



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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Happy Founders' Day!

ALL FAITHS

CELEBRATES 23 YEARS OF AWESOME!

February 18, 2024 - 12 p.m.

Join us for a \$10 Boxed Lunch

(kids eat free)



RAFFLE TICKET WINNER OF CAROL ELROD'S

AWARD-WINNING QUILT "The Women of Islam" WILL BE DRAWN

(Details on Page 3)



The Vagina Monologues

- an episodic play written in 1996 by Eve Ensler, will be performed at All Faiths. All proceeds benefit All Faiths!

**Saturday, February 10
at 2:00 pm**

All Faiths Unitarian
Congregation
2756 McGregor Blvd,
Fort Myers
Donation \$20 at the door

The Board meeting was held on Wednesday, January 17, 2024.

As promised, January has been very busy here at All Faiths and we will continue to be busy again in February.

Doug and Diane Cartwright held several casting calls for the play *The Vagina Monologues*. They have casted eleven very talented performers. There are some surprises in store for you. It will be wonderful! You'll laugh, cry and even learn a thing or two. So please join us on February 10th at 2:00 p.m. and support them. Tickets are \$20 and on sale now. You may purchase tickets at church events, or call the office 239-226-0900 to reserve your tickets.

The Directory picture taking went very well, however we still have some members and friends who did not have pictures taken and we haven't heard from them. So please

send a picture to us to be included in the Directory before it's too late. We really would like to see everyone in the new Directory.

Celebration of our Founders' Day is on February 18th. We will have deli sandwiches from Jason's Deli again for \$10 each. Look for a form to place your order beginning Sunday, February 4th.

Raffle tickets for Carol Elrod's beautiful quilt, *The Women of Islam*, are on sale now for \$25. We are selling only 100 tickets and they are going quickly, so don't wait too long as we expect them to sell out. We are planning a special show later in the spring for the remaining quilts. These quilts are handmade by Carol, her mother, grandmother and Ed's grandmother. They are truly amazing and many have won National awards.

MLK Day saw many of our members and friends at

the day's events. Frank and Nicole attended the breakfast and marched with other members in the parade. Many of us manned our All Faiths table in the park all day until we were rained on. We spoke with many people about All Faiths, our Racial Equity Team, and the work we do in the community. We were even interviewed for a podcast.

We are entering the third week of our Pledge Drive and we are off to a great start. Check out the Sun Thermometer outside the office. Please submit your pledge forms in the box provided in the Community Room. We need everyone's support this year to make our budget goals. Thank you to the Stewardship Committee for their wonderful work on this year's Pledge Campaign.

We continue with our efforts to keep our beautiful church home in good repair and safe. We've heard that

the front doors will be replaced hopefully in February. We are still waiting to get a date to resurface the parking lot. We are awaiting estimates on replacing the side office door. We'll keep you all posted on dates when we know them.

Our first monthly Potluck Dinner was held on January 25th. It was attended by 26 of our members. It was a lot of fun, with good food and lively conversations. Everyone I spoke with was very positive and agreed we should continue with these events. So, plan on joining the fun in February at our Valentine's Potluck.

Thanks to all of you for your support and all that you do for All Faiths.

*Peace and Love,
Marge*

The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 21, at 1:00 p.m.

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.)

February - Minister's Discretionary Fund Special Collection

March - Operation Joy

January Share the Plate raised \$515 for Quality Life Center Scholarships

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





This short month of February is most notably known as the month of love, wherein we celebrate Valentine's Day. In this 21st Century, I would like to think that we here at All Faiths Unitarian Congregation are aware of the history of St. Valentine and that it is shrouded in mystery and legend.

This reminds me of the Divine Feminine, another legendary and mysterious subject. However, this month we will take a dive into the Divine Feminine, and host a delightful, yet controversial play called the *Vagina Monologues*. The playwright Eve Ensler wrote the first draft of the monologues in 1996 following interviews she conducted with 200 women about their views on sex, relationships, and violence against women, which later blossomed into an international global non-profit movement that has raised over \$100 million for groups working to end violence against women, including those whose identities are fluid and are subject to gender-based violence.

