

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Fellowship of Bay County



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A Welcoming Congregation

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Saturday, February 6, 2021 **UUFBC E-News** Edition 19, July 2020-June 2021

Greetings and good wishes to all of our members,

The UUFBC Board of Directors has issued a statement which will appear soon in condensed form in the News-Herald. The original version was written by Chris May and is reprinted here in its entirety.

Please wear your mask, stay safe and be well.

The Board of Directors, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County

Bob Gilmore

John Shaffer

Lynne Siegfried

Bob Nixon

Janet Cross

Matt Raver

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution is a carefully worded document. These many years later, "We, the People" are still trying to form that more perfect union. At the recent inauguration Representative Roy Blount, (R) Missouri, referencing the Preamble to the Constitution emphasized the words "to form a more perfect union." He said of democracy that it is both fragile, and resilient.

He added that always working to be better is the hallmark of a great democracy.

In her poem written for the Inauguration, *The Hill We Climb*, Amanda Gorman spoke of "a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished." Because "being an American is more than a pride we inherit. It's the past we also step into and how we repair it."

In his inaugural address, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr began "This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope. Of renewal and resolve." "Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The will of the people has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded. We have learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile."

President Biden also pointed out "the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us, on "We the People" who seek a more perfect Union. Unity is Biden's catchphrase, a good one and a challenging one. This requires work for all of us.

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven Principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. One of these is "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large".

(Statement continued)

We live in a representative democracy built upon these five concepts:

- Fundamental worth of every person. Everyone is worthy of being part of our democracy.
- Equality of all persons. Everyone has equal opportunity and legal rights regardless of gender, religion, or race.
- Majority rules support minority rights.
- Necessity of compromise.
- Individual Freedom.

It seems that along the way we have neglected the necessity of compromise and downplayed the fundamental worth of every person. The relationship between majority rule and individual freedom has always been a complicated one in our country.

Another of the Unitarian Universalist principles is 'The inherent worth and dignity of every person'. President Biden phrased the work of upholding inherent worth this way: "Let us listen to one another. Hear one another. See one another. Show respect to one another." "Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we are all created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear and demonization have long torn us apart. The battle is perennial."

As we make our way through the next few months together, it is important to remember to continue to incorporate accountability. We must address the extremism evidenced by the attack on the Capital Building. That attack exceeded the boundaries of our democratic principles. As the Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger pointed out in a sermon recently: "No lessons are learned when unity and absence of conflict is prized over accountability." Perhaps it is time to do as the Rev. Jake Morrill suggests: "in a polarized time whose anxiety demands simplistic answers, let's slow down our thinking and uphold a complex view with thoughtful, moral commitments."

Here, in Bay County, Florida, as we continue to rebuild our community from the Cat 5 devastation of Hurricane Michael, and persevere through the current pandemic, let us work to be better by seeing one another, speaking with one another, listening and understanding one another, and showing respect to one another.

In hope,

Board of Directors
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County

Announcements:

Contact the Fellowship at info@uuofbaycounty.com or call us at 850-615-4127 for more information about our services or with any question you may have. Please let us know if you have a joy or a concern that the Service Leader may share during our worship service. Also let us know if you have something you would like to submit for the E-News.

Joys and Concerns:

Please keep Fred and Georgia Beauchemin in your thoughts as Fred continues to deal with serious health issues.



Sunday Worship Services: Our virtual Worship Service begins at 10:30 AM. We invite you to join us on Zoom by clicking the link below. Please join in by 10:25 AM, so you don't miss the beginning. We will also stream the service LIVE on Facebook and have it posted to our YouTube channel shortly after the service is over. In whatever way you choose to join us, thank you for being with us!

Click on this link: <https://bit.ly/3hWkhEI> **Remember, please join a little early.** "Coffee Talk" will take place immediately following the service on Zoom, so stay connected to enjoy another half hour of fellowship. If you're watching on Facebook, you're welcome to join us for Coffee Talk by clicking the link above after the service has ended.

February 2021 Monthly Theme, "Beloved Community"

The practice of bending the arc of the universe toward justice.

The practice of recognizing inherent worth.

The practice of dismantling the structures that divide us.

The practice of transforming opponents into friends.

February 7th Reverend Tiffany Sapp "Beloved Differences"

The theory of multiple intelligences launches us into an exploration of the different gifts we bring to our Beloved Community. Figuring out the ways we've been called to work together within our diversity, and holding what unites us as a community within our differences, will strengthen our justice work and the bonds of our community. With a little help from Dungeons and Dragons and the latest Trolls movie.

