

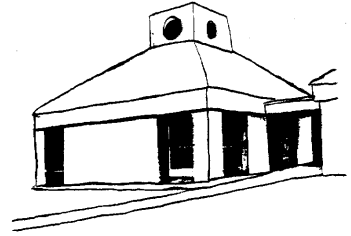
# The Flaming Chalice

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2342  
Valdosta, GA 31604

Minister: Rev. Fred Howard  
<http://uuvaldosta.org/>

229-242-3714 e-mail: [uuvaldosta@yahoo.com](mailto:uuvaldosta@yahoo.com)



### What's going on... **August 2011**

	TBA	6:00 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing ( <i>Watch for announcement</i> )
Sun	Aug. 7	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Women in Philosophy,” Dr. Keith Johnson Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	Aug. 8	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
F	Aug. 12	6:30 PM	Book Discussion and Potluck at the church
Sun	Aug. 14	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service – “Religious Narratives that Students Tell: Part Two,” Dr. Michael Stoltzfus Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	Aug. 15		<i>September Newsletter deadline – <b>Sorry no flexibility this month!!!</b></i>
Sun	Aug. 21	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "Reconnecting with Nature," Michael Edwards Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
Sun	Aug. 28	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - “Celebrating the Month of Ramadan,” Dr. Steve Childs Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	Aug. 29	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery

**August** ... Here's hoping you have had a glorious summer! For many folks, especially those in education-related jobs, the “summer” ends in early to mid-August while here in south Georgia we are still headed into some of our hottest weather. Get to the beach to cool off when you can but don't forget to drop in when you are in town. Keep our congregation in your thoughts wherever you are. We've had lots of visitors in recent weeks and hope for more as new faculty arrive for the Fall Semester at VSU. We have some fine Sunday service programming this month and a book discussion as well. Several of our other social activities should be back next month. Come when you can. We miss you when you are not here. Welcome newcomers!

#### INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

If you are interested in becoming a member of our fellowship, we encourage you to talk with our minister, Rev. Fred Howard or our President, Lars Leader or Membership Director, Kimberly Tanner. We welcome your questions, and we extend an open invitation to all who want to join our liberal community of faith.

## **Sunday Services**

### **Sunday, August 7 –Dr. Keith Johnson, “Women in Philosophy”**

Keith Johnson will continue his discussions of women in philosophy this morning. Hroswitha and Heloise, 100 years separating the death of the former and the birth of the latter, were both women of faith and philosophers during the waning years of the Middle Ages. Hroswitha, the first renowned poet and dramatist from Germany, and Heloise, the astounding pupil of Peter Abelard in Paris -- Keith thinks surpassing him in scholarship -- not only utilized human feelings and emotions to convey their ideas about earthly love toward the divine, but expressed the very human passion that only women can articulate well to others about their feelings. There may be a cloud of patriarchal context clouding the content in today's understanding of their writings, but their sensual recognition is eloquently voiced in their respective loves.

### **Sunday, August 14 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Religious Narratives that Students Tell: Part Two”**

Michael Stoltzfus will continue the discussion he began last month describing three typical mainstream religious narratives that students articulate over and over again. He will compare and contrast these stories and interpret what they tell us about the ongoing religious quest for young adults to discover meaning, purpose and community. Part Two will focus on three alternative, yet quite common, religious stories: The activist, the explorer, and the secular humanist narratives. Dr. Stoltzfus is a regular speaker at our services and is a member of the VSU faculty in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies.

### **Sunday, August 21 - Michael Edwards, “Reconnecting with Nature”**

Michael Edwards says this is a message fellow UU's love to hear. Over the years, we've become separated from the beauty and comfort of Nature, and maybe this short service will help some to reconnect. His talk reverberates references to Michael Cohen's book by the same name. He took an on-line course through Cohen's website a number of years ago, and "met up" with a number of other people who shared their individual connections after doing exercises in the book. He says he has never looked at Nature the same way since. He hopes this service will bring some sunbeams in through the clouds. He suggests that perhaps, afterwards, we can all take a Nature walk together. He would much rather do that than sit inside and talk about what we can do to "reconnect."