We are also launching an experiential 13-week course on the Divine Feminine called *Rise Up and Call Her Name*, which will begin Valentine's Day (Feb. 14, 2024), facilitated by Helen Dixon and myself during *10 O'clock Scholar* on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. This course is for women only and those who identify as women. The course

is already full and we may need to repeat it at a later date.

But no worries - if you have not signed up, or if you do not identify as a woman, or are just not interested, we invite you to take advantage of *News Talk* on Sunday mornings, 9:15 a.m.- 10:00 a.m. This is a small group who loosely discuss topics in the news. Currently we have no official facilitator, but there are a few committed individuals who come together during our Sunday morning *News Talk*. However, it is our hope to formalize Sunday *News Talk* and offer it as an ad hoc *Civil Discourse Group* that will include debates with factual contents. If you are interested in being a part of this more formalized civil discourse, please join us Sunday mornings as we plan to make it happen.

I am looking forward to both of these offerings here at All Faiths, as they are needed and necessary experiences to move us towards a more just and loving community, filled with leaning inward and demonstrating outward our UUA values of Interdependence, Equity, Transformation (no fear of changes), Pluralism, Generosity, and Justice - all centered in Love.

Remember we have a destination in mind...to find joy in our offerings.

Love and Hugs, Albie
Your CL Minister



QUILT AUCTIONS TO BENEFIT ALL FAITHS

by Doug Cartwright



All Faiths has been presented with a generous gift and an opportunity to hold a unique fundraiser. Ed and Carol Elrod have donated her award winning quilted wall hanging, *"The Women of Islam,"* to be raffled off as a fundraiser, the entire proceeds to go toward All Faiths. A total of one hundred tickets will be sold at \$25 apiece. Once the sale of 100 tickets has been reached, the sale will be closed, and the drawing will be held, hopefully at the Founders' Day luncheon and celebration of All Faiths' 23rd anniversary. Tickets are available from Regina in the office. The sale is open to anyone, not just All Faiths' members, and you need not be present to win.

"The Women of Islam" is on display in the social hall at All Faiths. It has been exhibited at quilt shows and at quilting competitions across America. It has won prizes at several quilt shows including the prestigious Philadelphia show in 2005 and has been featured in quilting magazines.

In addition, Ed and Carol have donated 10% of the profits generated by a second quilt sale/auction/raffle (details yet to be announced) featuring about twenty of her hand-made quilted wall hangings of various sizes. After the Founders' Day raffle drawing, further details will be announced and a catalogue of pictures and sizes of her quilts will be made available as well as a display of the quilts in the social hall.

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 24 Ed Elrod
- Feb 26 Nita Flores
- Feb 28 Cameron Anholt

And Coming Up...

- March 1 Eileen Moran
- March 3 Charlotte Blitt
- March 4 Frankie Jennings
- March 5 Debby Kopp

February Potluck

Thursday, February 15 at 5:00 p.m.
 The theme is....(drum roll)...
 LOVE!
Sign Up on the Bulletin Board

Solos Monthly Lunch!

**Saturday, January 6, 2023
 1:00 p.m.**
Cantina Loredo
**5200 Big Pine Way, Fort Myers, FL
 33907 (across fro Paris-Saigon)**

check your email for details.

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

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

The Epicureous Group

Strictly Social Dinner Group - All Are Welcome!
Saturday, February 24, 2024 - 5:00 p.m.

Dinner & Conversation at **5pm, Saturday, February 24, 2023, at Carrabba's Italian Grill, 12990 S. Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers**

Please text, call or email John Fischer to RSVP at 267-992-6566 or silverfischstudios@gmail.com with your name, contact information and the number in your party. The restaurant needs exact numbers and reservations. Please tell the Host or Hostess you are from ALL FAITHS when you arrive.

The Rainbow Connection

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

The Rainbow Connection is an inclusive group that supports the LGBTQ+ community and Allies. All are welcome.
Contact: Frank Stephens at fdinfla99@gmail.com

Racial Equity Team Meeting

Meeting on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the Month at 10 a.m.

The Racial Equity Team will meet twice a month until further notice to accommodate a book read. The team is currently reading Layla F. Saad's "*me and white supremacy.*" All are welcome.

All Voices Choir Practice

Meeting Every Saturday at 11 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.

