



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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Welcome Back Autumn!

Happy 1 Year Anniversary to our Commissioned Lay Minister, Alberita Johnson!

Labor Day Cookout & Anniversary Celebration!

September 1 - After Service - \$5 Per Person - Kids Free

Child & Youth Program Begins

September 1 - 10:30 a.m.

Register online at www.allfaithsuu.org

Join One of All Faiths' Justice Teams:

Climate Action Team

Racial Equity Team

Heart for the Homeless Team

Rainbow Connections Team

Donate your Time and Talent:

Garden & Grounds

Program Support

Stewardship



There was no August Board meeting. The Board traditionally takes the month of August off.

I have asked the Board of Directors to consider permanently posting the Great Tree of Religion, which outlines all the world's major traditions. This infographic marks the dates when new types of religion emerged in human history. Starting with Animism, around 100,000 years ago. This is excerpted from a discussion provided by the creator of The Evolutionary Tree of Religion, Simon E. Davies.

Divine Feminism, about 40,000 years later. Shamanism appears around 20,000 BC.

Then we see Ancestor Worship at 10,000 BC. Nature Worship follows 5,000 years later.

And Polytheism emerges 2,000 years after that! The Dharmic traditions of India

appear in the 2nd millennium BC.

Then Monotheism arises in the 1st millennium BC.

In close succession, Mysticism emerges in the 1st century CE.

And just a hundred years later, Dualism appears around 150 CE.

What you're witnessing is the adaptation of religion as it evolves into new forms and expressions over time. Notice how the intervals between new traditions become shorter:

60,000 years, 20,000 years, 10,000 years, 5,000 years, 2,000 years, 1,000 years, 900 years, 300 years, then 150 years!

Then we have a quiet period, as though Religion is taking a little breath, otherwise known as the Dark Age. After this, there is a scientific revolution, so you might think re-

ligion is on the decline... but hold that thought!

In the last 300 years, we've seen the founding of new syncretic traditions, such as Neopaganism and Spiritism, which places a coordinate just here... Now follow the trajectory as the line gets close to flattening! In science, this is called a singularity, and it represents a point where change accelerates beyond our ability to predict.

A singularity, in this context, refers to a point in time when technological and cultural advancements accelerate at an exponential rate, leading to profound and unpredictable changes. This moment has been predicted by the computer scientist and futurist Ray Kurzweil, who suggests that advancements in technology, particularly in AI and computing, will lead to a future where human life is

fundamentally transformed.

However, even religious scholars have foreseen the same singularity. Theologian and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin envisioned a point of convergence for human consciousness and cosmic evolution, where humanity reaches its ultimate potential and unity with the divine. Both concepts align with the idea that we are approaching a critical juncture in human history — a point where transformative movements will redefine our understanding of spirituality and our connection to the cosmos.

Frank Geltner,
Board Chair

The next Board Meeting will be held on September 18, 2024, 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.)

September - SWFL RESET Center (Climate Action Team)

October - St. Matthew's Women & Children's Shelter (Heart for the Homeless)

August Share the Plate raised \$505 for Quality Life Center!

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





As I write this, I cannot help but look back to last year, when I penned my first newsletter article in Connections as your Commissioned/Contract/Interim-Lay Minister. It is with joy that my first year is completed and my second year officially begins. Thank you, All Faiths, for embracing me once again, and renewing my contract through March 2026 as your Contract Commissioned Lay Minister.

For the last few weeks, I have been thinking about our next steps together as a Beloved Community and how we can be recognized as such within our doors and outside the doors of All Faiths. Ruminating on questions such as how to increase membership, particularly Millennials (1981-96), Gen. Z (1997-2012) and Gen. Alpha (2013-2025), with an emphasis on greater diversity across the board. And how we can be more effective in our community outreach efforts and building networks. And lastly, how to better meet the spiritual and religious needs of the community while emphasizing our non-creedal approach which is fundamental to Unitarian Universalism. There are many others, but these three rose to the top of my list.

With these questions in mind, I would like to hear from you. Your thoughts are welcome. Let us do it together, increase membership, get involved in the community, meet and greet our neighbors, find our spiritual-center and ground in it.

What else? I am excited already, and look forward to hearing from you.

