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**Saturday, November 28, 2020**      **UUFBC E-News**      **Edition 14, July 2020-June 2021**

Greetings and Well Wishes to all of our members,

It is likely difficult for many of us to feel thankful this Thanksgiving, and yet we do have so much for which to be thankful. We have our Fellowship, whose structures survived Hurricane Michael, and whose membership will survive this pandemic. As we work hard to maintain our perspective, we can remember our many Thanksgivings from years past celebrated happily together and know that sometime soon we will be dining together again. As has been announced this past week, Covid-19 vaccines are about to become available to us all. We must be thankful for how quickly the research and vaccine development and production has occurred. We can be thankful for our own members who do wonderful things, some of which we are aware of and some we are not. We have special people in our midst who delivered Thanksgiving meals so others could have special meals too. Once you begin to list the things for which we are thankful, you know that we have a cornucopia of blessings and many reasons to look with hope, faith and love toward our future.

With much thankfulness for all,

The Board of Directors, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County

*Bob Gilmore*

*John Shaffer*

*Lynne Siegfried*

*Bob Nixon*

*Janet Cross*

*Matt Raver*

We have been fortunate to use this space in previous issues to get to know Fellowship members with the biographical summaries we have published. We will do more biographies in the E-News, but interspersed with those, we will include members' topical submissions. If you want to write an article about something of interest, perhaps connected to a Sunday service message or a social justice issue, we welcome you to do so. Please send your thoughts to [info@uuofbaycounty.com](mailto:info@uuofbaycounty.com).

The article on the next page describes the sobering reality of the indigenous, or Native American people as we reflect on Thanksgiving and what it means. Let this begin a process of contemplation and analysis that will continue comprehensively in this Sunday's service.



## Social Justice: Thoughts on Indigenous Issues

We are all familiar with issues surrounding Black Lives Matter. But it is appropriate during this Thanksgiving season to give some time for reflective thought to similar issues suffered by Indigenous peoples in our great country. We all know that American Indians were living and thriving in America long before we of European descent came and began to colonize America. In the process, Treaties were made and broken. Lands were taken and tribes forced to relocate to some of the most inhospitable lands available. Those Indigenous peoples that welcomed the pilgrims, sharing their bounty ostensibly during a “Thanksgiving” feast, within generations were wither wiped out or forced onto reservations far from their native lands. Where African Americans were taken from their native African surroundings and brought here to be slaves, American Indians were here first and had rightful ownership. But they were treated in a similar fashion because they were different: different skin color, different sociological structures, different religions. They paid for their differences with their lives and their human capital, chased from their homes.

There is much written about what to do to make up for our white, European sins against native people. For myself, I can’t imagine things could ever be equal. And perhaps I can’t do much myself in the bigger picture. But what I can do is to increase my awareness, which in turn may increase the awareness of others around me. I can become more mindful of the ingrained, natural white supremacy bias with which I was born and raised. Hilary Giovale, community organizer and author, has written some thoughts that I can get my arms around. She reminds us that “Within white settler culture, our identities as settlers tend to be invisible to ourselves. We are entangled with systemic white supremacy and national mythologies designed to keep us comfortable and complicit. Many of us have developed multi-generational bubbles of denial and amnesia about the genocide, broken treaties and stolen land that enabled us to stay. Our opportunity is to willingly pop those bubbles.” She states that “My world view started changing dramatically the first time I said out loud ‘I am a ninth generation American settler. All my life, and since 1739, our family has been living on stolen Indigenous land’.”

European-descended settler families and communities need to begin our own healing work together. A first step she says is to FEEL the discomfort of the true history and being open to learning: how has this history benefitted us while inflicting unbearable trauma on Indigenous peoples. In this way we open the doors to bridging the divide (the “Colonial Gap”) between us and the Indigenous peoples. Starting now, we can learn which First Nations previously and currently inhabit the land on which they live and gather. We can hear and tell their stories. We can seek opportunities to visit Indigenous, organized events and spaces, and allow ourselves to be impacted by what we observe. “When we build bridges from the ashes of the Colonial Gap, the ensuing relationships are things for which we can be *really* grateful at Thanksgiving and beyond.”

by John Shaffer, M.Div.  
November 28, 2020



**Sunday Worship Services:** *All virtual Worship Services begin at 10:30 AM.*

**November 2020 Monthly Theme, "Healing"**

*The practice of turning our pain into connection.  
The practice of letting go of the life you wished for.  
The practice of forgiving yourself for being imperfect.  
The practice of moving beyond apology to repair.*

**November 29<sup>th</sup> Bob Nixon "First Thanksgiving Fairytale"**

The Thanksgiving story you were taught and the one I was taught are most likely the same. It's the story deeply rooted in America's culture—the one that inspires arguably the most enriching and tradition-filled holiday in today's American culture. Unfortunately, the story is not historically correct due primarily to the absence of input from the Indigenous Peoples who were involved. How can the long-term resulting wounds begin to be healed? "The antidote to feel-good history is not feel-bad history, but honest and inclusive history" James W. Loewen, *Plagues & Pilgrims: The Truth about the First Thanksgiving*.

*The Fellowship's "Coffee Talk" will take place immediately following the service. To join the Zoom Talk, click the link, [Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting](#)*

**December 2020 Monthly Theme, "Stillness"**

*The practice of turning off voices that aren't ours.  
The practice of making space for deeper truth to speak.  
The practice of finding peace.  
The practice of living in the breath of the Divine.*

**December 6<sup>th</sup> Reverend Tiffany Sapp "Waiting for the Mud to Settle"**

In a culture that demands our productivity, stillness can be revolutionary. Reverend Tiffany Sapp explores the whys and hows of stillness with the help of the Tao Te Ching and Essayist Pico Iyer's "The Art of Stillness".

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**December 13<sup>th</sup> Michael Lister "Be Still and Know"**

New York Times bestselling and award-winning novelist Michael Lister is a native Floridian and holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in theology with an emphasis on story, myth, and narrative. For nearly a decade, he served as staff and then senior chaplain at three different correctional facilities in the Panhandle.

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## Joys and Concerns:

Bob McNeal wants everyone to know that he is doing better. He appreciates all of our well wishes and hopes people will stay in touch with him. Let's continue to send him our warm wishes and season's greetings. You can contact Bob by email at [remram69@gmail.com](mailto:remram69@gmail.com).

*Be well. Keep safe. Wear your mask when you're not at home.*



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