



CONNECTIONS

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

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by Alberita Johnson, CL Minister
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The Rainbow CONNECTION PRESENTS
MOVIETIME: Friday, May 16, 2025 at 1pm
Will & Harper - In this intimate portrayal of friendship, transition, and America, Will Ferrell and his close friend of thirty years decide to go on a cross-country road trip.



The Board meeting was held right after the annual Board Retreat on April 16th, 2025 from 10 am to 3 pm.

The theme of our Board Retreat was "Navigating the Road Ahead". I started the meeting with the following quote:

"There will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. They will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it all depends on how you use them." — Friedrich Nietzsche

Like any organization, All Faiths faces new challenges each year. It's important not to be afraid of what lies ahead but to learn to navigate through the roadblocks and use them to make us stronger. It's important that we proceed with a plan, looking forward, not behind, and always with an open heart and mind.

At our Annual Retreat last month, the Board had a lengthy discussion around the question: How well are we at fulfilling our purpose as stated in the Articles of Incorporation

when the Congregation was originally formed? That purpose is:

- To Advocate Diversity,
- Be committed to Liberal Spiritual Development,
- Work to achieve Social Justice for the oppressed, and
- Exhibit loving care and informed concern for both our members and the larger community.

We also briefly discussed ideas to help expand the membership at All Faiths. These are two important concerns for a vibrant, thriving Congregation. This will be a major focus of my efforts. We will continue to explore these topics at future Board meetings. I am also very interested in hearing feedback from our members on any thoughts you might have regarding these topics. Please feel free to contact me either in person, by email, etc., so that we can discuss any concerns or comments that you might have to improve our community.

I want to thank everyone who was involved in making the AIDS Quilt showing such a success. It took the whole village to make this happen and a special thanks go out to Wayne Reese, who made this possible, as well as all the volunteers who sat with Wayne and hosted visitors. It was a somber reminder of the AIDS scourge that is still with us, as well as a learning event for the Congregation. I want to especially thank Regina for being the ROCK that makes everything possible.

As you may see, there is a flurry of activity on various work around the property. We have finished having the new fence installed. Thanks to John Conrad for his commitment to All Faiths special projects. We are anxiously awaiting approval to start the sign replacement, however, the city has requested that we seek an engineer to approve the design before they grant a permit for the work.

The Building & Grounds team has recently installed new plants and bushes at the front of the church under the All Faiths sign. Brian Bigelow, Dan DeShon, and Frank Geltner worked hard to design and install the native plants to give us an updated look. We have also engaged a contractor to repurpose the old, unused sprinkler system so that it can now just be dedicated to watering the memorial garden and plants in the front of the building.

A new audio system will be installed in the next couple of weeks, to include a trial of 1 hanging microphone for the choir, with the possibility of adding additional ones if it is effective. The Board also approved hiring a sound operator on a 3-month trial basis, as we do not have enough volunteers in the congregation to accomplish this task. Estimated payments for this effort would be funded through donations.

(continued on page 3)

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.)

May - St. Matthew's House Women/Children Shelter (Heart for the Homeless)

June - Pride Cape Coral

July - Operation Joy - Back to School

April Share the Plate raised \$385 for SWFL RESET Center!

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





We all are familiar with the adage, April showers bring May flowers. Well after closer investigation I found that we have been leaving out a few words, the full expression is “March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers and June bugs.”

But surprise.... (Based on the long-term average (1901-2000), June typically sees 3.15 inches of precipitation, whereas April ranks as 5th wettest at 2.52 inches.) However, since April is the first full month of astronomical spring (a season most of us associate with trees and flowers) and is also the rainiest month up to that point, the “April showers” reputation likely stuck.

Yet for us Floridians as the weather warms up we have rain just about everyday. In the oppressive heat we welcome the coolness that rain brings. There are benefits that rain brings us: Rain is like aromatherapy. It cleans the air and often brings a pleasant smell. There is a natural phenomenon that occurs: those little droplets attract air pollutants and the air will smell better. And when we get caught in the rain, we often forget our troubles as we navigate the rains. Additionally, plants and animals are offered fresh water, it is food and nourishing for them. And for many countries rain is scarce and when it comes it can be harvested.