Mr. Michael Edwards is the newest member of our congregation and brings a wide range of experiences to our group. He says he is excited to be a member of the UU Church of Valdosta, as he is new to this area with its strong religious overtones. He has been a member previously of UU Fellowships in Orlando, FL, New Bern, NC, Greenville, NC, Wilmington, NC, and most recently W. Melbourne, FL. He says these congregations have always given him peace and comfort and a place to rest his hat. He hopes to be a part of the continuing movement to "enlighten" those who need an

alternative place to call home, and looks forward to meeting and getting to know members of our congregation.

### **Sunday, August 28 – Dr. Stephen Childs, “Celebrating the Month of Ramadan”**

We are pleased to welcome back Dr. Stephen Childs from the Valdosta Islamic Center for a discussion of Ramadan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar. Dr. Childs is a long time member of the Islamic Center and always shares insightful experiences as a member of the Islamic community in Valdosta. He plans for this visit a brief talk describing the practices associated with Ramadan, the importance of fasting as stated in the Qur'an and Hadith, and the benefits of fasting for the Muslim community.

## **Religious Education**

**For Children:** The RE program for children meets at 10:45 AM concurrent with the Sunday morning service. Two adults are needed each Sunday to help with RE. Please let Sue know if you can volunteer from time to time or sign up on the monthly Sunday Volunteer list. Contact: Susan Bailey

Fred Howard is our part time minister. You may contact Rev. Howard by email (preferable) at [fredhoward435@hotmail.com](mailto:fredhoward435@hotmail.com). He is available for consultations on Monday and Wednesday afternoons on most weeks from 2-5PM by appointment. Fred welcomes any questions you may have about membership in our congregation. He is also available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

### **Sangha Tuesdays**

**5:30-7:00 PM at the church**

This Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Group will be meeting weekly at the church for tea at 5:30 PM with meditation beginning at 6 PM followed by a brief reading. Those who follow other Buddhist practices are welcome. Contacts: Julie Halter or Theresa Thompson.

### **At the Church-in-the-Woods**

**New Hope Christian Community Church-** Sunday evenings: Choir practice at 4:30 PM. Service at 6:00 PM.  
<http://www.wix.com/nhccc1/nhccc>

**Taoist Tai Chi** – Monday and Thursday: Beginner's Class: 7-8 PM (**New class begins, Monday, August 22**); Continuing class, 5:30-7:00 PM (6-7:30PM until new class starts.). Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin.

**PFLAG Meeting** – 4th Tuesday each month, 7:00PM  
Contact: Doug Tanner The web page for PFLAG Valdosta:  
<http://pflag-valdosta.web.officelive.com/default.aspx>

## PRESIDENT'S PORTION

Lars Leader

The Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Charlotte, NC, this June, gave me the opportunity to understand and, even better, to experience what *Universalist* in the name of our denomination really means. Throughout the General Assembly, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of formation of the Unitarian Universalist Association was a common thread in workshops, special sessions, and worship events. Among the many activities, a few stood out to me as being particularly meaningful expressions of how important Universalism is in what our denomination means and does today.

Friday afternoon at GA, Sue Bailey and I attended a rally put on by the Standing on the Side of Love campaign. About 600 people marched from the convention center several blocks to a park to rally for rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. At the park, the marchers covered a hillside and the edges of the plaza, many wearing the yellow Standing on the Side of Love shirts or hats, to sing and hear speakers. The Rev. Mark Kiyimba, minister of the UU Church of Kampala, Uganda, told the crowd that when it comes to discrimination against LGBT people, "Enough is enough." In the spring of 2011, the Uganda Parliament had considered a bill that would have made homosexuality a crime that in some cases would be punishable by the death penalty. International pressure, including petitions signed by thousands of Americans, is credited with persuading the Parliament not to vote on the bill before the legislative session ended. Loan Tran, a Charlotte high school student and youth board member, spoke out against taunting and bullying. And local clergy members asked North Carolina residents to take postcards to send to their legislators to oppose anti-LGBT measures. A front page photo and article about the rally appeared in the next morning's Charlotte newspaper, a witness to our very Universalist principle on the inherent worth and dignity of every individual.