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

McGregor Clinic Collection

Collection is on the 3rd Sunday of Every Month

This month the clinic is in need of men's clothing and kitchen utensils. Coordinator: Joyce Schaffer, joycelschaffer@gmail.com

FEBRUARY 2024 CALENDAR

Sunday

Monday



Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

 <p><i>Happy Valentine's Day</i></p>					1	2	3
						2pm Dominoes	11am Choir Practice 7pm ACMA Concert (see pg. 9)
4		6	7	8	9	10	
9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP		1:30pm Climate Action Team Mtg. via Zoom	6:30pm Fort Myers Camera Club		2pm Dominoes	2pm <i>The Vagina Monologues</i>	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 12am Rainbow Connection	10am Sun. Service Mtg.	10am Racial Equity Team Mtg. Last Day of Stewardship Pledge Drive	10am <i>Rise Up & Call Her Name</i>	10 am Finance Mtg. 1pm Homeless Team Mtg. 5pm FEB. POTLUCK "Love"	2pm Dominoes	11am Choir Practice Founders' Day Setup	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
Founders' Day! 10:30am Service & CYP McGregor Clinic Collection 7pm-ACMA Concert (pg. 9)	12pm Book Club		10am <i>Rise Up & Call Her Name</i> 1pm Board Meeting 6:30pm Fort Myers Camera Club	7pm Tamiami Tale Tellers	2pm Dominoes	11am Choir Practice 5pm The Epicureous Dinner Group (Pg. 4) 7pm- ACMA Concert (Pg. 9)	
25	26	27	28	29			
9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP Ice Cream Social			10am <i>Rise Up & Call Her Name</i>				

Visit our website for information on events and programs
www.allfaithsuu.org

FEBRUARY 2024 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES THEME: JUSTICE & LIBERTY

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 4

Title – *Black Music*

Speaker – Alberita Johnson

Worship Associate – Michelle Gemma

Music by Carlos Garcia

Testimonial by Kathleen Weber

February 11

Title – *Love, Loved, Loveable*

Speaker – Alberita Johnson

Worship Associate – Doug Cartwright

Music by Carlos Garcia & All Voices Choir

Testimonial by Pam Pfalzer

February 18

Title – *Honoring Our Visionary*

Speaker – Alberita Johnson

Worship Associate – Regina Kilmartin

Music by Carlos Garcia

McGregor Clinic Collection

Founders' Day Lunch

February 25

Title – *Floridians for Democracy*

Guest Speaker – Jim Nathan

Worship Associate – Alberita Johnson

Music by Carlos Garcia & All Voices Choir

Life of Congregation Report – Marge DiGalbo

REMAKING NEWS TALK

Extra, Extra, Hear All About It! *News Talk, a Civil Discourse*, is coming to All Faiths!

Do you enjoy a healthy debate? The sharing of thoughts and opinions backed by facts? Perhaps witnessing a debate is intriguing to you? Several people have signed up already, however all are welcome to join Albie, for a brief meeting, Sunday, Feb 4th, after service for further details.

JOYS & SORROWS

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

Judy Alberda remains at home recovering from surgery for a broken hip. She is receiving physical therapy. Please keep her in your healing thoughts and prayers.

Carol Elrod is at home after spending more time in the hospital. She and Ed are moving to an assisted living facility where more care is available for her.

Peter Erickson has returned home after being hospitalized for respiratory failure. He is feeling better, but still needs supplementary oxygen for breathing. Please keep him in your healing thoughts and prayers.

Sharon Gray's son, Rick, had surgery for a brain tumor. He will be receiving rehabilitation treatments. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Bob Way passed away after being hospitalized with failing heart and lungs. Bob and Fran were founding members of All Faiths. For many years, we were blessed by having Bob singing solos at our Sunday services. We extend our sympathy to Fran and their family.

Please reach out to those who are homebound or suffering with chronic illnesses, so that they know they are loved and are not alone.

Joyce Ramay,

Care & Support Coordinator

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

News Talk - 9:15am in the Sanctuary

News talk is a facilitated group that will offer a time and space for you to discuss the weekly headlines.