Poets often write about the rain, this is an excerpt from one of my favorites by Christina Rossetti:

*“What is the rain?
It is the tears of the earth,
Washing away the dust of life,
Clearing the path for new birth.”*

I welcome the spring and the rains that come with it. May the water wash away your tears, and all your troubles as the fresh smell of the rain engulfs us all.

Our destination to Joy is before us. May our hearts welcome spring and the newness she brings.

We are journeying together.

All aboard...Destination Joy

Love, Minister Albie

JOYS & SORROWS

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

Diane Chernow was able to return to services after suffering from a severe back injury. We hope she continues to recover well.

Dr. Vanessa Gilyard shared her sorrow at having to part with the belongings of her mother who passed away. We extend our sympathy to her and her family.

Sharon Gray shared the good news that her son Rick, who had surgery for a brain tumor, had an MRI which showed that there is no evidence of the tumor.

Wayne Reese was happy to share the famous AIDS Quilt which was on display in our sanctuary. Many people from our community came to see it.

Lewis Robinson suffered the loss of his elder first cousin who was like a brother to him. We extend our sympathy to him and his family.

Our Board of Directors were happy to hold their annual retreat at the McGregor Clinic.

Our congregation shared the joy with Linda Bigelow that her Gators won the men's national college basketball championship. Go Gators!

Joyce Ramay

Care and Support Coordinator



BOARD NOTES *(continued from page 2)*

Joyce Ramay, John Conrad, and Dick Scudder agreed to fund the trial months. We are still looking for volunteers to assist with the video recording duties to help Sharon Gray.

On May 25th, All Faiths will be hosting a Memorial Day Cookout. Please look for the sign-up sheets in the near future.

The UUA General Assembly is coming up in June, and All Faiths has the possibility to have 3 delegates at that meeting. So far, Albie and Carole Latino will be attending. If anyone else is thinking about it, please see Albie or myself. It is a great way to get a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalism.

The next Board meeting will be on May 21st at 1:00 pm.



Ice Cream Social

Next one in June
Sponsored by Lewis Robinson

Happening at All Faiths

Happy May

Birthday to you!

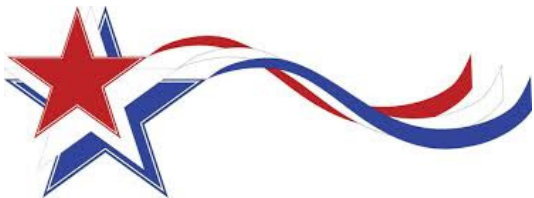


- May 9 Helen Dixon
May 13 Annely Hudanick
May 16 Laura Snow
May 22 Laurie Babcock
May 25 Lisa Leonhardt
May 26 Marge DiGalbo
May 30 Nancy Frasca Cabazares

And Coming Up...

- June 5 Dr. Vanessa Gilyard
June 6 Joyce Davison

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



Solos Luncheon

Saturday, May 3, 2025
1:00 p.m.

Nomiki's Plakka Greek Restaurant
12901 McGregor Blvd, Fort Myers

*check your email for details.
This special Solos gathering
is open to all.*

RSVP to: Annely Hudanick,
annelyblue@hotmail.com

The All Voices Choir Practice

Meeting on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m.

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

McGregor Clinic Collection

Every 3rd Sunday of the Month at Service

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

Book Club

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

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



12 Steps to Compassion Workshop

Sundays at 9:15 a.m. (Starting 5/18 - 12 Weeks)

In this important and thought-provoking work, Karen Armstrong—one of the most original thinkers on the role of religion in the modern world—provides an impassioned and practical guide to helping us make the world a more compassionate place. Facilitated by Alberita Johnson albiestalk@gmail.com and Joyce Ramay

