DAY and beyond.

## LEE INTERFAITH FOR EMPOWERMENT UPDATES

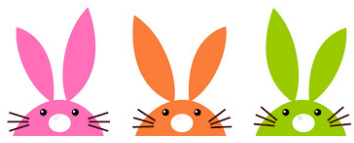
by Marsha Bates, Team Leader

All Faiths was well-represented at LIFE's February Love In Action event. Feedback from the event was positive... especially the discussion time when All Faiths network members had the opportunity to talk with attendees from other congregations. LIFE's new Lead Organizer, Paul Leingang, was introduced. He will replace Chelsea Plaisance as Chelsea moves to a new phase of her career.

LIFE's next large gathering will be April 25th, where network members can learn about and celebrate the achievements LIFE has attained in the last 12 years. This year's event will be held at Unity of Fort Myers, 11120 Ranchette Road, and will begin at 6:30 pm. Besides learning about LIFE's many accomplishments, network members' injustice concerns will be identified as LIFE prepares to identify a focus for its 2023-24 actions. That focus will be decided at LIFE's Fall Assembly.

This is the time of year when network members are encouraged to invest (aka donate) to ensure LIFE can continue to work toward creating a more just community for all Lee County citizens. The suggested investment is \$200 per network member, but any amount will be welcomed and put to good use. Donations can be made by mailing a check to: PO Box 62692, Fort Myers FL 33906 or via CashApp@LIFEJustice. You can also make a donation at: <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/life-lee-interfaith-for-empowerment-corp>. or by googling Lee Interfaith For Empowerment and scrolling down to the Donate button on its website.

The LIFE Board has instituted policies and procedures that will prevent a recurrence of the embezzlement they discovered this past year. (The perpetrator is no longer a bookkeeper for LIFE and is being investigated by the Lee County Sheriff's Department as well as the FBI for his fraudulent actions against LIFE and 14 other entities.) LIFE's new policies require two signatures on every check; signatories are subjected to a background check; the Treasurer and LIFE employees are not allowed to sign checks; and the Board reviews the bank statement and reconciliation statement every month. You can be assured that your donation will be safe-guarded and will be used to fight injustice.



## BUNNY 101

by Rachel Spiller

Did you know that rabbits are the third most surrendered animal, right after cats and dogs? Did you know that carrots are actually a very bad choice for a bunny treat, no matter what we learned from Bugs? Did you know that Lee County has a very big problem with rabbit dumping to the point that Cape Coral now has a large wild colony of domestic breeds?

What we know about caring for rabbits as companions has come a long way in the past couple of decades. We've learned how to provide the best nutrition, veterinary care and community awareness to better provide for these fascinating creatures. Come learn all the Bunny Basics and what you can do to be a part of the solution to Lee County's big bunny problem even if fostering or adoption is not in your future. This class will be facilitated by Rachel Spiller, House Rabbit Educator, owner, foster and rescue adoption coordinator. You'll have a chance to meet a bunny ambassador and find all about these pleasant animals.

**What: Bunny 101 at All Faiths**

**When: April 14th at 1:00 pm**

This event is open to the public and the homeschool community as well.

## ♥ FOR THE HOMELESS NEWS

by Barb McFarlane

The Heart for Homeless Team continues to receive bikes from the neighborhood and All Faiths members. Thanks to Dan Deshon who has faithfully brought these to All Souls in No. Ft Myers for repair and distribution. Brian Bigelow has offered to help with this chore, as well as Dan Mahoney, a friend of Pam Pfalzer, who has attended some team meetings. This will give Dan DeShon a little break. We thank them too!

The team is researching areas of need for specific subsets of people without housing. Anyone with an interest, experience, or curiosity, please join us on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. at All Faiths.

This month's meeting will be held on April 20th.



## Ice Cream Social

After Service

Sunday, April 30, 2023

Sponsored by Marsha Bates & Chris Stotler

## WITH OUR APPRECIATION

♥ A big shout out to **Frank Geltner**, who donated a \$250 gift card to All Faiths for carpet cleaning! It's the ultimate hint that the carpets need cleaning! Thank you, Frank!

♥ Thank you to **Bob DiGalbo** and **Brad Davidson** for putting our fence back in order after the mess that Ian left. We are missing one piece - soon to be replaced.

♥ And thank you to **John Fischer** for organizing the Epicureous Dinner Group which will meet monthly for strictly social purposes. A great way to get to know each other.

