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## Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County!

Welcoming Everyone • Growing in Mind & Spirit • Empowering People • Leading in Social Justice

We are an open-minded, open-hearted spiritual community

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*The UUFBC is meeting in person for our Sunday Services at this time*

Sunday Fellowship Services at 10:30 in person and on zoom. \*Address: 1410 Airport Rd, Panama City, FL

Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/3hWkhEI> Please start the connection process a little early.

### Reverend Ruth's Reflections

Sometimes I miss living "slow."

During my childhood, I went with my mother and little brother to visit my widowed grandfather who lived alone in rural Sumter County, Alabama. Mama and two of her sisters divided up the weekends to check on him.

I always complained that there was nothing to do. Grandpa's T.V. only picked up one very snowy channel, and it took real concentration to follow the Saturday morning cartoons as I lay across the homemade crocheted bedspread on my stomach, chin sitting on my fists. Sometimes he would walk in and drop a couple of sweet potatoes in the ashes of his bedroom fireplace, using the poker to cover them up with the hot coals. Later, I'd see him in the kitchen cutting open the charred skins and slathering butter onto the sweet orange flesh of his lunch.

My brother and I often played on the long screened-in porch where there was a bench swing hanging from a timber under the high ceiling. I'd lift Mike up and then push the heavy swing as far back as I could before jumping on myself and lying down across his legs while I closed my eyes and let the swing rock me like a baby. Sometimes at night in bed, I could still feel the swinging sensation as I drifted off to sleep.

It was the country with all the outdoor delights and fascinations the flora and fauna could offer a curious little girl with a small brother tagging along. It was so quiet, and dark at night. My energetic youth bristled against the slowness of those weekends, but after Grandpa died in 1979, I began to miss those days.

The turning of the year has been busy and fast-paced for me, and probably for a lot of you. May you find some slowness filled with wonder, may the cosmos rock you gently to sleep as often as you need, and may you feast on roasted sweet potato dripping with butter whenever you can.

In wisdom & grace,  
Rev. Ruth

### **Upcoming Worship Services**

**Jan 15:** What might MLK Say Today? In celebration of the great Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, we welcome Shelly Clark, JD as our guest speaker

Shelley E. Clark, JD, Short Bio – 2022

I relocated to Florida from Columbus, Ohio in 2008 with over 25 years of professional experience in state and local executive and judicial administration. After earning a law degree in 2000, I discovered my preference for working upstream in the justice system. I am proudest of my work with youth, including the creation of a youth leadership retreat, peer mediation training and foster parenting teenage girls.

For the last 20 years, I have served in various capacities in education, including consulting; classroom instruction, in public and private secondary schools; and 8 years at Gulf Coast State College teaching Political Science. I currently serve on the Board of the Friends of the Bay County Public Library; and as President of the League of Women Voters of Bay County.

**Jan 22:** Reverend Ruth in person, followed by Potluck lunch!

**Jan 29:** Finding Your Center by Serena Dee Latiolais

### **Announcements**

#### ***Invitations!***

#1)

In 2023, 30 Days of Love will offer spiritual nourishment for the long haul, with weekly messages and resources shared from January 16 – February 14. Each week will focus on a different theme and resources will be published online each Monday:

- Week 1: interdependence theme with a focus on democracy and electoral justice
- Week 2: embodiment theme with a focus on LGBTQIA+, gender and reproductive justice
- Week 3: resilience theme with a focus on climate justice
- Week 4: healing theme with a focus on decriminalization
- February 13-14 are bonus days with a theme of blessings and a focus on liberatory intersections

Once they become available online, we hope you'll use the resources in whatever ways are meaningful and useful for you and your congregation or community. Some individuals may watch a video blessing during their lunch hour; religious educators might use the Time for All Ages in worship, or teachers might start their classes with the body practice; families might incorporate a written reflection and discussion into their mealtime; congregational Board members and committee chairs might use a grounding practice to kick off that week's meeting agenda.

However you choose to use them, we offer these resources as a spiritual balm to help nourish us and prepare us to continue the long-haul work for justice that lies ahead. Get more details and weekly updates online through Side With Love.

[Join 30 Days of Love](#)

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**P.S.** Have you seen [this story about Unitarian Universalist Becky Harper](#) living out her values and siding with love in support of democracy and voting rights in North Carolina? She is lead plaintiff in a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, *Moore v. Harper*, that will impact how states can influence voting in federal elections.

#2) Your members and friends are cordially invited to join us virtually for [Seminary for a Day on Saturday, January 28, at First Unitarian Portland](#). **This year's spiritual theme is Transcendentalism.**

**Our keynote speaker is [Rev. John Buehrens](#).** Rev. Buehrens served as UUA President, 1993-2001. A prolific author, his most recent one about our heritage is CONFLAGRATION: How the Transcendentalists Sparked the American Struggle for Racial, Gender, and Social Justice (Beacon, 2020). Rev. Buehrens will offer a keynote on the first Unitarian Transcendentalist on the Pacific Coast, the Rev. Thomas Starr King. He exemplified key spiritual practices of the Transcendentalists that need renewal among us today: personal reflection (often in the form of keeping a journal), and deep interpersonal connections crossing conventional boundaries.

In addition, Rev. Buehrens will offer a workshop entitled, "God Optional: Theologies Among Us Today." John Buehrens and Rebecca Ann Parker surveyed the hope-filled thought patterns in progressive religion today in their book, A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion in the 21st Century (Beacon, 2010). While their framework borrows from a heritage of Judeo-Christian systematic theology, it also makes room for humanist, indigenous, and non-Western a/theologies. All such thinking, however, needs to meet some overriding and important tests to be effective. Tests which will be revealed in the workshop.