Mexican Train Dominoes

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






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

ACMA Songwriters Circle

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

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

MAY 2025 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 May Day!	2	3 11am Choir Practice 1pm Solos Lunch (Pg. 4)
4 9:15am CAT Workshop 10:30am Service & CYP 2-5pm ACMA Circle	5	6 1:30pm-Zoom Climate Action Team Mtg.	7	8	9 2pm Dominoes	10 11am Choir Practice 7pm ACMA Concert Bear & Robert
11 10:30am Service & CYP 12am Rainbow Connection Mother's Day! 2-5pm ACMA Circle	12	13 10am Racial Equity Meeting 11:30am Social Justice Comm. Mtg.	14	15 10 am Finance Mtg. 1pm Homeless Team Mtg. 7pm Tamiami Tale Tellers	16 1pm Rainbow Connection Movie <i>Will & Harper</i>	17 11am Choir Practice 12pm Sunday Service Team Mtg.
18 9:15am Sun. Workshop 10:30am Service & CYP McGregor Clinic Collection	19 12pm Book Club	20	21 1pm Board Mtg.	22	23 No Dominoes	24 11am Choir Practice
25 9:15am Sun. Workshop 10:30am Service & CYP Cookout & Potluck after Service	26  MEMORIAL DAY OFFICE CLOSED	27	28	29	30	31 11am Choir Practice

MAY 2025
SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES
THEME: THE PRACTICE OF JOY

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

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

May 4

Beltane: A Holiday Celebration

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

May 11

Celebrating Mothers

Reflections by Three Members
Worship Associate – Alberita Johnson
Music by Carlos Garcia

May 18

Celebrating Progress:

Brown vs. Board of Education
Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Nicole Racine
Music by Carlos Garcia
McGregor Clinic Collection

May 25

Celebrating Our Muses

Speaker – Alberita Johnson
Worship Associate – Joyce Ramay
Music by Carlos Garcia

Adult Education - 9:15am in the Sanctuary

May 4: Climate Action Team Workshops:
Save the Planet, Save Ourselves

May 18 & 25: *12 Steps to a Compassionate Life*

The Rainbow Connection

Meeting every 2nd Sunday at Noon

Contact Frank Stephens – fdinfla99@gmail.com

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

CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM NOTES

by Sharon Heinrich, CYP Director

This month “Imagination” is the faith practice that we will explore. We will use our imagination to have fun, to help and find hope, and to help us understand others.

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.

May 4: Use your imagination to have fun. Magic Rock, “The Bear Hunt”, Imaginary Friend Puppets, Skits

May 11: Use your imagination to help and find hope. “The Magic Paint Brush”, Guided meditation/movement story, Peace flag, Mother’s (Nurturer’s) Day card

May 18: No CYP

May 25: Use your imagination to understand others. Imagining being another, Emotions Freeze dance, Hot Potato - Why did they do that?, Make a Flag

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

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

Sharon, CYP Director

Happy May Day!



RAINBOW CONNECTION NEWS

by David Donovan and Carole Latino, Co-Chairs



Carole and I want to acknowledge what a great honor it was for All Faiths to host a section of the AIDS Memorial Quilt last month. We displayed a 12'x12' block of the Quilt, which is comprised of 8 individual panels.

Each panel represents the life of someone who died from HIV/AIDS. The entire quilt contains over 6,065 such blocks - or 50,000 panels. This was an emotionally significant event and was only made possible by the generous commitment of Wayne Reese and his connections with the National AIDS Memorial Quilt Organization. We also want to recognize the commitment and dedication of all the volunteers who helped with the installation of the Quilt at the front of the Church, as well as all those who volunteered their time to sit with Wayne and host outside visitors during the four weeks.

The Director of the LGBTQ ministry at the UUA has confirmed that the official Welcoming Congregation Renewal Certificate for 2024 will be in our hands by the end of April. At that time, we will plan on a formal presentation.

We are well on our way towards the 2025 renewal process of being a Welcoming Congregation. So far, we have completed two of the six required Days of Observance and have held one of the two Worship Services. The next event will be to honor International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, on May 18th. As part of the renewal process, The Rainbow Connection will be hosting an educational movie with a short Q&A session afterwards on May 16th. The movie is called "Will & Harper" about the comedian, Will Ferrell and his best friend's coming out to him as Trans. Mark your calendars.

The Rainbow Connection has paid for a spot at Naples Pride where we will host a booth. The event is scheduled for Saturday, June 7th. Last year's event was very successful, and we are excited to be returning again this year. More information will be available as we get closer to the event.