Child & Youth Program

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

by Marsha Bates, Chair



The All Faiths 2024-25 Pledge Campaign was kicked off at the January 14th service. The theme, *Celebrate All Faiths*, was chosen to encourage each of us to think about what we value about All Faiths and why we support it. An email blast was sent on January 17th giving recipients an option to pledge on-line.

Pledges are the main source of income for All Faiths' 2024-2025 fiscal year. Using data from this year's expenses, the Finance Committee developed a budget that includes known increases in basic costs (e.g., insurance and utilities) plus other anticipated increases for things such as office supplies, building maintenance costs, etc. The draft budget also estimates income that will be received from pledges and other sources such as cash donations, rental of the building to outside groups, fundraisers and interest earned. Pledges are All Faiths largest source of income; to have a balanced budget, next year's pledges must total \$200,200. To achieve that goal, current pledges will have to increase by 11.6%.

You can fulfill your pledge in a manner that best suits your budget: in one lump sum or by breaking your payment into weekly, monthly, or quarterly payments. No pledge is too big or too small! Every pledge is needed... is important ... and is appreciated.

Please pledge by February 13th so the Finance Committee can prepare a realistic budget adjusted to reflect the amount of pledges received. If pledges fall short of the \$200,200 pledge goal, expenditures will have to be cut for things such as worship service expenses, music supplies, community outreach and/or program expenses, or other discretionary items.

Once that adjusted budget has been approved by our Board of Directors, it will be presented to the Congregation for approval at our Annual Meeting in March.

Thank you for doing what you can to sustain this loving congregation where all are welcome and for helping to ensure that its many social justice activities continue.

Submitted by Marsha Bates on behalf of your Stewardship Committee

FEBRUARY CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM NOTES

by Sharon Heinrich, CYP Director



This year's theme, "The Gifts of Our Faith" explores ten beloved UU values and explores their potential to shape us and, in turn, shape the world. With this in mind, we will focus on the gifts of justice and equity and what they offer us and the world. We'll learn through songs, stories, poems, and exercises the ideas of justice and equity (fairness and kindness) as we play games (sometimes made intentionally unfair to talk about the feeling of being treated unfairly), make Valentines and express our thoughts on equity and justice through creative projects.

Opening this month: We are here together. We think with our minds. We love with our hearts. We create with our hands. We explore together.

February 4: What is equality, equity and justice?: How do the words differ? Video/book - "A is for Activist" Play a game with "unfair" rules and talk about how it feels.

February 11: The gift of building better relationships: Valentine songs, Story about friendship - "Frog and Toad", Make valentines for friends and loved ones.

February 18: The gift of building a better world (Black History month): Video/books about important contributions from Black people, Appreciating each person's contribution, Cooperative building with Duplos

February 25: The gift of joy: Yoga laughter, Joyful songs of equity and justice, An art project to express joy

Closing this month: "As we make choices each day, may we remember to make them with love and fairness in mind."

If you have any questions, ideas or something to share please contact me.

Sharon, CYP Director

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Co-Chair



Last year, All Faiths was one of four Southwest Florida UU congregations that participated in the developmental prototype for a course of study on how to be a good neighbor to our local indigenous tribes. That course has been updated, reworked, revised and refined and is being offered this year throughout the state of Florida. We strongly encourage both new and former participants to sign up now to be a part of this powerful experience. We promise you will find it deeply rewarding.

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR with REV. HOUSTON CYPRESS

REGISTER HERE

A four-part exploratory workshop guided by Love the Everglades Movement and sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), UU Justice Florida (UUJF), and the SWFL RESET Center to promote Indigenous Sovereignty,

Resilience and Climate Justice.

Participants can expect a deep exploration of how Florida Indigenous people relate to nature, create a Land Acknowledgement, discover ways to honor and support Indigenous Sovereignty, and how to be good allies in the struggle to Protect The Sacred. A full curriculum of reading materials and videos will be provided. We ask that participants commit to all four sessions on ZOOM.

Date & Time

Mar 4, 2024 06:00 PM

Mar 11, 2024 06:00 PM

Mar 18, 2024 06:00 PM

Mar 25, 2024 06:00 PM



Ice Cream Social

After Service

Sunday, February 25, 2024

Sponsored by Lewis Robinson

THE RAINBOW CONNECTION

by Frank Stephens, Chair

Hi! My name is **Frank Stephens**, the fella who sits in the front row during Sunday services. I am flattered and grateful to accept Alberita's request to facilitate the *Rainbow Connection*. We meet every second Sunday after service and social time; all are welcome and encouraged to attend. You may contact me at fdinfla99@gmail.com, as well as speak to me in person. As a new member of the congregation, it has been wonderful getting to know some of you and I look forward to becoming acquainted with more of you.