The Saturday evening Ware Lecture has always been a highlight of General Assembly for me. This year's speaker was Karen Armstrong, the writer of best-selling books on comparative religion. Her message was titled "The Challenge of Compassion." Ms. Armstrong provided a variety of meanings for the word *compassion*, including the Latin origin's sense of enduring something with another person. She explained that this means putting yourself imaginatively in other people's shoes and "not just seeing things from your own blinkered and often self-interested perspective." Then she told about her latest book, which presents a 12-step program to help the reader day by day understand the implications of compassion. The reference to Alcoholics Anonymous was quite deliberate, she noted, because we're addicted to our dislikes, prejudices, and pet hates. Karen Armstrong devised this program "to help us all try and wean ourselves step by step away from this addiction, by integrating habits of mind and action and thought into our daily practice." She ended her lecture by suggesting where these practices might lead us: "It's when we can go beyond the hatred, the enmity that knocks us into so much grief and pain and violence, it's then that we become god like. That is the end of the religious quest."

This year I was at GA into the last day. I attended the Sunday Morning Worship for the first time—and was glad

that I did. Kaaren Anderson gave the sermon. She seamlessly continued the theme Karen Armstrong had emphasized the night before—compassion and its power to connect us. Ms. Anderson brought this theme home to the attendees by focusing on the perceptions and practices of members of UU congregations. She described how, in recent years, a lot of UUs have moved past arguing about the importance of specific aspects of our varying beliefs. She explained it this way:

"We have really grown up and are clear that the question of belief is not which belief is right and which belief is wrong but does your belief lead you to the right experience—to the experience of practical compassion and practical connection. Or, as we at First Unitarian in Rochester have grown fond of provocatively telling our newcomers: 'Unitarian Universalism doesn't really care one wit whether you're an Atheist, a Theist, Agnostic, Buddhist, Pagan or Barnes and Noble-ite. Our question for you is whether your Atheism, Theism, Paganism, Buddhism or Barnes and Noble-ism, leads you to connection. Leads you to listen to your deepest self, to be open to life's gifts and serve needs greater than your own.' In other words, do your beliefs help you connect to self, life and others? If your beliefs serve this higher purpose of connection, they're in; if they don't, and we really mean this, they're out."

Kaaren Anderson wrapped up her sermon in a similarly challenging way: "In this world of disconnection, isn't the value of your congregation found ultimately in being the force that dedicates itself solely to fighting that disconnection? And being clear to the world, that's what we are here to help with? Promoting the experience of compassion and connection."

So, the days at General Assembly ended for me with this Sunday sermon that declared clearly the Universalist message—a message that flowed through much of GA this year, and a message that I think needs to be heard and acted on in UU congregations.

## Let's Have Some Fun!!

### BOOK DISCUSSION AND POTLUCK

Friday, August 12 - 6:30 PM

At the church

The book is "The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother" by Amy Chua. The author, who is Chinese, discusses parenting a Chinese American child. Readers have both agreed and disagreed with her parenting style. It should provide an interesting discussion of both cultural differences and parenting styles.

Bring a dish to share. Coffee and tea will be provided. You are welcome to bring other beverages. We socialize over our potluck meal for the first hour and then promptly begin our book discussion drawing to a close with the selection of our next book by about an hour later so that folks who want to head home early on a Friday night can do so. We have been selecting books which deal with difference in all its guises. We welcome your suggestions. Contact: Betty Derrick.

## Thank You! Thank You!

**For speaking at Sunday Services:** Betty Derrick  
**For layleading services:** Doug Tanner, Sue Bailey, Betty Derrick, Lars Leader  
**For help with Sunday Service music:** Bill Webster, Keith Johnson, Doug Tanner, Jenny Gallant  
**For Stories for All Ages:** Sue Bailey  
**For helping with Children's RE:** Sue Bailey, Lars Leader, Emmilee Bailey Rosie Asbury  
**For serving as Meet and Greet Hosts:** Doug Tanner, Lars Leader  
**For greeting visitors:** Betty Derrick, Valarie and Bill Webster, Lars Leader, Rosie Asbury  
**For delivering Break Bread meals:** Rosie and Frank Asbury  
**For cleaning the church:** Frank Asbury, Lars Leader  
**For keeping our grounds:** Jim Ingram  
**For making the peace poles for both our church and Serenity:** Jim Ingram  
**For coordinating the potluck dinner after the Shared Sunday Service in June:** Dee Tait  
**For preparing food and helping with the Shared Service potluck dinner:** Rosie Asbury, Valerie Webster, Kathy Howard, Jimmy and Danita Boyd and Shanderlin Watkins, Doug Tanner, Sue Bailey, Sherry Willis, Shawanda Davis, Dee Tait, Lars Leader, JMordon Czaja, Claire, Esther Reese, Don and Cassandra Nelson, Rev Floyd Rose, Percy Chastang  
**For printing and mailing the August newsletter:** Dee Tait  
**For coordinating transportation to services for Governors Honors students again this summer:** Lars Leader and others who may have helped.

### ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

#### Condolences to

- ❖ Our members and friends mourning the loss of loved ones.

#### We are all relieved that

- ❖ Chuck Giese, all of his fellow passengers, and the crew survived a fire in one of the engines on the plane they were flying earlier this summer. The pilot landed in a field and all escaped the burning plane safely. The plane was lost in the fire. They were on their way to an air show with the restored plane when the accident occurred.

Happy Birthday in August to anyone with a birthday!

#### Keep in your thoughts

- ❖ Our members and friends serving in Iraq and their families.
- ❖ Individuals recovering from health concerns

**Facebook:** Visit us on Facebook by searching "Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta." The latest issue of the <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/group.php?gid=92779034840> Contact person: Kimberly Tanner.

## Social Action Activities

### Break Bread Together

Our date for meal deliveries with the Break Bread Together program is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday (and 5<sup>th</sup> when there is one) of each

month. If you would like to help deliver meals beginning about 11:00 AM, please contact Frank or Rosie Asbury.

**UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting Minutes- July 2011:** Watch for information from the Board in the next newsletter. Information from the July meeting was unavailable for this newsletter. The usual date for the next meeting would be the first Wednesday of August, but watch for announcements.

### Treasurer's Report – Rosie Asbury June 30, 2011

Receipts	<u>June</u>	<u>July -present (12 mos.)</u>
Plate	\$ 153.00	\$ 1278.01
Pledge	1600.00	19957.00
Rent	240.00	2780.00
Miscellaneous	<u>00.00</u>	<u>1235.00</u>
Total Receipts	\$ 1993.00	\$25250.01
<b>Disbursements</b>		
Speakers' Fees	\$350.00	\$2550.00
Minister Expense	838.70	9736.52
Maint./Repairs	499.03	5433.45
Pest Control	35.00	635.00
Building Insurance	0.00	1232.00
Postage	0.00	273.49
Supplies	9.91	214.62
Utilities	221.07	3220.29
RE Program	0.00	178.67
Membership Program	0.00	81.00
Advertising/Website	313.50	347.51
UUA Dues	0.00	1485.00
UU Conference	641.00	1216.00
Donations	0.00	550.36
Others	<u>0.00</u>	<u>314.13</u>
Total Disbursements	\$ 2898.30	\$27503.04
Net Receipt	\$ -905.30	\$-2253.03



### Newsletter

Editor: Betty Derrick  
 Website: Carol Stiles  
 Local Publicity: Dee Tait  
 August 15: Deadline for September newsletter. Please note that there will be **no flexibility** this month on this due date.  
 Thanks for getting your information in early if possible.

## UU Activities and Announcements

*September 10 - Northeast Cluster Fall Gathering, Orlando, FL*



## UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund  
jlund@uaa.org

August 2011

It was good to see many of you in June at GA. Hope you experienced a rewarding, challenging, and fun time in Charlotte. There is a Trustee-written GA June, 2011 report sent to the District office earlier this week, my reflections of important happenings at GA; and of course much information may be found at UUA.org, linking to GA 2011. I made a pledge to myself, and now to you that I plan to devote Trustee Tidbits columns from now until next March or April to our Justice GA 2012 to be held in Phoenix next year. I think it will be one of our most important gatherings in our over fifty year history. Please make plans to attend.

What I know about GA 2012: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, minister of the UU congregation of Phoenix, has accepted a key leadership role in the Arizona immigration effort. Rev. Harlan Limpert, Vice-President for Ministries and Congregational Support, and Susan, with input from Rev. Ken Brown and others, are in the process of finalizing specific roles, responsibilities of those involved. Rev. Frederick-Gray is widely respected as a minister, and outstanding spokesperson on justice issues and partner with Arizona congregations and other Arizona immigration groups and their leaders, with whom the UUA is already working, and will continue to do so in the coming months.