### **Details: Saturday, January 28, 2023**

9:30 a.m. - 2:35 p.m. Pacific Standard Time  
10:30 a.m. - 3:35 p.m. Mountain Standard Time  
11:30 a.m. - 4:35 p.m. Central Standard Time  
12:30 p.m. - 5:35 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

Registration is open until 4:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on Sunday, January 22nd. You will receive a link to join via email on January 23rd.

<https://www.firstunitarianportland.org/events/sfad23/> **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Below are the event links for Facebook and Instagram:

Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/3aga8EBPO>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/firstupdx/?hl=en>

If you have any questions or would like any additional descriptions please contact Kerry, [kheintze@firstunitarianportland.org](mailto:kheintze@firstunitarianportland.org)

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#3)

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must [certify](#) annually to have voting delegates.



Join us June 21 - 25, 2023 online or in-person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Most GA events will take place at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, 1000 Fort Duquesne Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA. [Google map](#) [More about traveling to Pittsburgh](#) [Registration](#) is open. Register early to secure the lowest rates. [Volunteer opportunities](#) and [financial support](#) are available.

### Food Bank

Grace Presbyterian food bank will continue to accept canned and unopened, packaged donations.

The donation box is near our name tags at the UU. We will take items over there.

### Volunteers Needed!

- Zoom Hosts- we're looking for anyone who can assist with sharing the duty of Zoom host during our Sunday Services to help relieve the requirement on just one or two people. If you're at all interested or need more information, please contact Charissa Thacker at [charissa.thacker@yahoo.com](mailto:charissa.thacker@yahoo.com)

Children's RE, Backup Volunteers - Arlene Zacker has volunteered to be the lead for our occasional RE classes, but we need some volunteers ready as backup in the event she is absent. Pre-planned classes/curriculums will be in place, so no lesson planning needed. This activity will require a background check. If you would like to volunteer or need more information, please contact Arlene Zacker at [info@uofbaycounty.com](mailto:info@uofbaycounty.com)

## Upcoming UU Events

Campfire on Wednesday January 18th at 6:00. This will be under the magnolia tree at the UUFBC.

Bring a canned good for the food pantry and also bring a poem, story, song or inspiring words to share around the campfire. Any Questions?... ask Bob Gilmore

### Book Club

Several of us met last Sunday to talk about Finding the Mother Tree. By Suzanne Simard. We also watched her Ted Talk. We agreed that This book and her work will alter the way we look at forests. I have a habit of talking to trees already- nice to know they might appreciate the effort ;-)

We voted on a couple of books for this next quarter. The winner is The Rough Side of The Mountain:Black Women's Ministries in Unitarian Universalism., edited by Rev. Dr. Qyamah Rahman.

This is a series of articles by many of our most important black women ministers. Since February is black history month, and March is women's history month; this seems a very appropriate choice. The link below is to the UUA bookstore. The book is being released Jan 23rd. Get your order in and it will be shipped on the 23rd. That should give us plenty of time for a meeting on April 2nd. We will meet after the service.

<https://www.uuabookstore.org/The-Rough-Side-of-the-Mountain-P19391.aspx>

For April/May/June our book selection is for you to choose. In the attachment is a list if four books, all young adult books, all with social justice themes. Your task us to choose one and email me your choice.

Please do this asap so that I can let everyone know.

Finally, we all agreed to open the book club to members of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Emerald Coast. This is our closest UU neighbor. It is also the other congregation that Rev. Ruth serves. I plan to make an invitation to them Saturday when I have more time. They would be Zoom members.

### Annual Yard Sale

Mark your calendars now! Our Annual UU Yard Sale is scheduled for February 11, 2023. Your donations to this sale are greatly appreciated and if you begin setting things aside now, we'll be well-prepared when the day arrives.

NEW THIS YEAR... we would like to add a PLANT SALE to this fundraiser. With all of the Green Thumbs in our community, we are asking folks to consider propagating some of your plants to sell. Folks LOVE Plant Sales and it will also draw folks to the Yard Sale as well. All types of plants are needed, but Native Plants would be a bonus! \*Please, avoid any plants that may be invasive\*



## Recent Events



New Year's Day walk:  
Charissa and Billie; Janet;  
Bob; Dusty; Ne-Ne; and  
Bailey; Paul; Keith



**“Faith is taking the first step  
even when you don't see the whole staircase.”**

**Martin Luther King Jr.**



### **Upcoming Community Events**

UUFBC is hosting the Interfaith Dinner for February 25th at 5:30pm  
Martin Luther King weekend

January 16th Monday from 10 - 4 at Sheffield Park there will be festivities celebrating Dr Martin Luther King. The annual Saturday march, sponsored by ACCURE is yet to be confirmed.

\*Did you know we have a Facebook page? If not, you should check it out and click the Like button here: <https://www.facebook.com/uubaycounty>  
UUFBC Website <https://www.uuofbaycounty.com/>

Newsletter Editor: Cindy Gregory -- Board Members: President: Bob Gilmore; Vice president: Matt Raver; Secretary: Charissa Thacker; Treasurer: Janet Cross Member At Large: Chris May

Contact info: 850- 615-4127 \*Office Hours are Tuesday 10 a.m. – noon (leave a message, please)

To submit information for the biweekly e-newsletter, send to [info@uuofbaycounty.com](mailto:info@uuofbaycounty.com) and please cc cindykg@gmail.com