All Faiths has been recognized by the UUA as a *Welcoming Congregation*, but this status must be renewed each year. Our committee has decided to focus on this process. Details may be found at this link: www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program/five-practices-welcome-renewal. If you would like to participate in this project, please contact me.

Julie Simmons and Patty Hart have made a generous donation to Cape Coral Pride. As such, All Faiths is a sponsor and will have a table at the celebration. This will assist us in fulfilling the third practice of the Welcome Renewal Program, Welcoming Days of Observance.

Any input will be appreciated and needed so please do not hesitate to communicate with me in person or by email. It is my intention to facilitate the wishes of the congregation so I am looking for your guidance, expectations, and opinions whether you attend the meetings or not.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity, Frank.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HELPERS



If you look close, you'll see four All Faiths' members joining a couple of families putting in their hours, and some "caravaners" who travel around the country working on Habitat projects. Thanks to **Barb McFarlane** for organizing these Habitat projects for All Faiths volunteers.

TREASURER'S REPORT

by John Conrad, Treasurer

Cash Assets – December 2023

First Horizon Checking	\$ 35,490
First Horizon Op. Reserve	25,296
Live Oak Op. Res. CD	21,833
Raymond James Legacy	4,497
Pay Pal	35
First Horizon Capital Checking	4,300
First Horizon Capital Reserve	3,201
Live Oak Capital Reserve	33,471
Live Oak Capital Savings	20,494
Live Oak Legacy CD	20,616

Total	\$170,233
Prior Month	<u>175,077</u>
Net Loss	(\$ -4,844)

December 2023 Profit & Loss

Operating Income	\$ 13,235
Operating Expense	<u>17612</u>
Net Loss	(\$ -4,377)

COMMENTS:

- Revenue/Operating Income and Expenses:
- No unusual expenses were incurred. Budget control was good in December.
- Our Pledge Goal from April to December was \$152,632.00; and \$127,526.34 was received (83.6%). However, some congregants' pledge was received at the end of the last fiscal year (during the pledge drive); that amounted to \$22,600.00. Factoring in those funds, along with \$3,500 received in October 2023 for next year's pledge drive, we have received a total of \$146,626.34 (96.1%) towards the Pledge Goal. Thank you for your generosity!
- 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 4.0%.
- The monthly transfer/deposit of \$1,250.00 to the Live Oak Capital Reserve account was made. A contract has been issued to repave the parking lot and we now expect that this work will be completed by March 2024. In addition, we have contracted for new front doors which we expect to have installed by March also. There were no Capital expenses in December.
- In December, \$608.00 was collected for Mano a Mano.

RISE UP & CALL HER NAME

The Journey Begins on Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Facilitators: Albie Johnson and Helen Dixon
Beginning Wednesday, February 14, 2024
10:00 a.m. in the Community Room.



Rise Up and Call Her Name, a Women's Spiritual Journey of the Divine Feminine. Join us Wednesdays at **The 10 O'clock Scholar** as we explore feminine deities from around the world. We will share crafts, dance and music while we learn of these Goddesses and their archetypes; how they were honored and are honored today.



**PRIDE PARADE HOST
\$10,000**

SAVE THE DATES! Cape Coral's 6th Annual PRIDE Celebration - Saturday & Sunday, March 2-3, 2024. Sponsored by All Faiths, thanks to a generous contribution from two congregants. This two-day celebration happens on SE 47th Terrace, between SE 9th Place & SE 11th Place. 3 PM: Food Trucks, Beer Tents, Liquor Tent, Teen Tent, & Vendor age open. There are many ways to participate. Sign up on the bulletin board.

RACIAL EQUITY TEAM NEWS

by Frank Geltner, Co-Chair

Nicole and I recently attended the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Unity Breakfast.” This event is organized by Xi Omicron Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the SWFL Alpha Educational & Leadership Foundation. The program brings community leaders together with a number of goals: 1) To honor MLK; 2) To award scholarships; 3) To honor several individuals with the “Keeper of the Dream” award; 4) and To promote the Dunbar Festival.