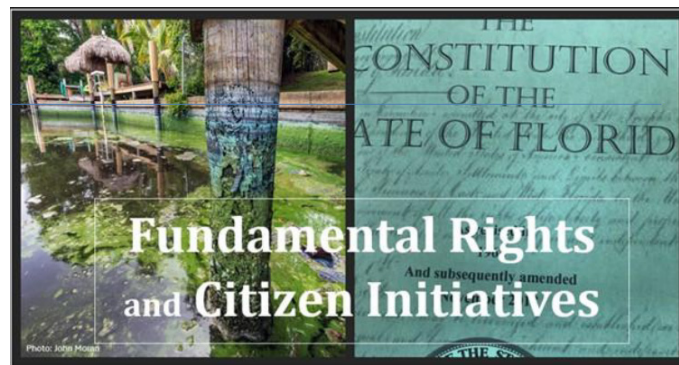
FOR THE HOMELESS TEAM

The Heart for the Homeless Team meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m. Please join Robert Bennett and Judy Alberda to see how you can participate and get involved. All are welcome!

Contact: Judy Alberda at judyalberda@yahoo.com
or Robert Bennett at rbnftm@aol.com

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Hosts Action-Oriented Discussion May 3rd



The League of Women Voters of Lee County (LWVLee), Florida Right to Clean Water, and the SWFL RESET Center invite members and the public for an action-oriented discussion of Fundamental Rights and Citizen Initiatives, May 3rd, 2025, 9-11am, in person at the Collaboratory, 2031 Jackson Street, Fort Myers and virtually via Zoom. (A Zoom link will be emailed to registrants.)

Because Florida's waters are badly polluted, FloridaRightToCleanWater.org has launched a citizen initiative to amend the Florida Constitution with a fundamental right to clean and healthy waters for all Floridians. Proposed new laws may cripple the citizen initiative process.

Fundamental Rights and Citizen Initiatives will focus on the proposed right to clean water amendment and the threat these new laws pose to citizen initiatives and Floridians' First Amendment Rights.

Register with this link: <https://FLRighttoCleanWater.eventbrite.com> Or Email: lwvlee@lwvlee.org Or call 239-278-1032.

Panelists:

Joseph Bonasia, Chair, Florida Rights of Nature Network and SWFL Regional Director, FloridaRightToCleanWater.org. Original organizing member of ProtectOurWetlandsinCapeCoral.org and for several years served as Citizen Climate Lobby's volunteer legislative liaison to Senator Rick Scott's office. He writes about constitutional environmental rights and climate change. See some of his articles at The Invading Sea.

Abdelilah Skhir, Policy Strategist, ACLU of Florida will address impacts of new Florida legislation on citizen initiatives and paths forward to address clean water and first amendment rights. Skhir's ACLU responsibilities include analyzing and developing state and local policies and supporting an impactful, non-partisan policy advocacy program. As the son of immigrants, he brings first-hand knowledge of the direct impacts our voting laws and policies have on immigrant families and communities.

RACIAL EQUITY TEAM NEWS

by Frank Geltner, Co-Chair

The Racial Equity Team continues its work with the Quality Life Center, its parents and students. Julian Ramirez, the Executive Director, and his assistant, Shannon Soffian, have attended several of our meetings over the past few months. The Racial Equity Team has been to the Quality Life Center a few times over the past few months. Recently team member Becky Ross met with Julian to discuss how we might realize our so-called “outcome” goal in collaboration with the QLC.

To add some cross fertilization of our efforts, I recently donated six copies of Layla F. Saad’s *me and white supremacy* for young readers with the invitation to students at the Quality Life Center to read the book and report back to the Racial Equity Team on how the book resonated with them.

Members of the congregation are always welcome to join us at our regular monthly meeting on the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is on May 13 at 10 a.m.

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHOPS

12 Steps to a Compassionate Life

Book by Karen Armstrong

Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. starting May 18th

Facilitators, Alberita Johnson & Joyce Ramay

In this important and thought-provoking work, Karen Armstrong—one of the most original thinkers on the role of religion in the modern world—provides an impassioned and practical guide to helping us make the world a more compassionate place. She shares concrete methods to help us cultivate and expand our capacity for compassion. She teaches us that becoming a compassionate human being is a lifelong project and a journey filled with rewards.

Introduction

Step 1: Learn About Compassion

Step 2: Look at Your Own World

Step 3: Compassion for Yourself

Step 4: Empathy

Step 5: Mindfulness

Step 6: Action

Step 7: How Little We Know

Step 8: How Should We Speak to One Another?

