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CONSULTING MINISTER
THE REVEREND BETH MILLER

THE FRIENDSHIP
FELLOWSHIP

AT PINEDA

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION IN THE LIBERAL TRADITION





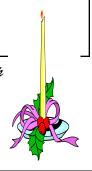






The staff of the Friendship Flyer wish all readers a happy, prosperous, and satisfying New Year!





THE FRIENDSHIP FLYER

Volume 24 Number 1

Our mission is to promote living with love and reason

January 2016

DATE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT	SERVICE LEADER	GREETER	TOUCH OF BEAUTY	HOSPITALITY HOST
Jan 3	Dr. Robert P. Tucker, Minister Emeritus of the Lakeland UU Church	What a Difference a Day Makes!		David Peterson	Betty Allison	Irene & Claudia McDonald
Jan 10	The Reverend Beth Miller, Consulting Minister at Friendship Fellowship	Four Freedoms Series #1: Speech	Emily Curry	Pat Tebbe	Claudia McDonald	Shirley Works
Jan 17	Bill Scott, Member of Friendship Fellowship,	Martin Luther King Day		Allen Claxton	Willa Davidsohn	Smitty Hooper
	Lecturer at SAIL					Birthday Cake: Kathy Lees
Jan 23	The Reverend Beth Miller, Consulting Minister at Friendship Fellowship	Four Freedoms Series #2: Worship	Nancy Shacklette	Debra Mischley	Kitty Linton	Emily Curry
Jan 30	The Reverend Scott Alexander, Minister at UU Vero Beach	May Your Pillow Catch Fire!: A Sermon on the Virtue of Empathy	The Reverend Beth Miller	Irene McDonald	Rosemary Stroda	Debra Mischley and Nancy Shacklette

BETH'S BITS

... The Reverend Beth Miller

Well, here we are; another year over and a brand new one beginning. 2015 has been a time of great challenge in our nation and throughout the world. What will 2016 bring? A new President for us, yes, but will that make a difference? Will congress work any better? Will terrorism, both foreign and domestic, be eliminated? How will we balance safety with our rights as a democratic nation



and with our role as a leader in the world? Nothing seems clear at this point, but let's be hopeful and thoughtful as we participate in the democratic process that insures our freedom.

All this has me thinking about previous challenging times in our nation's history. I'm reminded of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's *Four Freedoms* and plan to offer a sermon series on them in January and February. The *Four Freedoms* were goals he articulated in 1941. In his State of the Union address he proposed four fundamental freedoms that people "everywhere in the world" ought to enjoy: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear. I'm no historian, but from what I've read so far, there was bipartisan agreement at that time on the values of democracy which included the benefits of economic opportunity, employment, social security, and the promise of adequate health care. It will be interesting (at least to me) to see where my research and reflection on Roosevelt's *Four Freedoms* takes me.

On another subject, I call your attention to the announcement in this Friendship Flyer of the <u>All-Congregation Strategic Planning Retreat on January 24, 30 & 31</u> here at Friendship Fellowship. I'm excited to be working on this with a CLC member and very experienced organizational development professional, Sue Huseman. We both hope you will be there. The success of any congregational plan depends on the participation of its membership, so please do your best to join us. See the bottom article in the next column, under *Salutations From Sue*.

Because I will be there for the Retreat on January 31st, I will be service leader and host for my good friend and colleague, the Rev. Scott Alexander, minister of the UU Fellowship in Vero Beach. Rev. Scott says of his sermon: By way of a curious Hasidic tale, I want to explore one of the virtues I believe must be integral to our lives as human beings—empathy. The good news is that, like all the important human virtues, it can be cultivated, not only in our own adult lives, but in the lives of our children and grandchildren as well. Please join me in welcoming him to our fellowship.

... Yours In Faith and Fellowship, Beth



Dean Siren Pat Hemphill Russ DeLoach Fahim Ahmed

SALUTATIONS FROM SUE

It's trite, but sincere—HAPPY NEW YEAR to each of you!!