My vacation began on Sunday, August 18th, and I will officially return to the pulpit on Sunday, September 1st. I look forward to our Ingathering and Water Communion Service at the end of the month.

My new core office hours are Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and other times by appointment. Wednesdays are my writing and study days when I will not reply to emails, or phone calls except for emergencies. My weekend will normally be Fridays and Saturdays, though that will occasionally be flexible if there is a congregational event that requires my presence. My email address is albiestalk@gmail.com. If you prefer to reach me by phone, please call All Faiths 239 226-0900.

Thank you once again for the faith you have placed in me. My hope is for a future shared ministry, filled with love demonstrated for this beloved community. I am grateful for the commitment to love and justice, to the sound stewardship of resources and for the sturdy foundation that we have to build on. I believe we will grow into a multigenerational spiritual community that will nurture our spirits and build bridges in our community.

All Aboard... to "Destination Joy,"

With love, Albie

JOYS & SORROWS

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

Ed Elrod entered hospice care at the Larsen Health Center. His wife Carol died in April. They were both founding members of All Faiths. They actively participated in Board leadership, worship services, and music. We appreciate all their wonderful years of friendship and service.

Ron Abplanalp had cervical spinal surgery. We are happy that he reports that he had good results and no pain..

Linda Bigelow had knee surgery. We hope that she has good results – less pain and better mobility.

Frankie Jennings had extensive heart surgery with eight stents. We hope that she has a good recovery and more energy.

Fran Way had a fall at home and bruised her ribs. We hope that she improves and can rejoin us soon.

We celebrated the life of our founding minister, **Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Robinson**, with a beautiful memorial service and bricklaying in our memorial garden on August 10th. We are grateful for the inspiration and pastoral care that he provided to us, and his strong leadership in the promotion of social justice.

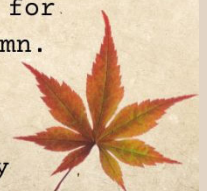
We are grateful for the ministry of **Alberita Johnson**. We are celebrating her first anniversary with us on September 1st. We look forward to many more wonderful years to come.

Joyce Ramay,

Care & Support Coordinator

In the dreamy silence
Of the afternoon, a
Cloth of gold is woven
Over wood and prairie;
And the jaybird, newly
Fallen from the heaven,
Scatters cordial greetings,
And the air is filled with
Scarlet leaves, that, dropping,
Rise again, as ever,
With a useless sigh for
Rest—and it is Autumn.

Autumn
by Alexander Posey



Happening at All Faiths

*Happy September
Birthday to you!*



- Sept. 07 Brad Davidson
- Sept. 08 Wayne Dean
- Sept. 11 James Kersey
- Sept. 14 Edith (Edi) Griffiths
- Sept. 16 Ainsleigh Babcock
- Sept. 23 Jo-Ann Hilliard
- Sept. 23 Ken Malkin
- Sept. 25 Dottie Mayol
- Sept. 30 Harold Philpot

And Coming Up...

October 4 Michael Pierre

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



Solos Monthly Lunch!

**Saturday, September 7, 2024
1:00 p.m.**

El Goucho Inca

4383 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers, FL
check your email for details.

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

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

The All Voices Choir Practice

Meeting on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m.

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

Women's Sacred Singing Circle

Meeting on Sunday Afternoons from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.

The Women's Sacred Circle will meet on Sunday afternoons for singing and chanting women empowerment songs. Contact: Toni Latino at latinolaw@gmail.com. Not all Sundays are available - check calendar on page 5 to confirm.

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

Tuesday Discussion Group

Meeting on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

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

Mexican Train Dominoes

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

Join in on this fun and popular dominoes game. Don't know how to play? Come and we'll teach you -- it's easy. Contact Regina at office@allfaithsuo.org to get on email distribution list.

The Epicureous Dinner Group

Meeting on the 3rd Saturday of the Month at 5 p.m.