February 14th Paul McAuliffe "Cupid's Arrows and Love Handles"

The Bay Storytellers' Valentine's Day program will be presented by tellers Pat Nease, Megghan McDougall, and Paul McAuliffe. Members of Bay Storytellers have been sharing stories in and around Bay County, Florida for nearly twenty years, telling at senior centers, schools, festivals, civic organizations, and seasonal events.

February 21st Candis Harbison "Nature's RX: Experience the Healing Qualities of Nature"

The pandemic has forced us to take stock of our lives, and many people are turning to Nature to regain a sense of belonging and wonder.

February 28th Bob Gilmore Poetry Sunday

We are celebrating the power of poetry to inspire, reflect, make us cry, laugh and feel deeply. Members of our Fellowship will read selections they find meaningful and would like to share with the rest of us.



Social Justice: Mass Shooting in Parkland Florida

On the third anniversary of the shooting, the need for gun control and gun law reform remains nationwide.

On February 14, 2018, a young gunman opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 people and injuring 17 others.



UUFBC members and friends hosted a memorial service at Oaks by the Bay park on the first anniversary of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting, February 14, 2019.



On the second anniversary of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, February 14, 2020, the UUFBC Social Justice Team hosted a memorial service at the site where the Fellowship's Peace Garden will be.

On the third anniversary of the shooting, February 14, 2021, let us remember those listed below who lost their lives, as well as those who were injured, and the family members, friends and community forever changed by this tragic event.

Alyssa Alhadeff, age 14
Luke Hoyer, age 15
Nicholas Dworet, age 17
Carmen Schentrump, age 16
Meadow Pollack, age 18
Jamie Guttenberg,* age 14

Joaquin Oliver, age 17
Alaina Petty, age 14
Helena Ramsay, age 17
Peter Wang, age 15
Alex Schachter, age 14
Chris Hixon, age 49

Gina Montalto, age 14
Martin Duque, age 14
Cara Loughran, age 14
Scott Beigel, age 35
Aaron Feis, age 37

*Jamie Guttenberg's father, Fred, has recently published his first book, Find the Helpers, about learning to live through grief. It includes a collection of autobiographical anecdotes.



The following letter was prepared by Lynne Siegfried on behalf of the Board of Directors who sent it to our state legislators. If you wish, you may use it as a template for a letter of your own. Websites where you may obtain more information are listed in the last paragraph of this letter.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County
1410 Airport Rd, Panama City, FL 32402

January 20, 2021

The Honorable Jay Trumbull
Florida House of Representatives

RE: Repair Legal Holidays of Confederates and Colonizers

Dear Representative Trumbull:

As a constituent of Florida, and a representative of the Board of the Unitarian Universalists of Bay County, I ask that you lend your affirmation to this new Bill that will be sponsored by Senator Bobby Powell and Representative Geraldine Thompson in the 2021 legislative session. Our organization supports this legislation because we believe it helps remove stigmata created by symbols of celebration of Confederate principles and racial inequalities, replacing old holidays extolling exploitive colonizers and Confederates with new holidays of great importance to the citizens, students, businesses and visitors to our state.

The Bill would provide for renaming five official legal holidays in FS 683.01 S1, and refocus these holidays with accurate historical events and persons exemplifying the unity of ideals represented in our democracy. There are no date changes, therefore there is no expected financial cost to Floridians. The five holidays and the recommended changes are:

Birthday of Robert E. Lee to ***John Lewis Voting Rights Day***, January 19.

Pascua Florida Day to ***Pascua Florida*** and ***Indigenous Peoples of Florida Day***, April 2.

Confederate Memorial Day to ***Slave Ancestors' Day***, April 26.

Birthday of Jefferson Davis to ***Juneteenth Month Jubilee***, June 3.

Columbus Day and Farmers' Day to ***Indigenous Peoples' Day*** and ***Small Farms' Day***, second Monday in October.

We will very much appreciate seeing your name in sponsorship of the 'Repair Legal Holidays' Draft Bill proposed by The Green Party of Florida. We would enjoy discussing this with you. You may contact Lynne Siegfried at 850-866-8413. For more information, see Bills4Florida.org or Endorse@Bills4Florida.org.

Thank you for considering sponsorship of the 'Repair Legal Holidays' Draft Bill proposed by The Green Party of Florida.

Board of Directors
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County



If you wish to contact your state legislators about the "Holidays" Bill or anything else, their information is listed here.

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