As I head into the final stretch of my tenure, I am excited about not only looking ahead in my own life but towards the goals the CLC has planned for the next three months, beginning with a workshop led by two qualified and very competent people—Rev. Beth and Sue Huseman.



Our congregation has stood the test of time. There are many new faces sitting with us on Sunday and many treasured old faces. I believe that the reason for this, in part, is due to not only what we stand for but because we are relevant. We want to keep that relevancy. We want to insure that we continue to attract to us other kindred spirits. The CLC believes that in order to insure that, we need to start at the top of our pyramid with you, the members of FFP, by first looking at where we are, why we've been so vital in people's lives and then asking the questions that need to be asked in order to make sure we remain vital, to remain current, to be able to move ahead in a direction of agreement.

Sue and Rev. Beth will lead that workshop which you'll be seeing and hearing more about in this Flyer and in various other ways over the next month.

Once our Mission and Vision statements are approved by you and we reaffirm who we are and know where we want to go as a congregation then we will ask the committees to build off of that as they consider their missions as they fit into the FFP mission.

It's going to be an exciting and busy 3 months. Isn't that what all new year beginnings are about for all of us? Onward!

... Sue Holland

Inputs to the *Friendship Flyer*February 2016 edition
are due to the editor
by Sunday, January 24

SAVE THE DATES! JANUARY 2016 ALL-CONGREGATION STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

Sunday, 1/24/16 - 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM (shared lunch at noon) Saturday, 1/30/16 - 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (shared lunch at noon) Sunday, 1/31/16 - 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM (shared lunch at noon) In Friendship Hall; Sue Huseman & Rev. Beth Miller facilitating.

It's time for our congregation to review and renew our mission and vision and to engage in some focused planning for our future. Who are we as a faith community? Who do we serve? Based upon what principles and values? How do we serve? What are our shared goals for the future and how will we achieve them?

Remember, a plan is only as good as the input and commitment of those who articulate and implement it, so your participation is truly important. Everyone is invited and encouraged to join in this effort.

Look for details by email, by snail mail for those not online, and at the Fellowship and please plan to come!

January 2016

Comings, goings, and doings for FF@P

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Girl Scouts Sundays-Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31 2:00—4:00 PM Coffee House		Choir Practice: Every Tuesday 7:00 PM Friendship Hall	Tai Chi: Every Wednesday 2:00 PM, Coffee House		1	2
3 Sun Svc 10:30 AM Sunday Morning Discussion: 9:15-10:15 AM Coffee House— Current Events Welcoming Congr Meeting: 12:30 PM, Friendship Hall	4 Winter Film Discussion Series: Limelight (tale of old vaudevillian—Charlie Chaplin) Friendship Hall, 1:00 PM (Helen Bennett) CLC Mtg: Coffee House, 10:00 AM	5 Hula Lessons Every Tuesday 3:30—6:00 PM Coffee House [Bobbie Keith]	6	Women's Friendship Circle: 10:30 AM Coffee House	8 Introduction to Judaism: 2:00 PM Friendship Hall (Helen Bennett)	9
10 Sun Svc 10:30 AM Sunday Morning Discussion: 9:15-10:15 AM Coffee House— Current Events Piano Recital: 3:00 PM, Friendship Hall— Eun Nelson	11	12	13 Social Justice Movie: 4:00- 6:00 PM Friendship Hall	14	15 Brevard Birth Moms: 7:00-10:00 PM Friendship Hall	16 Book Launch: 12:00 Noon, Friendship Hall (Ruth Rodgers and Marshall Frank)
17 Sun Svc 10:30 AM Sunday Morning Discussion: 9:15-10:15 AM Coffee House— Current Events	18 Winter Film Discussion Series: Milk (first gay man elected to major public office) Friendship Hall, 1:00 PM (Helen Bennett)	19 Daily Bread Volunteers meet Tuesday at Daily Bread 10:30 AM	20	Women's Book Club: 10 AM Coffee House	22	23
24/31 Sun Svc 10:30 AM Sunday Morning Discussion: 9:15-10:15 AM Coffee House— Current Events All-Congregational Planning Retreat: Jan 24, 1:00-3:00 PM: Jan 31, 1:00-4:00 PM, Friendship Hall Shared Lunch	25	26 ditor	Februa by S 24 Ja	28 needs your ry inputs unday anuary is Better)	29 Introduction to Judaism: 2:00 PM Friendship Hall (Helen Bennett)	30 All-Congregational Planning Retreat: Jan 30, 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM, Friendship Hall Shared Lunch