The Epicureous Dinner Group is a social group. The organizer, John Fischer, will post restaurant information on the bulletin board. Please be sure to sign up! **This month: Thai Ninja Sushi Bar, 13550 Reflections Parkway, Suite 3-303, Fort Myers, FL**

SEPTEMBER 2024 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 12:15pm Sacred Circle 2-5pm ACMA Circle	2 Labor Day Office Closed	3 10am Sun. Service Team Mtg. 1:30pm Climate Action Team Mtg. via Zoom	4	5 	6 4pm Quality Life Center Tour (Pg. 8)	7 1pm Solos Lunch (Pg. 4)
8 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 12pm Rainbow Connection 2-5pm ACMA Circle	9	10 10am Racial Equity Team Mtg. via Zoom	11 6pm Monthly POTLUCK DINNER & Game Night	12 10 am Finance Mtg.	13 2pm Dominoes in the Community Room	14 11am Choir Practice 7pm ACMA Concert (Pg. 10)
15 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 12:15pm Sacred Circle McGregor Clinic Collection	16 12pm Book Club	17 	18 1pm Board Meeting	19 1pm Heart for the Homeless Team 7pm Tamiami Tale Tellers	20	21 11am Choir Practice 5pm Epicureous Dinner Group (Pg. 4)
22 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 12:15pm Sacred Circle	23	24	25	26	27 2pm Dominoes in the Community Room	28 11am Choir Practice
29 9:15am News Talk 10:30am Service & CYP 12:15pm Sacred Circle Ice Cream Social Pet Shelter Collection	30	31				

Check the online calendar at: <http://www.allfaithsuu.org>
 for post-printing updates

SEPTEMBER 2024 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

THEME: INVITATION

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

September 1

Title – *Growing Pains*
Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Diane Cartwright
Music by Carlos Garcia
BBQ Potluck Lunch

September 8

Title – *Upon Our Return*
Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Regina Kilmartin
Music by Carlos Garcia

September 15

Title – *Back Together Again*
Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Annelly Hudanick
Music by Carlos Garcia
McGregor Clinic Collection

September 22

Title – *Dark and Light*
Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Nicole Racine
Music by Carlos Garcia

September 29

Title – *Take Me to the Water*
Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Joyce Ramay
Music by Carlos Garcia
Pet Shelter Collection
Life of Congregation Report – Frank Geltner

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

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

CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM NOTES

by Sharon Heinrich, CYP Director



Each Sunday is an adventure as the children in our community are invited to share the UU faith through songs, stories and activities. This year we will focus on the practices of our faith. What practices inspire us to act, live, and love our values out in our world? What practices help us to connect to our core value of liberating love. This month “Invitation” is the practice that we will explore. What does “invitation” mean and how can it help us embody love in our daily lives? With an array of fun and meaningful activities each session lifts up a different way that “invitation” shows up in our lives.

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 as we celebrate each other.

September 1: Invite reconnection with friends

September 8: Invite renewal

September 15: Invite change

September 22: Invite spiritual practices

September 29: Invite sharing

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

If you would like to share a talent, skill or knowledge with our young people please let me know.

Sharon, CYP Director



MONTHLY POTLUCK DINNER WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 AT 6:00 P.M.

Join us for fun and fellowship.

Bring a dish to share.

Play games & get to know each other!

Call For Volunteers!

The new church season begins in September. There are many things you can do to help make our next year -- our 25th Anniversary! -- our best year ever.

Volunteers are the backbone of every religious organization, and All Faiths is no exception. There are so many areas that would benefit from a little extra help. Please take a look at the list below and see if there are any areas you may be interested in helping with:

Stewardship/Legacy - *Without stewardship and our pledge campaign, All Faiths couldn't exist. We need three or four people to solidify a strong committee. You won't be reinventing the wheel, just steering it! Pledge campaign work begins in December and ends in February on Founders' Day. Stewardship and legacy giving go hand in hand. This is something that the committee will work on throughout the year.* (Contact: Regina Kilmartin 239-226-0900).

Greeters - *Welcome people on Sunday mornings. Hand them an order of service and a hymnal. Make them feel welcome when they walk through the doors. This is a great way to get to know our members and friends.* (Contact: Dick Scudder scud51@gmail.com).

Program/Event Support - *This is a much needed and important role. Everyone likes an occasional Sunday BBQ, or an evening event. We need people who are willing to rearrange/setup the community room, pick up food and beverages when necessary, put out food and clean up*

afterwards. There can never be too many volunteers to help with programs. See the signup sheet on the bulletin board. (Contact: Barb McFarlane mcfarlanebar@gmail.com).