## ACMA LIVE MUSIC SCHEDULE!

**Sunday, April 2 - 2:00 - 4:00 pm**

Songwriters' Circle Open Mic  
Something new! Free



**Saturday, April 8 - 7:00pm**

Ordinary Elephant in Concert  
Barbara Chamberlin Opening

**Saturday, April 22 - 7:00pm**

Mean Mary in Concert  
JD Lashley Opening

**The Listening Room at All Faiths**

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida 33901

General public \$18/Member discount \$12

Donations at the Door



## TREASURER'S REPORT

by John Conrad, Treasurer

### Cash Assets – February 2023

First Horizon Checking	\$ 21,150
First Horizon Op. Reserve	25,775
Live Oak Op. Res. CD	21,175
Raymond James Legacy	24,551
Pay Pal	35
First Horizon Capital Checking	39,348
First Horizon Capital Reserve	27,864
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$159,897</b>
Prior Month	<u>146,486</u>
<b>Net Gain</b>	<b>\$ 13,411</b>

### February 2023 Profit & Loss

Operating Income	\$ 29,915
Operating Expense	<u>16,190</u>
<b>Net Gain</b>	<b>\$ 13,724</b>

Revenue/Operating Income and Expenses:

Budget control was good with 82% of our budget over the first 11 months being expensed (considering the monthly transfers to Capital Reserves). There were no minister-related expenses from September through February.

Our Pledge Goal through February was \$192,475; and \$160,310 was received. Most of the recent pledge giving was for the current year (2022-2023): but \$22,600 was for the next year (2023-2024). This "overlap" in pledge giving occurs at the end of each fiscal year when our Stewardship pledge drive is underway. Your continued generosity to meet our financial obligations is appreciated.

Our annual insurance premiums were paid totaling \$11,416.

\$6,000 previously "borrowed" from the Operating Reserve Account was returned in February.

Since Hurricane Ian, with available funds from the UUA and our insurance carrier, the roof and gutters have been replaced. Interior renovations will be done when contractors are available and acceptable quotes are received. Funds for this work are deposited in the Capital Checking Fund. This is why there is such a large balance in the Capital Checking Fund.

The AED/defibrillator ordered last November, cannot be delivered by the manufacturer, an upgraded AED was purchased at an additional cost of \$250; And a new BBQ grill was purchased for cookouts.

In February, \$1,110 was collected for the Minister's Discretionary Fund.

## RACIAL EQUITY TEAM NEWS

by Lewis Robinson, Chair

We are about six months post hurricane IAN'S destruction in our communities. I am sure all of the marginalized communities had significant damage in some areas but we are recovering.

In addition, these communities are in a chronic state of environmental injustice. There is always the problem of air pollution, and poor quality water. We established that several years ago in our environmental study in Dunbar. Since that study, environmental legislation has been passed to remove and replace old municipal water line and provide some in-home removal of lead pipes. However, I know of no such work ever being done in Lee County. Just a few days ago, there was on Facebook a posting of a member with a very poor quality water sample displayed on the post. So, despite the cities receiving grants to repair leaky sewage plant spill into Billys creek and others areas we still have that problem.

Each day, now that I am displaced from my usual residence, I walk along, McGregor Boulevard and Iona Road for some distance. Unfortunately, this is usually in morning rush-hour and traffic is very heavy. I haven't had to do this since I practiced and lived in city, and often time did not permit me to find a better place to run. This is not healthy, and certainly not enjoyable. Yet most of our inner city residents, particularly economically stressed reside in an area, which is bound by two or more heavily congested roadways. That seems to be the way we construct our cities. So, although we are not on McGregor Boulevard during usual rush hour traffic, our neighbors are and people who use McGregor Boulevard for recreation or commuting are. I also travel daily on route 41 (Cleveland Ave), and parts of Gladiolus and Summerlin Boulevard. I think most of us live out of these Corridors, but it doesn't mean we should not be concerned.

An additional problem which is very concerning is that Habitat for Humanity gets its source of land to build on usually in compromised areas. For example, in Lee County's Harlem Heights area there will be continued building and rebuilding in a flood Zone. The county perhaps has a plan for that, but I do not know.

I will address this in the racial justice equity meetings, and I hope the congregation understands what is being communicated. Thank you very much.