Over the course of this event and earlier at the Quality Life Center, we have made a number of contacts who may prove instrumental when the Racial Equity Team is ready to reach out to the larger community. For example, we have made initial contact with Mrs. Tamara Joy Hunter, recipient of the Golden Apple Teach award for 2023. She is a teacher at Franklin Park Elementary School in Fort Myers. “We just want our students to know that you are more than welcome to soar on the wings of our ancestors,” said Tamara Joy Hunter, a district teacher leader at the school, which has a majority Black student population.” We again connected with Mrs. Hunter at the “Unity Breakfast.”



Frank Geltner, Tamara Joy Hunter, and Nicole Racine, making good connections at Unity Breakfast.



First shift staffing the table at MLK Day, Frank Stephens, Marge DiGalbo, and David Donovan. Many thanks to everyone who participated in the MLK events.

♥ FOR THE HOMELESS NEWS

by Barb McFarlane

After a month off, the team met January 18 to plan this years activities.

The bike ministry had been on hold for a month. It will resume since learning the North Shore Alliance church in No. Fort Myers can continue to receive and repair bicycles. We will need 1-2 volunteers to bring bikes there. Please contact me if this is something you can do occasionally. I will provide the women’s name, number, address for drop off.

The annual Homeless Service Day/Veterans Standdown was held Jan. 27. Sharon Heinrich and Barb McFarlane volunteered at this event which provides those seeking housing access to goods, medical care, haircuts, and social service agencies.

There will be a T-shirt collection the 1st and 2nd Sundays in March. See Susan Meissner's article below.

March 24 Terryn Streets, director of the Salvation Army’s revamped day program for people without housing, will speak at our Sunday service.

We continue to welcome anyone curious about this team to attend the monthly meeting. Your curiosity inspires new ideas on ways our congregation can support those without stable housing.

T-SHIRT DRIVE IN MARCH

by Susan Meissner

The Heart for the Homeless Team will be conducting a “T-Shirt Drive” on the first two Sundays in March, March 3 and March 10.

We are asking All Faiths Members & Friends to donate any good used T-shirts that a homeless person could wear.

Kindly clean out your closets & dresser drawers and give us any T-Shirt that you no longer want and can donate to this project.

For the first two Sundays in March, please bring your T-Shirt donations to All Faiths and place them in the “green” collection bin marked “T-Shirt Drive”.

These T-Shirts will then be sorted by size and delivered on/about April 1st to Matt Wallace at the Lee County Coalition for the Homeless for his Staff to distribute.

Thank you in advance for your help with this project!

LEE INTERFAITH FOR EMPOWERMENT UPDATES

by Marsha Bates, Team Leader

Thanks to the efforts of Paul Leingang, LIFE's Lead Organizer, LIFE continues to increase its membership. A newly recruited church, The Community Church of Babcock Ranch, recently joined and Iona Hope Episcopal Church is re-activating its involvement in LIFE. Three additional churches plan to join this summer.

The Mental Health Action Team continues to research mental health issues facing our community. They are interviewing area mental health professionals associated with facilities that provide mental health services. Once all interviews are completed, MHAT members will identify a specific issue to be addressed and the decision-maker(s) who could implement an action that would improve the mental health landscape in Lee County. At its April 9th Nehemiah Action, those key decision makers will be asked to take the action(s) that LIFE has identified.

At Fort Myers City Council's February 5th meeting, the Council is seeking public input about proposed amendments to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund ordinance. The 4:30 pm meeting will be held in City Council Chambers, 2200 Second Street. You can support LIFE's efforts to influence the Council to award the funds in a manner that maximizes the number of low-income wage earners receiving Affordable Housing funds.

LEECARES HURRICANE IAN HOUSING RECOVERY PLAN

from Lee County SWFL Newsletter

Fort Myers, FL, Jan. 16, 2024 – Lee County has announced that the application portal for the LeeCares Hurricane Ian Housing Recovery Program will open February 1. Door-to-door outreach to raise program awareness among individuals in need begins today, Jan. 16.