Dr. TUCKER REVEALS "THE OTHER JESUS" 13 Dec

Dr. Tucker began his sermon with a fable that described the selection of a mother for the Virgin Mary. This complex and lengthy story came from an ancient writing dating to similar times and degree of believability of those books canonized in the Biblical New Testament.

Most of us know the familiar story of Mary and Joseph, of their not finding room in the inn, and of Mary's giving birth to Jesus in a manger in a



stable. But, Dr. Tucker asked, how many of us in this congregation have ever heard the story he just told about Jesus' grandparents? Not many! Yet that story and hundreds of others like it were fairly well know throughout the early church!

Wondrous details about the lives of almost everyone connected to Jesus are given in these ancient stories. For example, Dr. Tucker gave us some items about Mary, Jesus' mother:

There was at that time a priest in the Temple..., whose name was Zacharias... An angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said, "Say to Anna and Joachim, 'Keep your daughter a holy virgin for one husband, Christ." [This he did.]]

[Now Mary,] the virgin of the Lord was held in admiration by all the people of Israel. Even when she was three years old, she walked ... and spake ... as a grown-up person of thirty years old.

She never adorned herself, nor did she seek after outward show ... She never painted her eyes, nor put saffron on her cheeks, nor plaited her hair. She did not put choice perfume upon her, nor did she anoint her body with ointment. She did not bathe nor wash with water ... Her raiment ... never became foul nor wore out nor tore ... As she grew in stature, the raiment became greater with her.

Mary was of medium stature, and her body was...graceful and well proportioned. She was somewhat delicate in appearance, and her colour was like that of ripe wheat. Her face was oval ... her hair was golden, and she wore it bound up; her eyes were large and piercing, inclining to blue in colour; ... her nose was rather long ... Her hands and fingers were long. Her appearance was so beautiful and glorious that ...if anyone who was unwell touched her, the same hour he went home cured.

How is it, then, that these ancient stories are unknown to most of us, today? The answer, of course, is to be found in the New Testament.

For most people, their one and only source of information about Jesus is the set of scriptures sacred to Christians called the New Testament. Out of its 27 "books," only four focus directly upon the life of Jesus. They are the "gospels" referred to as "Matthew," "Mark," "Luke," and "John." As wonderful as they are about telling us important things about Jesus, these biblical gospels leave many questions unanswered. Indeed, in some cases they leave huge gaps in our knowledge, as, for example, about what Jesus was doing between the age of 12 and when he began his ministry as a grown man in his 30s.

Such gaps and questions were not a problem for ancient Christians. Besides the four gospels which made it into the New



Testament canon, there were, back then, dozens of other noncanonical "gospels" and hundreds of other pieces of apocryphal, scripture-like literature circulating throughout the early church. In their magical, mystical and mythical ways these documents filled every gap and answered every question early believers had about the life and times of Jesus.

In addition to such "gospels," there were also books with names like: "The History of Joseph the Carpenter"; as well as many so-called "Letters of..." various authors, and numerous books entitled the "Acts of..." someone or another. All of these were books about Jesus and they were used and circulated within the early church just as the New Testament is today, although none of them made it into the Bible.

The portrait these books drew of the man from Nazareth differed so greatly from the picture given in the New Testament that scholars came to refer to their version as "The Other Jesus."

