

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Fellowship of Bay County



A Welcoming Congregation  
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Saturday, November 20, 2021

**UUFBC E-News** Edition 11, July 2021-June 2022



## *Reverend Ruth's Reflections*

Hello Bay County UUs!

Naturalist Poet Mary Oliver writes about the Alligator as a fixture in the Florida landscape: "In beautiful Florida, he is king of his own part of the black river, " and she celebrates the strength, speed, beauty and ferocity of this animal.

I recently saw a video about Wally the registered Emotional Support Gator. He's about 5 feet long and weighs 60lbs or so. His owner raised him to enjoy being petted and cuddled and he takes Wally to restaurants and shopping malls on a leash. He teaches folk about alligators and he allows them to hold Wally over one shoulder for a "Gator hug" while his tail drags the ground at their feet.

Not sure what Mary Oliver would have made of Wally who will never swim in a river or catch fish. I am all for emotional support, and maybe this was the best option for Wally. Still, there is a thin line between wild and tame.

What's going on these days with your wild side? Been to the river lately?

Happy Wild Thanksgiving, my Friends!

In wisdom and grace,  
Rev. Ruth



***Thanksgiving Dinner*** will be held at 3 PM on Thanksgiving Day, November 25<sup>th</sup>. The UU Fellowship will be providing the turkey, and would like members to bring a dish to share (potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, bread, salad or dessert). Sign up tomorrow at church for what you would like to bring, or get in touch with Bob and Arlene. Also help with setting up and cleaning up would be greatly appreciated. While we will be sharing dishes, we will still maintain social distance and wear masks indoors. Dinner will be held outdoors, weather permitting. There is always room at our table, so come join us. We are looking forward with gratitude to this opportunity to celebrate and share a meal together.

## **Worship Services at our Fellowship:**

***The UUA Soul Matters theme for November is “HOLDING HISTORY”.*** The 2021-22 themes focus on our relationship with our times, and on the central work and spiritual practices needed during this period of radical change, challenge, crisis and opportunity.

***November 21st***                      ***Alicia Simmons Miracle***    ***“The Spirit of Laughter”***  
Alicia Simmons, actress and comedian, will be giving a presentation focused on her journey through the pain of losing her family at the age of twelve, to becoming the person and comedian she is today.

***November 28th***                      ***Reverend Ruth Vann Lillian (prerecorded)***    ***“A Hole or a Skylight”***  
Life is full of problems from small inconveniences to major disasters and losses. How can we maintain our optimism and hold onto hope without trivializing suffering? Do we patch the hole in the roof or turn it into a skylight?

***December’s Soul Matters theme is “OPENING TO JOY”.***

***December 5<sup>th</sup>***                                      ***Reverend Ruth Vann Lillian (prerecorded)***    ***“Family of Choice”***  
“Family” is complicated. We have no control over the family we are born into, for good or ill. We’re stuck with them. Somewhere in our maturation process we begin to gather friends & companions around us who may be closer than biological kin. As we look at this phenomenon, let us consider how our UU Fellowship may also constitute for many of us a “Family of Choice.”

We will meet in-person (masked and distanced) in Fellowship Hall at 10:30 AM each Sunday. The Board wants to do everything possible to ensure the good health of those attending in-person. Please do not attend in person if you are not feeling well or have any symptoms of COVID. Children will have a program provided for them in a separate room.

**Please note:** While we are now offering worship services in person, we will continue to offer each service on Zoom. Join us every Sunday by 10:25 AM, using the Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/3hWkhEI> for all UUFBC virtual services.



## **Social Justice: Holiday Giving - Celebrate the Season by Helping Others**

**Holiday Food Drive:** UUFBC is sponsoring a Holiday Food Drive from November 21st through December 12<sup>th</sup>. Please bring non-perishable food items to the church. We will deliver them to the food pantry at Grace Presbyterian Church during the week of December 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Meals for the Homeless:** Please consider making a donation to the Family Services Agency in support of their program providing homeless care packages. Donations can be made in our Fellowship's offering plate (please identify your check for Family Services) or send your check directly to the Family Services Agency, 114 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Panama City FL 32401.

## **Fun and Games: Maggie's Farm**

We are planning a UU social gathering at Maggie's Farm on Sunday afternoon, December 12<sup>th</sup>. Maggie's Farm is located at 15312 Blue Springs Road. The afternoon event at Maggie's Farm usually starts at 2 PM with local artists sharing their music for an hour. At 3 PM the visiting artists featured that weekend will begin. The event usually ends around 5 PM. There are numerous chairs for everyone's use under a solid structure in front of the stage. If people want to bring some snacks or drinks to enjoy during the show, they are welcome to do so. Also remember to dress appropriately for the weather. It could be chilly!

## **Joys and Concerns:**

**Meal Schedule for the Sizemores:** The best way we can continue to help Ken and Susie Sizemore is by supplying meals for them a couple times a week. Please sign up for one or more meals if you're able. Anything you would like to provide will be much appreciated. To be reimbursed by the Fellowship's Pastoral Care Fund for the cost of the meal, contact Bob Nixon. Ken and Susie like all types of food and have no special dietary restrictions. The link to the Sizemore meal schedule is <https://www.TakeThemAMeal.com/AYMM8735>

**Sympathy for the Sirmons Family:** Judge Don T. Sirmons, a long-time friend of our Fellowship and always welcome speaker in our pulpit died this past Tuesday. There will be a memorial service at 10 AM on December 4<sup>th</sup> at Wilson Funeral Home. We extend our sympathy to Don's wife Marty and their two daughters.

## **Need Information?**

Contact the Fellowship at [info@uufbaycounty.com](mailto:info@uufbaycounty.com) or call us at 850-615-4127 for more information about our services or events, or with any question you may have. Reverend Ruth invites you to contact her at 205-218-1666 whenever you need a pastoral ear.

Please let us know if you have a joy or a concern that the Service Leader may share during our Sunday worship service. Also let us know if you have an article, a poem, or a picture that you would like to submit for publication in this newsletter.

*Stay Safe and Be Well*

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