Memorial Garden and Grounds - *Our garden and grounds take a lot of tending too. Trimming, weeding, watering. You don't have to go it alone. Judy Alberda and/or Nicole Racine will give you direction and show you what needs to be done. It's quiet and beautiful early mornings in the garden. Ask a friend to join you!* (Contact: Judy Alberda judyalberda@yahoo.com or Nicole Racine nra-cine_1948@yahoo.com).

Building & Grounds - *Light maintenance and repair requires someone with a little handyman experience. This would include things like trimming a stray tree branch, putting new flags on the flagpole, tweeking a leaky toilet, replacing a light bulb, occassional paint touchup. Also bringing the garbage cans in from the street on Fridays, or Sunday parking when Joe is not available.* (Contact: Regina Kilmartin 239-226-0900).

Audio/Visual - *This is a big one! Running the sound-board and the livestream equipment is easier than you think, and the place where we really need help. A lot happens on Sunday mornings, and we are often scrambling to find someone to operate the equipment. Three or four people would allow us to formalize a schedule that works for everyone.* (Contact: Regina Kilmartin 239-226-0900).



VAGINA MONOLOGUES REPRISE AT THE ALLIANCE FOR THE ARTS!

After a rousing success at All Faiths last February, the Vagina Monologues will perform three shows at the Alliance for the Arts - *save the dates!*

Friday, September 27 - 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 28 - 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, September 29 - 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$18 for Alliance members/\$20 for non-members
Available through the Alliance website and on the dates of performances

Don't miss it - many original All Faiths cast members will be performing.

Social Action & Outreach

RAINBOW CONNECTIONS TEAM

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

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

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM (CAT)

Meeting on 1st Tuesday of the Month at 1:30 a.m.

Via Zoom (Link Emailed Prior to Meeting)

Join the regularly scheduled meeting of the Climate Action Team, where we work together to learn to live sustainably and protect our planet for ourselves and future generations. All are welcome. **Contact: Joan Marshall:** jfmdbm@yahoo.com

RACIAL EQUITY TEAM

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

The Racial Equity Team meets once a month. You are invited to join them as they work towards becoming proactive anti-racists. **Contacts: Nicole Racine** nracine_1948@yahoo.com and **Frank Geltner** frank@newportnet.com

HEART FOR THE HOMELESS TEAM

Meeting on 3rd Thursday of the Month at 1 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the regularly scheduled meeting. Come learn what All Faiths is doing to help our local in-need community. **Contacts: Barb McFarlane** mcfarlanebar@gmail.com, or **Judy Alberda** judyalberda@yahoo.com

McGREGOR CLINIC COLLECTION

Donations Accepted on 3rd Sunday of the Month

Donate men's and women's clothing and non-perishable foods to Florida's number one AIDS/HIV Clinic.

Contact: Joyce Schaffer: joycelschaffer@gmail.com

ANIMAL SHELTER COLLECTION

Donations Accepted on 5th Sunday of the Month

Donate dog and cat food, cleaning supplies and bedding materials to area animal shelters. **Contact: Sharon**

Gray: geemal@yahoo.com

RACIAL EQUITY TEAM NEWS

by Nicole Racine, Co-Chair

The Racial Equity Team (RET) will be touring the Quality Life Center (QLC) on Friday, September 6 at 4 p.m. This is the culmination of Phase 1 of the RET's process of identifying an outreach activity for the congregation. The RET is off to a good start. Community outreach with the Quality Life Center of SW Florida, the recipient of All Faiths "Share the Plate" donations, marks the next phase of RET's outreach exploration.

On Sunday August 11th, Julian Ramirez, the new Executive Director of the QLC, amazed All Faiths with his enthusiasm and his desire to continue the work of his predecessor, Abdul'Haq Muhammad. As promised, two days later he arrived at All Faiths and participated in the RET's Tuesday meeting. He reviewed the many programs being offered by the QLC. The mentorship program sounded like it would be a good fit not only for the members of the RET, but for members of the Congregation as well. Please sign up to tour the QLC facility.