As Unitarian Universalists, we keenly recognize the difference between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith." In many ways the Church has given us a distorted picture of the man from Nazareth. We UUs notice this most acutely in the Church's doctrine of the Trinity wherein a human being like ourselves is claimed no be no less than a deity

Despite the problems we may have with the Church's "Christ of faith," these apocryphal and legendary stories show clearly that the Church has done us an enormous favor by weeding out such literature from its set of sacred scriptures. Yes, there remain all sorts of magical, mystical, and mythical elements in the New Testament's picture of "Christ,"—elements that do not coincide with the historical man from Nazareth. Nevertheless, the most reliable historical information we have about this remarkable person is to be found only in the gospels of the Church's New Testament. If we read "between the lines," as we peruse those pages of the Bible, we will come face to face with a wonderful person whose wisdom and insight have been and can be of benefit to all people, whether they are Christian or not.

Because its existence affirms the importance of the man from Nazareth, and because its exclusion from the New Testament indicates the greater reliability of the Bible's own documents, blessed be the apocryphal and legendary literature which describes "The Other Jesus." ... jce



MUSIC ON THE HILL — NOVEMBER 29, 2015



The Dick-Doc Duo played Prelude before performances Marshall Frank on violin and Dr. Jay Barnhart on piano

Marshall Frank described the Sponsor of Music On The Hill: *The Creative Arts Foundation of Brevard, Inc.*, and how they support young talented performers.

Money collected is divided among those who entertain. And, is frequently the case, there are novelists present who make signed copies of their books available in the 50-50 drawings.



Elianna Berrean Emcee and Vocalist



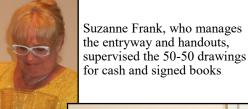
Tomas Lopez Violin



Jan Johns Piano Accompanist



Eun Nelson Piano





Hunter Curry Ode from Italian Opera



Elianna & Ariel Berrean Sisters Duet

Ariel Berrean Vocalist



Tomas Lopez with father Tomas Lopez Sr.
Guitar Duet

REVEREND MILLER CLARIFIES "HANUKKAH" 6 Dec

With Hanukkah beginning this year at sunset on Dec. 6, our consulting minister, the Reverend Beth Miller, based her sermon on the victory of religious freedom that it Hanukkah celebrates signifies. the continuation of a light that has lasted now for more than 2100 years.



When Alexander the Great captured much of the Middle East in building his vast empire,

he allowed the conquered countries to remain religiously and culturally pluralistic, but upon his death, the empire became fragmented and ruled by competing monarchs, a situation that almost led to the obliteration of the Jewish faith. When the Seleucids of Assyria took control of Israel, their king, Antiochus IV, feared that the Jews, with their strong monotheistic beliefs, could not be trusted to be politically loyal to him. Therefore, he was determined to wipe out their religion, outlawing all forms of worship except that of the Greek gods. His troops tore down the walls of Jerusalem and put up statues of the Greek gods in the public square. They broke into the temple, tore apart the altar, and desecrated their sacred scrolls with pigs' blood. They erected a huge statue of Zeus and made Jewish practices such as keeping the Sabbath, circumcision, and adherence to dietary laws offenses that were punishable by death.

For many Jews, being Hellenized was better than death, so they submitted to the new laws, but Judah the Maccabee assembled a band of rebels willing to fight for the right to maintain their religious and cultural existence as the chosen people of God. How this led to the story we have today of Hanukkah gets a little murky, for the books of the Maccabees are not part of the Jewish Bible. They are found in the part of the Christian Bible called the Apocrypha. Here, in 1st and 2nd Maccabees, Judah the Maccabee is described as taking back Jerusalem and the Temple in 164 BCE and re-consecrating it for the Jews. The author of 2nd Maccabees depicts this as a brutal civil war in which Jews who wanted to assimilate were massacred and their sons forcibly circumcised, so while we admire the Maccabees for rising up against oppression and refusing to give up their own religious beliefs, we also have to look at their killing of other Jews who had assimilated into the dominant culture. Were they national liberators or religious fanatics? Freedom fighters or terrorists? The truth depends upon who is telling the story.

To further complicate matters, the story of the oil that should have lasted for only one day but instead burned for eight days does not appear in either 1st or 2nd Maccabees. That story comes 600 years later in the Talmud, a collection of interpretations and commentary on the Hebrew Scriptures and on Jewish history, law and customs written by priests and rabbis over several centuries. Scholars don't know where this story of God's miraculous intervention in the restoration of the temple came from, but it led to today's Jewish celebration of Hanukkah.