Step 9: Concern for Everybody

Step 10: Knowledge

Step 11: Recognition

Step 12: Love Your Enemies

IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE LINKS

Courtesy of UU Florida Justice

Each Florida legislative chamber has their own website: the Florida House of Representatives and The Florida Senate

Below is the Florida House Directory link.

<https://flhouse.gov/FileStores/Web/HouseContent/Approved/ClerksOffice/HouseDirectory.pdf>

The Directory has Important information such as House leadership, committee leadership, and contact info as well as information about your elected official.

Florida House website: You might go there to see the ever changing: Current House Calendar, Florida House Directory and to view what some of you elected officials post.

<https://flhouse.gov/default.aspx>

Florida House Districts maps

https://www.flhouse.gov/FileStores/Web/District/DistrictMaps/32x32_Statewide_State_House_Districts.pdf

Important to know who your neighbors are politically and who might be your allies.

Florida Senate which includes the Directory of Senators

<https://www.flsenate.gov/>

IT'S OKAY TO SPEAK ABOUT POLITICAL ISSUES

It is a misconception that pastors cannot address political issues—even “hot button” issues like religious liberty, abortion and same-sex marriage—from the pulpit. Any person or entity that attempts to silence a pastor for addressing these issues is violating that pastor’s constitutional rights under the First Amendment. Pastors have every right under the First Amendment to talk about any of those issues, and there’s never been any case in American history that said pastors can’t do that.

Historically in America and in many places around the world, government and religion have never been mutually exclusive concepts; rather, they coexist. America’s Founders saw religion as a necessary component to a healthy, moral society—not a taboo topic to bar completely from the political realm; neither was political talk to be barred from churches. Sermons on politics, government and controversial issues were common at our nation’s founding, and popular among pastors and churches on varying sides of the political spectrum.

Source: First Liberty Institute - the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious liberty for all Americans.

BUILDING & GROUNDS UPDATES

by Frank Geltner, Co-Chair

The Building and Grounds team, which of late, includes Brian Bigelow, Dan DeShon and myself, have been engaged in working the front garden by removing non-native species and adding native species. This includes Silver Buttonwood bushes, Silver Saw Palmetto, Pink Muhly Grass, Dune Sunflowers, and Necklace Pod Tree — in addition to other species.

We have recently decommissioned a sprinkler system originally designed to water the lawns and repurposed it to irrigate the four garden areas: one in front of the building, two flanking the entrance walkway, and the Memorial Garden. This work was done by All Green Way for the cost of \$1,300. The system includes a new controller and a rain sensor. We have also added a number of concrete donuts to protect sprinkler heads from getting damaged.

With regard to the gardens of which there are four. For convenience sake, consider #1 garden is in front of the building, #2 garden is on the left side of the entrance walkway, #3 garden is on the right side of the entrance walkway, and #4 garden is the Memorial Garden. Dan will be outlining a new plan for #2 garden to install native species. We are also floating an idea to poll the congregation about commissioning a mural for the side of the building adjacent to garden #2. In conjunction with that idea is the thought of moving the sculpture that CJ and Richard donated on the wall in this area that could fit nicely with our efforts to go more environmentally native and also represent our efforts as a church considering itself part of the tree of life. Stay tuned.

Soon we will embark on a project to shore up the rear side of the Memorial Garden to prevent any further erosion and settling.

We have recently received a donation of a Honda generator. While not powerful enough to restore electricity to the entire building, it has the potential to power some lighting and keep refrigerator operating. Some additional electrical work will be required if we want this automated; otherwise we would have to run extension cords from the generator.



CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall, Co-Chair



The Climate Action team's "Save the Planet...Save Ourselves" workshops will hold their final session on Sunday, May 4th. We encourage everyone to join us for this brief summation of the material covered in the workshops and a discussion of what All Faiths, as a congregation, can do to most effectively address this life-altering crisis.

Hopefully, the material covered in these workshops can provide a resource to be used by other UU's and local church groups or educational organizations. CAT plans to "package" the presentations and make them available to others in the community.