The tour will take place on Friday September 6, 2024, at 4pm. During the August 18 service, Joyce Ramay shared this information with the congregation. A sign up list has been posted on the bulletin board. The Racial Equity Team hopes to see more All Faiths members on the tour, with the hope that more will get involved in this important work. Let's stand strong with the Quality Life Center of SWFL.

FOR THE HOMELESS NEWS

by Barb McFarlane

After a two-month hiatus, the Heart for the Homeless Team is ready to start discussing ways to reinvigorate the team and assist those without stable housing.

Despite not meeting in July, a few members of the team donated back-to-school items to the Lutheran Family Services refugee program. This helped newly arrived refugee children start their school year with the same supplies as their classmates.

We continue to receive donated bikes from neighbors and members. Thanks to Brian Bigelow for transporting them to North Shore Alliance Church to be repaired and donated to people in need of stable housing. Without Brian's help, we would need to stop this ministry. 238 bicycles have been donated over the years!

We look forward to October's Share the Plate and speaker from St. Matthew's House new Women and Children's Shelter on October 6th.

Join us September 19 at 1:00 p.m. at All Faiths for the monthly team meeting.

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Co-Chair



There has, perhaps, never been an election that had as great an impact on the environmental quality of life on this planet than will the U.S.A. election this November. For this reason, your Climate Action Team is asking you to join us as we reach out to urge environmental voters around the country to vote in this year's election. The Environmental Voter Project, online at Environmental Voter Project., makes it simple, pleasant and extremely satisfying to reach out to people who care about the environment but are infrequent voters, and urge them to vote in the November election.

An entirely non-partisan message is provided for the call. Here's a quote from the above website:

"We estimate that over 8 million environmentalists did not vote in the 2020 presidential election and over 13 million skipped the 2022 midterms. We are a nonpartisan non-profit focused on a simple, high-leverage solution to this problem: with an 8-year track record of success, we are accurately identifying these non-voting environmentalists and efficiently converting them into a critical mass of consistent voters that will soon be too big for politicians to ignore."

We urge you to check out this website and participate in one of their many call opportunities.

Your Climate Action Team is delighted to announce that a new alliance has now taken shape in our community among a variety of environmental, conservation, sustainability and climate change groups. It is called the SWFL EcoAlliance. CAT member Jack Ubinger, who is co-leader of the local Citizens Climate Lobby chapter, describes it this way: "The Alliance is conceived to operate as a cohort that will enable members to maintain their respective identities and missions while, at the same time, establishing a platform to better coordinate with one another, engage in more effective information exchange, share resources, and foster constructive conversations with each other, as well as the public." We will keep you informed as this new collaborative effort gets fully underway.

The Climate Action Team is open to participation from any and all interested parties. We meet via Zoom at 1:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. We hope you will join us and share your thoughts and ideas about ways to make a difference in the future we are creating through our actions today.

RAINBOW CONNECTIONS NEWS

by David Donovan & Frank Stephens, Co-Chairs

The Rainbow Connections Team plans to honor the memory of Rev. Wayne Robinson with a plaque titled "The Reverend Dr. Wayne A. Robinson Memorial Library." It will be dedicated at an upcoming Sunday service, and will be mounted above the alcove over the library.

Frank and I represented All Faiths at the SWFL Harmony Chamber's July mixer which was held at the Standard Restaurant in downtown Fort Myers on 7/18/24. The next mixer is a Member Business Expo & Mixer scheduled at Syndey & Berne Davis Art Center 8/15/24.

The Rainbow Connections Team continue to work on the renewal process for All Faiths "Welcoming Congregation" status. We have completed the remembrance of 4 out of the 6 LGBTQ Days of Observances. The next ones coming up are Bisexuality Day, and Trans Day of Remembrance. The next worship service honoring LGBTQ community will be National Coming Out Day on 10/20/24. We will complete our annual renewal process and file paperwork in December.

The Rainbow Connections is also looking to have the following fundraisers developing fund raising ideas so that we can again be a sponsor for Cape Coral Pride and other possible community actions in the future. Look for a potential survey in the future for your input. Any ideas can be submitted directly to us.

Idea to Host an Open House for the Harmony Chamber at All Faiths – November 21st??