In the long and sad history of the persecution of the Jews, this little victory at Jerusalem doesn't count for much. What the Maccabees won was soon taken away again, but their revolt marked the first serious attempt in Western history to proclaim and champion the principle of religious freedom and cultural diversity within a nation. This is a principle still being fought for today all around the world, including the United States. Many Americans would reverse our right to religious freedom and make America a Christian nation if they could. What the



GUESTS



We extended our Friendship Welcome to We extended our richesing them to these guests . . . and we encourage them to return again and again!

Vanessa Maiorino Kristin & Jonathan Springer Dawn & Vivian Michaels

Bernice Brioso Fred Dunhour

Viera

New York City, NY

Melbourne Fiskdale, MA Richland, WA



Story For All Ages Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah Hanukkah explained by Laura Petruska 6 December

Maccabees defended was the principle that the function of the state is to embrace, not subordinate, its various religions, races, and cultures. Their battle was for the regeneration of the Jewish people and a strengthening of their religious identity. What the Maccabees failed to get, however, is that imposing a single religious and cultural pattern on all people goes against the principles of freedom and justice.

Most striking about the story of Hanukkah is that the mark of the Maccabees' victory is not a triumphal parade but an act of dedication, the cleansing and putting back together of the defiled temple. It is the light in this story that we must not allow to ever be extinguished—the light of religious freedom and the rights of conscience and the quest for justice, the universal light shining within the soul of humankind.

THE REVEREND BETH MILLER EXPLAINS "SOLSTICE **LIGHTS. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS'** 27 Dec

The Reverend Miller gave an inspiring sermon about the origins of Christmas as they were tied to the fear ancient peoples felt about the winter solstice. "Solstice" in Latin means "sun stopping," and in the far North especially, people were afraid on the darkest day of the year, the winter solstice, that the sun would never come back. Before there was electricity or scientific knowledge of the cause



of the solstice, the earth tipping farthest back on its axis in the northern hemisphere, this fear was terrifying, especially in Scandinavia and other northern countries. People lit bonfires on hilltops to coax the sun-god to come back. It is hard for us Floridians to imagine their fear when we do not face starvation from the cold during the long winter, and we have flowers blooming all year.

The Celtic people of Britain called the winter solstice "Yule," which means young or youth in Old English. They thought of the solstice as the sun god's birthday, when the sun begins its journey to come back in the spring. Here are the roots of the idea of resurrection. The Celts and other ancient peoples brought evergreen trees indoors and adorned them with candles to symbolize the fact that life is never extinguished. They believed that mistletoe that grew on bare oak trees fell from heaven and "the tree on which it landed was favored by the gods."

The Divine Child story emerged in many places before the birth of Jesus:

The Egyptian god Horus was born of the virgin Isis, and was visited by three kings as an infant.

A Roman savior Quirrnus was born of a virgin.

The Greek deity Adonis was born of the virgin Myrrha, at Bethlehem in the same sacred cave claimed as the birthplace of Jesus.

The Persian deity Mithra was born of a virgin on DECEMBER 25. Zoroaster, also Persian, was also born of a virgin.

Virgin births were also claimed for Egyptian pharaohs, Greek emperors, and even for Alexander the Great.

We do not know when Jesus was actually born, but the Roman Emperor Constantine chose December 25 to coincide with the Pagan Roman solstice festival, Saturnalia. Pope Julius I made that date official a few years later. Many think that our Christmas rituals and symbols have been borrowed (or "stolen") from those pre-Christian observances. These stories have some core wisdom:

The understanding that all life is cyclical; that the darkness and cold of winter will always give way to the light and warmth of spring; that, in, fact, the new life that emerges in spring relies on the death of winter. Cold, dark times are not death so much as hibernation—a time for new life to grow in the womb of the earth until it is "kissed" by the radiance of the sun.