Many relationships have been formed, maintained, and expanded in recent years between UUA Staff, lay and professional leaders in Arizona congregations, and individuals and organizations in Arizona committed to immigration reform and human rights issues. These relationships are critically important to any work that occurs during the coming year, during GA2012, and in the months and years following Justice GA. Our UUA has committed \$150,000 towards an Arizona immigration for fiscal year 7/1/11 to 6/30/12. There was a collection at the GA in Charlotte specifically for this fund and the GA Planning Committee has contributed to it. There is commitment to ensuring that the 2012 Justice GA impacts the justice work of our UUA for many years to come.

We know numerous other states are contemplating, or have passed, laws as oppressive as those passed in Arizona that have impacted the work and ministry we do together. Training and education throughout the year will be provided; hopefully this will have a big impact on justice work in congregations. The best place to find information valuable to your congregation will be at our UUA website. Bottom line: The very fact that GA will take place in Phoenix in 2012 is positive. It creates opportunity for making a difference in ways seldom seen.

### Notes & Comment by Our Florida District Executive:

The 50th General Assembly of our Association was grand, simply grand! Over 4,100 Unitarian Universalists (nearly 150 from 22 FLD congregations) met in Charlotte to worship, learn, reflect & decide. And perhaps most importantly to challenge ourselves to ask: How do we ensure our future as a

vital religious alternative (to orthodoxy and consumerist-secularism)?

You can get a sense of how it went by checking out: <http://blogs.uuworld.org/ga/>, for a full report, including videos, on the many events and actions.

#### Among Delegate Decisions:

- After 3 years study, approved A Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating.
- Approved implementation of off-site delegate voting effective in 2012.
- Agreed to reduce the size of the UUA Board to 14 and making all Trustees "at large."
- Amended UUA By-Laws to replace the terms "church" and "fellowship" with the more inclusive "congregations."
- Affirmed the decision of the former Thomas Jefferson District to name itself Southeast.

For me, the most important part of GA was renewed commitment to "Justice GA" next June in Phoenix. Last year, GA delegates opted not to boycott Arizona and instead to restructure GA to encourage Unitarian Universalist witness for the civil and human rights of migrants there. This decision is not without some controversy. However, as Gini Courter, UUA Moderator noted: "Unitarian Universalist congregations are going to Phoenix for a Justice GA in 2012. On our borders human[s] are being treated inhumanely. People are dying. Children are dying. Families are being torn apart. We go to Phoenix because we believe that [we] may be able to help end this tragedy."

I am excited that next year's GA will unite our faith, our theological reflection, our hearts and our actions. It will challenge us in ways more than organizational. Allying oneself with the oppressed stretches one's comfort zone, far more than the heat of Arizona in June. This is good work, good ministry for us to do. I hope you will plan now to be there.

I begin by asking all Florida Unitarian Universalists to commit to standing on the side of love and making GA 2012 among our best attended! I propose some challenges to you:

- Can we get 5% of our FLD membership to attend? That would be about 250 people, twice our typical turnout?
- Can we ensure 50% (23) of our congregations will send full delegations?
- Can we get 50 youth to attend? The FLD will offer matching scholarships for all congregations that pay their youths' registration.
- Can we get all of our congregations to participate in a "Justice Sunday" this winter (January 15), with worship, public forums, or educational programs on immigration and migrant rights?
- Can we get 5 more congregations to participate in the Building the World We Dream About curriculum – which addresses issues of racial justice and living in a multi-cultural world?
- Can our Clusters to devote one of their meetings to migrant justice in Florida?
- Can our congregations create intentional partnerships with other organizations devoted to the migrant rights?

Can we? I bet we can. Will we? I long to hear from you. What do you think?

Your FLD Board has approved "Crossing Borders" as the theme for our next District Assembly (Jacksonville, March 23-25, 2012). The DA will offer participants educational and experiential learning to prepare those going to Phoenix and to empower our congregations' ministries here in Florida.

GA's closing worship was heart-lifting. The Chalice Lighting that day was presented in song, with this text:

"Que recibamos esta luz y los ricos paisajes que hoy nos brinda. (That we receive this light and the rich landscapes that today offer us.)"

May it be so. Blessings, Rev. Kenn