# UUA RESPONDS TO GROWING LEGISLATIVE ATTACKS AGAINST TRANS AND NONBINARY+ KIDS AND THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

These are heartbreaking times. They are also defining times. An onslaught of oppressive laws and policies are threatening the lives and well-being of our children, young people and adults, our families, and the very fabric of communities.

We affirm and remain in solidarity with trans and nonbinary+ people because this is a fight for everyone's humanity.

We are experiencing the outright political targeting of transgender and nonbinary+ children and adults, including the banning of gender affirming healthcare, bans against trans kids playing sports, and laws criminalizing drag. This policy violence and dehumanizing rhetoric creates an environment that can provoke physical violence and further discrimination. We are also witnessing efforts to criminalize reproductive healthcare, comprehensive education about race, Black history, and gender, and numerous issues of human rights that are spreading across countless states nationally. These attacks cut right to the heart of our fundamental religious belief in the inherent worth and dignity of each person, a fundamental right of conscience, and the values of personal agency that give us all the opportunity to live fully into our whole selves.

These issues of censoring education and the targeting of LGBTQIA+ communities and communities of color are not unrelated. They are intended to divide and make neighbors afraid of neighbor. They coincide with efforts to dismantle democracy and individual agency, all by pushing authoritarian policies that violate the sanctity of our homes, our bodies, and our diverse religious beliefs. As progressive people of faith, we recognize the forces feeding these far-right efforts. Throughout history, we've seen these tactics and ideology before and it always leads to destruction and violence.

However, Unitarian Universalism teaches a different way. We know we must create communities where all feel safe and all belong. Our faith calls us to show up powerfully - both pastorally, providing support and aid to our people and neighbors, and prophetically, with committed organizing and bold moral courage.

We are clear and unapologetic. Our LGBTQIA+ siblings are sacred, whole, and divine. As Unitarian Universalists, we understand that the full expression of the diversity of gender and sexuality is a gift. Our commitment to love and justice, to inclusive ministry and prophetic action, is deep and life-affirming. We actively organize to promote the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. We work to end anti-Black racism, organize for racial justice, disability justice, gender justice, LGBTQIA+ equality,

and support reproductive justice, climate justice and more.

Our hearts are with everyone in these frontline communities and states. Every day, we see a new regressive policy idea being introduced or debated. We pray especially for all our trans and nonbinary+ kids and their families and the communities supporting them. Trans and nonbinary+ people are living in an environment where legislators and policy makers are criminalizing their very existence. Trans children and their parents fear that the state will prevent them from receiving appropriate healthcare or from feeling secure in their families. It is forcing many people to consider relocating for their own safety and that of their families.

As progressive people of faith, we affirm and remain in solidarity with trans and nonbinary+ people because this is a fight for everyone's humanity. We must actively work to create a society where trans children can be free to be who they are and fully live into their identity. And we must strengthen our partnerships across faith communities and with grassroots partners to build networks of safety and care while mobilizing for change that supports a more just, equal, and loving society.

Progress is not always constant or straightforward - and we will not succeed in opposing every bill targeted at our people and children. But we can find inspiration from our own Rev. Theodore Parker, who said in his sermon, "Of Justice and the Conscience" (PDF 11 pages), "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe, the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways...But from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice."

Join us to organize for LGBTQIA+, gender, and reproductive justice

The Unitarian Universalist Association has continued to use both our voice and our actions to show up for trans and nonbinary+ youth and individuals. Visit the UPLIFT Action webpage of Side With Love to see the ongoing work to support our trans siblings and loved ones - and ways that you and your congregation can participate.

UPLIFT also sponsors monthly gatherings for trans and nonbinary+ people of all ages and we welcome any trans and nonbinary+ individuals in need of support and community to attend. Additionally, in the past year, we have spoken out unequivocally against anti-trans policies in Texas and Alabama and have supported legal actions challenging these dehumanizing laws.

*(continued on page 11)*

## UUA RESPONDS *(Cont'd from page 10)*

We know that more must be done in our communities, congregations, and within the association itself to protect vulnerable people. We know that more is being asked of us - and more is needed from all of us to respond to this moment with clarity, compassion, and courage. And we know that we have the tools to create safe harbors, to continue to educate our children and communities about the full expression of human sexuality and gender, and the skills to organize to defend our values, our people, and the right of all people to be free and thrive.