Outreach workers will fan out across the county to provide information to residents who were impacted by Hurricane Ian and who may qualify. The in-person outreach staff will be easily identifiable with the LeeCares logo on the front of shirts and "How Can I Help" on the back of shirts.

Outreach will continue even after the application portal opens. Areas to be visited this month and next include Dunbar and Tice, Fort Myers Shores and Franklin Park, Harlem Heights, Heritage Farms, Matlacha and Pine Island, North Fort Myers and Suncoast Estates, South Fort Myers Iona, Bonita Springs and Cape Coral, as well as many other areas. Additional outreach information and locations will be announced Feb. 1.

Funding for the LeeCares housing program comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery allocation to Lee County to address the disaster recovery needs of residents impacted by Hurricane Ian, which made landfall in Lee County on Sept. 28, 2022.

The door-to-door outreach involves flyers, door hangers and other informational materials to educate the public about the LeeCares Hurricane Ian Housing Recovery Program. Informational materials will also be distributed through networks of community service organizations and through the mail.

The information will pertain to the two programs for which individuals can apply beginning Feb. 1:

- The Housing Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Elevation program may assist income-eligible property owners to repair, replace and/or elevate property that suffered hurricane damage.
- The Home Purchase Assistance may assist income-eligible home buyers to purchase a qualifying primary residence outside of the flood zone in Lee County.

To view a full list of eligibility requirements and documents needed to apply, visit www.leeflcares.com. Questions can be emailed to leecares@leegov.com. At noon on Feb. 1 when the portal opens, individuals also can call 239-382-5453

ACMA LIVE MUSIC SCHEDULE!

Saturday, February 3 - 7:00pm

Sam Robbins in Concert
Bob Williams opening



Sunday, February 18 - 7:00pm

Muriel Anderson in Concert
Ray Cerbone opening

Saturday, February 24 - 7:00pm

A Tale of Two,
Fred Ball opening

The Listening Room at All Faiths

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



The Vagina Monologues is an episodic play written in 1996 by Eve Ensler, who presented it as a one-woman show on Broadway. She has since revised the show to feature three actors talking about their very personal experiences with their own bodies. All Faiths Unitarian Congregation has further adapted the play into a readers' theatre production featuring eleven actors. We invite you to experience this play in a new format which attempts to achieve Ms. Ensler's goal (as expressed by Gloria Steinem): "With the help of outrageous voices and honest words like those in this [play], I believe the grandmothers, mothers, and daughters of the future will heal their selves - and mend the world."

This readers' theatre production will be presented without intermission at All Faiths Unitarian Congregation at 2:00 P.M. Saturday, February 10. Cost \$20. Tickets are available at All Faiths or from cast members, including All Faiths' members and friends: Joan Marshall, Eileen Moran, Pam Pfalzer, Kathleen Weber, Helen Dixon, Lily Nieves, Frank Stephens, and directors: Doug and Diane Cartwright. After the play, there will be a chance to partake in wine, light refreshments, and conversation with the cast. *Please note that the subject matter of the play is not suitable for children.*

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida 33901

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

Executive Board: Marge DiGalbo, Chair; Michelle Gemma, Vice Chair; John Conrad, Treasurer; Diane Chernow, Secretary; Chris Stotler, Past Chair.

Directors: Rosalie Kuehn, Barb McFarlane, Lewis Robinson, Linda Runkle, Richard "Dick" Scudder.

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

Lay Minister: Alberita (Albie) Johnson

Communications

Newsletter

Regina Kilmartin

Proofreaders

Weezie Close/Joyce Ramay

Social Media & Website

Regina Kilmartin,

Becky Ross

Adult Education Forums

Sunday Service Team

Joyce Ramay

Hospitality

Frank Geltner/Nicole Racine

Program Support

Michelle Gemma/Barb McFarlane

Member Services

Fran Way

Greeters

Marsha Bates

Care and Support

Joyce Ramay

Finance

Joyce Ramay

Stewardship Committee

Marsha Bates

Nominating Committee

Sharon Gray

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

Frank Geltner/Nicole Racine

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

Frank Stephens

Minister Emeritus: The Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson



Deadline for the **March** Issue of *Connections* is **February 19**

(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