CAT would like to thank all of you who joined in the April 20th Earth Day demonstration on the street in front of our building. It was encouraging to hear the many passersby honking their horns or waving in support of our message to Save Planet Earth. Thanks also to those who helped make the various signs. We are putting them away to use again next year.

With a climate-crisis-denying administration now in power in Washington D.C., the urgency to take meaningful action has become more acute than ever. Working together with our partner organizations, your Climate Action Team will increasingly look for ways to raise public awareness of the urgent need to address the impact of the climate crisis on our lives and the lives of the billions of others with whom we share this precious planet.

Everyone is welcome to participate in our monthly meetings on ZOOM. Hope you can join us on Tuesday, May 6th at 1:30 p.m. Look for an email from Regina with the ZOOM connection.

ALL FAITHS' MILESTONE APPROACHING

In February of 2026 All Faiths will turn 25 years old! This is a wonderful milestone in an era of many church closings and ministerial shortages. We will plan something special to celebrate our success!

We need a small committee of people to help carry out the planning for this momentous occasion. If you are interested in helping, please sign up on the bulletin board. The planning will begin some time over the summer.

What a great way to participate in something special!

TREASURER'S REPORT

by John Conrad, Treasurer

Cash Assets – March 2025

First Horizon Checking	\$ 14,988
Raymond James Legacy	5,259
Live Oak Operating Reserve (CD)	23,184
First Horizon Capital Reserve	3,319
Live Oak Capital Reserve (S)	34,579
Live Oak Operating Reserve (S)	42,693
Live Oak Legacy (CD)	21,912

Total	\$145,933
Prior Month	158,225
Net Gain/Loss	(- \$ 12,292)

March 2025 Profit & Loss

Operating Income	\$ 10,766
Operating Expense	16,624
Net Gain/Loss	(- \$ 5,857)

Comments:

Revenue/Operating Income and Expenses:

As we entered the new 2024-25 fiscal year on April 1, All Faiths budgeted \$200,200 for pledge giving; to date, actual Celebrate pledges totaled \$185,160 (92.5%).

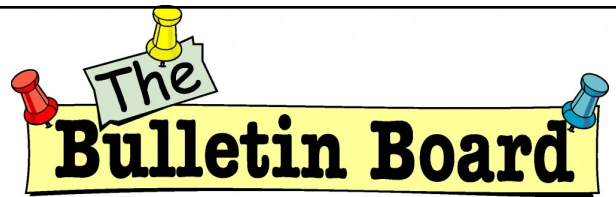
During the past year, we received \$170,023 in pledges towards our Celebrate Pledge Drive (91.8%). This “short-fall” was largely due to members death or moving away. And in the fiscal year that just ended, \$28,413 was received for the new year’s pledge drive (Not Alone).

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. March’s Interest Income was \$416.83.

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, several new accounts were created at Live Oak to generate increased interest income. The 1 Year CD rate is 5.0%. And the Savings rate is currently at 3.6%.

The March monthly transfer/deposit of \$1,530.00 to the Live Oak Capital Reserve account was made. The contracts were authorized to repair the fence on the west side of the property and to replace the sign; both were damaged during Hurricane Milton. The fence was replaced in March and the final payment will be made in April.

In March, \$525.00 was collected for Operation Joy.



Looking for something to do? Want to get involved with your congregation? Be sure to check out what's on the bulletin board on Sundays. Things to sign up for in May:

Meditation: If there is enough interest, All Faiths will offer free meditation. Sign up (before May 10) if you are interested and choose the best time of day on the bulletin board.

Friday Movie: *Will & Harper* - Friday, May 16 at 1pm. See page 11.

Founders' Day Planning Committee: Sign up to help with planning All Faiths' 25th anniversary! It's going to be a special event. We need a few people to help make it happen.

Program Support Pool: Sign up to help with programs and events that take place throughout the year. Program Support chairs will call on you from time to time to enlist your help.

FOR SALE: All Faiths is selling 11 of our green arm-chairs - the same chairs currently in our sanctuary and community room. They have been in our storage unit for years taking up valuable storage space. \$20/each or \$200 for 11. Comfortable and like new! Spread the word.

ACMA LIVE MUSIC SCHEDULE!