We cannot do it alone. As UUs, we understand that we are part of the interdependent web of all creation. We belong to each other and this knowledge fuels our faithful commitment to unwaveringly fight for justice; to unwaveringly fight for each other.

For more information contact [info@uua.org](mailto:info@uua.org).

### UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY PITTSBURGH, PA



Join us **June 21 - 25, 2023** online or in-person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Most GA events will take place at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, 1000 Fort Duquesne Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA. [Google map](#)

Registration is open. Register early to secure the lowest rates. Volunteer opportunities and financial support are available.

Visit [UUA.org/GA](http://UUA.org/GA) for detailed information.

# We **NEED** you. Can you **HELP?**



Shelters provide a safe and nurturing environment for these animals until they can find a forever home.

**Hurricane Ian displaced many helpless animals.** To help shelters in their mission, they would appreciate donations of pet food and treats, and any of the items listed below.

- Cat Food (Dry and Canned)
- Dog Food (Dry and Canned)
- Cat Litter (Clay & Scoopable)
- Contractor Grade Trash Bags
- Towels, large & small
- Blankets, Comforters
- Pillow Cases, Sheets
- Clorox Wipes
- Tissues
- Paper Towels
- Bleach

**Gift cards from Petsmart, PetCo  
or Pet Supermarket  
(or other local pet stores)**

**Sharon Gray will deliver the  
donations to shelters in need.**

# THE INAUGURAL ALL FAITHS' JUNK IN THE TRUNK SALE!

**Saturday**

**April 15, 2023**

**Reserve a Spot  
by April 10!**

**Volunteer!**



**WHAT:** A garage sale out of the back of your car! Pile all your stuff in your car, pickup or truck and sell it out of the back or set up a table/umbrella.

**WHERE:** All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, 2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers

**HOW:** Park in your assigned space. Sell your stuff, donate 50% of your proceeds to All Faiths! Space is limited, so reserve your space soon.

**WHEN:** Saturday, April 15, 2023 from 8 am to 12 pm. **7 am set-up time**

**COST:** Free - *sort of...* This fundraiser will support our general operating budget. By donating 50% of your proceeds, you still make money - and save a trip to Goodwill! It's a great way to spend time with friends and have some fun.

**Reserve your spot now - only 20 spaces available!**

**Call the office at 239-226-0900**

*(unfortunately, we are unable to store your items prior to sale)*



## All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Phone: (239) 226-0900 – Email: [office@allfaithsuum.org](mailto:office@allfaithsuum.org) – Website: [www.allfaithsuum.org](http://www.allfaithsuum.org)

**Executive Board:** Marge DiGalbo, Chair; Rachel Spiller, Vice Chair; John Conrad, Treasurer; Ed Elrod, Secretary; Chris Stotler, Past Chair.

**Directors:** Judy Alberda, Peter Erickson, Michelle Gemma, Lewis Robinson, Linda Runkle.

**Staff:** Regina Kilmartin, Administrator; Rachel Spiller, Acting CYP Director; Carlos Garcia, Music Director; Joe Gayton, Sexton.

**Minister Emeritus:** The Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson



### Communications

*Newsletter*

Regina Kilmartin

*Proofreaders*

Weezie Close

Joyce Ramay

*Social Media & Website*

Regina Kilmartin,

Sharon Gray, Becky Ross

**Adult Education Forums**

**Sunday Service Team**

Joyce Ramay

### Member Services

Fran Way

*Greeters*

Marsha Bates

*Care and Support*

Joyce Ramay

**Finance**

Joyce Ramay

**Stewardship Committee**

Marsha Bates

**Nominating Committee**

Dottie Mayol

### Sound Technician

Ed Elrod

**Livestreaming**

Regina Kilmartin/Sharon Gray

Brad Davidson

**Building and Grounds**

Bob DiGalbo

Judy Alberda

**Social Action & Outreach**

*Climate Action Team*

Joan Marshall/Carol Heilsberg

*Heart for the Homeless*

Barb McFarlane

*Racial Equity Team*

Lewis Robinson

*L.I.F.E.*

Marsha Bates, Michelle Gemma,

Barb McFarlane

*Mano a Mano*

Charlotte Blitt

*Operation Joy & Solos Group*

Annely Hudanick

*Animal Ministry*

Sharon Gray

*Rainbow Connection*

Greg Monk

**Minister: In Search**



Deadline for the **May** Issue of *Connections* is **April 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