We see cycles of opposites: "Darkness and light; joy and sorrow; birth and death. However, we also experience FEAR, and forget that things will change. Most of the world seems to be living in fear these days. People are afraid of creeping secularism or rabid fundamentalism; of rampant crime or the erosion of rights; of immorality or censorship; of the bleeding-heart liberals or the cold-hearted conservatives. And we all seem to be afraid of terrorists.

continued at the bottom of the next column







Story For All Ages Peace Is An Offering ... by Annette LeBox read by Nancy Shacklette 13 December

WORTHWHILE WORDS ...found & presented by Sue Huseman

May the sun bring you new energy by day, may the moon softly restore you by night.

May the rain wash away your worries, may the breeze blow new strength into your being.

May you walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life.

... Apache Blessing

Perhaps the secret of living well is not in having all the answers, but in pursuing unanswerable questions in good company.

... Rachel Naomi Remen



Birthday Cake for December 2015

Rev. Beth reminds us that we must subvert fear-based behavior with love. Marianne Williamson says that "Love is to fear as light is to darkness...In the presence of one, the other disappears." The ancient Celts, terrified that the light might not return, celebrated the solstice not with sadness and grief, but with joyful parties, feasting, drinking, and revelry. The highlight was a "Feast of Fools," in which everything of importance was mocked and turned upside down. The celebration was topped by a Fool King, who gave commands that everyone had to obey, no matter how ridiculous or licentious.

We are still, however, afraid of the dark—of the dark parts of ourselves. "Where might we find the courage to say No to the darkness of fear that dominates the world and our hearts today, and insist instead on the light and power of love?"

ANNUAL CHILI PARTY — DECEMBER 5, 2015







Sally Gourd played Piano to accompany our Carols



Chili Party was a success, with over 65 attending! Entry tickets were Gift Cards We collected almost \$2,000!







THE CREATIVE ARTS FOUNDATION OF BREVARD, Inc.

Presents

MUSIC ON THE HILL

(MOTH)



Welcome to monthly music concerts, performed by the most talented young artists in Brevard County, including: violinists, cellists, pianists, flautists, horn players, percussionists and vocalists . . . ranging from opera to Broadway to country. A fun event for all.

When: The Last Sunday of Every Month at 4:00 PM. Shows are generally 60 to 90 minutes in length.

Where: The Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 3115 Friendship Place, Rockledge, Fl, 32955 . . . just off US Hwy 1, 2/10 of a mile North of Suntree Boulevard.

Cost: Free, but Donation (say . . . \$5) is requested per person.

Tickets: Pay at the door.

Dress: Casual.

The Creative Arts Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting exceptional artists throughout Brevard County who have needs for assistance.

Information: 321-254-3398Visit Web site:

www.CAFOB.org

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BOOK LAUNCH FOR 4 LOCAL AUTHORS AT FRIENDSHIP FELLOWSHIP

Beginning Saturday Noon, January 16, 2016, Friendship Fellowship will present four Brevard authors who have recently published books: three works of fiction and one of nonfiction. Organized by Marshall Frank, the four featured authors are Ruth Rodgers, whose newly published novel, *Patchwork*, deals with a daughter's



struggle for family acceptance in rural north Florida in 1952, after the scandal of an out-of-wedlock birth: Stu Milisci, whose novel *Confessions, Lies, and Secrets* tells a gripping drama of sex abuse in a Catholic parish; Yolande Donnelly, whose collection of short stories, *12 Lives, 12 Signs,* focuses on characters born under each of the Zodiac signs; and Marshall Frank, whose new nonfiction work, *The Way Things Oughta Be,* addresses a myriad of social, political and global problems and presents new solutions.

The program, which begins at 3:00 PM in Fellowship Hall, will feature short talks by each of the authors about their new publications, followed by refreshments of wine, cheese, cookies, and other goodies. All four authors will have copies of their new books available for sale and signing.

Admission is free, so please join us for an afternoon of good food and drink and great discussion.

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THE FRIENDSHIP FLYER



is the monthly newsletter of THE FRIENDSHIP FELLOWSHIP AT PINEDA A Unitarian Universalist Congregation District 62, Society #2923

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Sunday School available for children at 10:30 AM

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