- i. Tables inside with all Social Equity Teams with displays on what they do
- ii. Snacks and wine or hamburger/hotdogs
- iii. Corn hole and/or volleyball outside on lawn
- iv. 2 hour event for an early afternoon
- v. Sell 50/50

NEW PHOTO DIRECTORY



Our new photo directory is almost done. It was a long time in the making, but our directory should be complete by the end of September.

New feature apps will make it worth the wait. New photos and entries will be periodically updated. Thank you for your patience!

TREASURER'S REPORT

by John Conrad, Treasurer

Cash Assets – July 2024

First Horizon Checking	\$ 31,774
Raymond James Legacy	4,505
Pay Pal	35
Live Oak Operating Reserve (CD)	22,443
First Horizon Capital Reserve	8,453
Live Oak Capital Reserve (S)	38,773
Live Oak Operating Reserve (S)	41,893
Live Oak Legacy (CD)	21,212

Total	\$169,088
Prior Month	<u>172,861</u>
Net Gain/Loss	(-\$ 3,774)

July 2024 Profit & Loss

Operating Income	\$ 17,190
Operating Expense	<u>20,367</u>
Net Gain/Loss	(-\$ 3,177)

Revenue/Operating Income and Expenses:

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

Our Pledge Goal for the months of April to July was \$66,736; and \$62,256 was received (93.3%). However, before April 1, 2024, \$24,757 was received in paid pledges towards the new year. Taking this into account, we have received a total of \$87,013 towards the current year total pledge drive goal of \$200,200 (43.5%).

The only unusual expense incurred in the General Fund Operating Account during July was the \$5,000 annual gift to the UUA.

The Board approved the consolidation of several accounts to streamline accounting and to further increase interest income. These changes were made before the end of March 2024 and are reflected in the figures listed above. July's Interest Income was \$447.49.

The July monthly transfer/deposit of \$1,530.00 to the Live Oak Capital Reserve account was made. In July, the driveway was resurfaced, and the final payment will be paid in August. The total cost of this project was approximately \$28,278.

In July, \$328.00 was collected for Operation Joy.

WITH OUR APPRECIATION



A big thank you to Lewis Robinson for donating a custom made Black Lives Matters flag for our flagpole. We had been ordering them from Amazon, and being made of polyester, they only lasted a few months in the Florida weather. The new flag will be manufactured by Gettysburg Flagworks in East Greenbush, NY, and will be made from the same "battle tough" material that the American and rainbow flags are made from.



And a super big shout out to the Americana Community Music Association (ACMA) for hosting a fantastic fundraiser for All Faiths on August 17. They raised \$800 and entertained a full house with an evening of nostalgic music, costume contests and prizes.

If you haven't done so yet, check out the ACMA concerts at All Faiths. There's no better way to enjoy the up close and personal music of fine local and touring artists.



Ice Cream Social

After Service

Sunday, September 29, 2024

Sponsored by Lewis Robinson



ACMA LIVE MUSIC SCHEDULE!

Saturday, September 14 - 7:00pm

Chelsea Saddler in Concert!

Jane Fallon Opens

The Listening Room at All Faiths

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida

General public \$18/Member discount \$12

Donations at the Door

SEPTEMBER IS ANIMAL SHELTER COLLECTION MONTH

by Sharon Gray, All Faiths Animal Ministry



Perhaps you've wondered about All Faiths' Animal Shelter Collection. Where do the donations go? When did it start? Does it really make a difference? Would my small donation matter? What effect, if any, has Hurricane Ian had on local Animal Shelters?

In late 2012, the Board of Directors approved a request to begin collections of food and various supplies for local animal shelters/refuges. The Collections began in 2013. With the New Year, we will be celebrating 10 years of continuous donations from members and friends of All Faiths. The collection takes place during months with 5 Sundays (approximately 3-4 times a year).

Donations from the generous folks at All Faiths have benefited the Lee County Domestic Animal Services, Gulf Coast Humane Society, Cape Coral Animal Shelter, PAWS, ARC (Animal Refuge Center), Octagon Animal Refuge, Forever Pets, Peace River Wildlife Center, Humane Society of Bay County (whose shelter was severely damaged by Hurricane Michael in Panama City, FL).

Often in natural disasters, animals need to be relocated at great expense to safe places.