Saturday, May 10 - 7:00pm

Karyn Oliver in Concert
Bill Veach opening

Saturday, May 31 - 7:00pm

RB Stone in Concert
Bruce Gallant opening



The Listening Room at All Faiths
2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida
General public \$20/Member discount \$15
Donations at the Door

FROM THE UUA PRESIDENT: A TIME FOR FINDING PURPOSE

[Sofía Betancourt, UUA President, 3/28/2025]

In this time of rising authoritarianism, we must remember UUs are a sanctuary people, says UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Bentancourt.

Here we are celebrating 200 years of the American Unitarian Association at a time when Unitarian Universalism is badly needed in our nation and in the world. Happy anniversary, beloveds. May this milestone year be one that galvanizes us in all the ways we are called to live into this moment and organize around our shared values in community.

Unitarianism, Universalism, and other bastions of liberal faith have had a profound impact on the unfolding of America and American religious history. Some of that story centers on freedom, reason, access, inclusion, and furthering the common good. Some of it served to institutionalize the very barriers we work so hard to dismantle today.

There is no question that ideas born of liberal teachings have inspired and continue to inspire so many of us to believe not only that everyone has the right to basic freedoms and equal opportunity, but also that we ourselves have a responsibility to work to ensure those freedoms for all. The challenge is that, as inheritors of the beautiful and life-giving side of these teachings, we often forget that they weren't always written with the entire human family, much less the entire Earth family, in mind. And too often we are encouraged to believe that if we could just get everyone to embrace a liberal, justice-seeking mindset, the evils we see ever present in the world would be resolved.

I think we must remember that we are a sanctuary people—not only in collaborating around the work of justice, but also in providing nourishment and shelter for our own spirits so that we do not give up in the face of all that is.

I think that it is sometimes difficult to hold the multiple truths that something we hold dear, and which often has been life-giving for us, can also be painfully limited in scope, or used to harm others. We should be proud of the accomplishments and impact of liberal thought and the theology that grows from that thought. Yet too there is trouble born of comfort in thinking that we know best when it comes to restoring justice and building a world and an Earth community that allows all to fully thrive.

So how do we proceed as authoritarianism is on the rise both domestically and around the world, all while the president of the United States freely admits his intent to limit the well-being of so many beloveds? I think we must remember that we are a sanctuary people—not only in collaborating around the work of justice, but also in providing nourishment and shelter for our own spirits so that we do not give up in the face of all that is. This is when communal care is most important. Times like these are where faith communities find their purpose. This magazine issue, which highlights and celebrates the accomplishments of our past while also spotlighting the work of the present, invites us to celebrate and re-commit ourselves to living faithfully with love at the center. I am so proud to carry our liberal and liberating tradition forward with all of you.



When Will Ferrell's good friend of 30 years, Harper Steele, comes out as a trans woman, the pair embark on a road trip to process this new stage in their friendship and reintroduce Steele to the country she loves as her authentic self.

Hosted by the Rainbow Connection on Friday, May 16 at 1pm. Discussion to follow. **Sign up on the bulletin board.**

OPERATION JOY TO THE RESCUE!



Annely Hudanick & Linda Runkle purchase 40 pairs of shoes for St. Martin de Porres Mission, making 40 little pairs of feet very happy (and two pair very tired!). Thanks to all who donated to Operation Joy in March!



All Faiths Meditation - are you interested?

Opportunity knocks. If there is enough interest, All Faiths will offer mindfulness meditation classes, free of charge, as early as the end of April.

Please take a moment to let us know: *Are you interested? What days of the week work best for you (Monday - Saturday)? Do you prefer morning, midday or evening classes?* There will be a sheet on the bulletin board (**sign up before May**

11) or you can email the office at office@allfaithsuo.org with your preferences.

About the teacher: *Ranji Latchmansingh*, is a trained Hatha Yoga instructor since 2009 and has been practicing and teaching Hatha Yoga, mindfulness meditation and breath awareness practices for many years. His classes have included adults of all ages, teenagers, and children. In addition to teaching Yoga and meditation to the general public, he has also been facilitating learning and transformation programs as well as conducting mindfulness based training for over 18 years in corporate environments. He continues to teach mindfulness in various settings, attends silent meditation retreats and maintains a regular meditation practice.

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

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

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Animal Ministry

Sharon Gray

Rainbow Connection

David Donovan/Carole Latino

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



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