Here in Lee County, in response to Ian, emergency pet pantries were set up throughout the county to provide thousands of pounds of free pet food and supplies for residents in need. The shelters were overloaded with lost pets. Some owners were able to reclaim their pets, while others were never claimed. Many animals were shipped to other shelters in and out of the state.

Some shelters/refuges are funded by tax dollars, grants, endowment, and donations. But there's never enough money to fully fund supplies and veterinary care for the lost, surrendered, and abused animals that end up there.

Animals are valuable members of our families and community. Pets are some of our greatest teachers and companions.

This September 2024 has a 5th Sunday which means another Animal Shelter will receive donations from All Faiths friends and members. Please consider bringing in wet/dry food, towels, trashbags, Clorox and other cleaning items for the shelters. Your donations will be greatly appreciated.

SEPTEMBER SHARE THE PLATE RECEIPT: SWFL RESET CENTER

September's share-the-plate beneficiary, *SWFL RESET Center*, located on the campus of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers, was chosen by the Climate Action Team. Here is their story:

The *SWFL RESET Center* has been formed out of the belief that human society is moving increasingly in the direction of irreversible environmental deterioration. Many of our ways of life are neither environmentally sustainable, socially just, nor spiritually fulfilling. Environmental scientists with many backgrounds agree: we don't have much time to change our ways.

But challenges can also be occasions of great opportunity. Paradoxically, the global pandemic has taught us where to look for optimism. While people are sheltering and many human activities are on hold, we are witnessing the resiliency of nature to heal herself. We're also seeing global efforts to confront the pandemic. The root causes of our current crises are becoming increasingly clear. We're experiencing an ardent yearning to reset the human systems and paradigms that are now failing us.

The recognition of our dire circumstances and the commitment to seize this opportunity to create fundamental change gave rise to the SWFL RESET Center. Inevitably, education and cooperation are essential if we are to meet the challenges before us. While many organizations in SWFL, large and small, are working individually to increase awareness of environmental and social dangers, their cumulative effect to avert crises has not had the pace and scope needed.

The SWFL RESET Center is a physical place with facilities and capabilities to share resources, set common goals, and augment outreach on environmental and related issues of regional importance. It will help to answer the urgent need to bring diverse organizations together for maximal impact within and beyond our region.

The mission of the SWFL RESET Center is to serve as a consensus-building hub inspiring collaborative local and regional actions through transformative education to reset human impacts on the natural world.



Happy Anniversary, Albie!



What a great year it has been!

We have had the special pleasure of participating in the wonderful services led by Alberita (Albie) Johnson. Her sermons have been inspirational, informative and joyful. We are truly blessed to have such a loving and caring person at the helm in All Faiths. We look forward to sharing the coming year together. Thank you, Albie!



All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

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Executive Board: Frank Geltner, Chair; Dick Scudder, Vice Chair; John Conrad, Treasurer; Diane Chernow, Secretary; Marge DiGalbo, Past Chair.

Directors: David Donovan, Rosalie Kuehn, Ken Malkin, Barb McFarlane, Lewis Robinson.

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

Commissioned Lay Minister: Alberita (Albie) Johnson

Communications

Newsletter

Regina Kilmartin

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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

Dottie Mayol/Carole Latino

Greeters

Dick Scudder

Care and Support

Joyce Ramay

Finance

Joyce Ramay

Stewardship Committee

t/b/d

Nominating Committee

Sharon Gray

Sound Technician

Brad Davidson

Livestreaming

Regina Kilmartin/Sharon Gray

Brad Davidson

Building and Grounds

Brian Bigelow/Judy Alberda

Social Action & Outreach

Climate Action Team

Joan Marshall/Carol Heilsberg

Heart for the Homeless

Barb McFarlane

Racial Equity Team

Nicole Racine/Frank Geltner

L.I.F.E.

Robert Bennett,

Michelle Gemma

Barb McFarlane

Mano a Mano

Charlotte Blitt

Operation Joy & Solos Group

Annely Hudanick

Animal Ministry

Sharon Gray

Rainbow Connection

Frank Stephens

David Donovan

Founding Minister: The Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson



Deadline for the **October** Issue of *Connections* is **September 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