



Connections

The Newsletter of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, *where diversity is treasured.*
 A member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Inside

| | |
|--|----|
| Board Notes..... | 2 |
| Increasing Love & Justice..... <i>by The Rev. Margaret L. Beard</i> | 3 |
| Ongoing Events at All Faiths..... | 4 |
| December Calendar..... | 5 |
| Joys, Sorrows & Milestones..... | 6 |
| The Sermons..... | 6 |
| Congregational Meeting Notice..... | 6 |
| Intern News..... <i>by Katie Romano-Griffin</i> | 7 |
| Are You New to All Faiths?..... | 7 |
| Cartwright Holiday Open House..... | 7 |
| Together on the Journey..... <i>featuring Sharon Gray</i> | 8 |
| Looking for Fun in SWFL?..... | 9 |
| Annual Pledge Drive will Launch on January 17..... | 9 |
| Nominating Committee in Action..... | 9 |
| Mano a Mano Crafts on Sale..... | 10 |
| Climate Action Team News..... | 10 |
| November Photos..... | 11 |
| ACMA December Concert Lineup..... | 12 |
| Finance Report..... | 12 |



**All Faiths'
 Holiday Party
 and
 Open Mic Night**
**Friday,
 December 18
 at 6:30 pm**

*Join us for an evening of good cheer, sing-alongs,
 and a holiday themed open mic night.
 Refreshments will be served.
 Bring your talent and/or your listening ears!*



**Special Christmas Eve
 Candlelight Service**
Thursday, December 24 at 5pm
**with soloist Darlene Mitchell
 and others**
 (Annual Collection for the Minister's
 Discretionary Fund will be taken)

**ALL FAITHS UNITARIAN CONGREGATION
 NOTICE OF CONGREGATIONAL
 FINANCE MEETING**

Sunday, December 13, 2015 at 11:45 a.m.

**All Faiths Sanctuary
 (see notice on page 6)**

Mission Statement

“All Faiths Unitarian Congregation is a welcoming, caring community seeking diversity, practicing openness, and encouraging personal and spiritual growth...”

“We are working toward a just, free, peaceful and compassionate world...”

The Board Meeting was held on November 30, 2015

Because of Thanksgiving and December holidays, All Faiths Board of Governors met on November 30 to balance the two holiday seasons. The meeting will be too late to report a follow-up for the newsletter; therefore, I am providing the topics of discussion and details as they are known by the end of November.

Discussions have been ongoing concerning which of our two pianos to keep. Both pianos are donations from caring members, so we will keep one and try to sell the other. Before a decision is made, we plan to move the sound system to the back of the sanctuary to give more room at the front

and to give the sound people better monitoring opportunities for sound. We will try to place the grand piano on the platform so that we can see how it functions for us. We want you all to share your thoughts on the matter with board members and the minister so that we can make a decision in keeping with what is best for us all.

Everyone is concerned about how long it is taking for the sign replacement, but the office and leaders are working hard to expedite the process. We have had a generous contribution from members to help us have a beautiful sign. We want to get the sign out front as soon as possible because seasonal residents are returning and may be shopping for a congregation.

The gap budget to cover January through March will have been approved at the Board meeting, and a congregational discussion and vote on the gap budget will be held after services on December 13. We hope all members will attend.

The Stewardship Team is working hard on creating a theme for our first year-long budget drive. A congregational workshop will be held on January 16 so that we as a congregation can dream and plan for our future. It is important that we know who we are and where we want to be five years from now so that we know why we contribute our time, treasure, and talent to this vibrant congregation.

continued on page 3



Happy Hanukkah

Communications

Regina Kilmartin
Newsletter Team
Doug Cartwright
Carol Elrod
Jeanne Ezell
Regina Kilmartin
Sharon Gray

Social Media & Website

Regina Kilmartin, Sharon Gray

Email Announcements

Joyce Ramay

Nominating Committee

Carol Elrod

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

2756 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Phone: (239) 226-0900 Fax: (239) 278-5743

Email: office@allfaiths-uc.org Website: <http://www.allfaiths-uc.org>

Board of Governors: Diane Cartwright, President; Bill Snider, Vice-President; Jeanne Ezell, Secretary; Susan Anthony, Acting Treasurer; Ed Kleinow, Past Chair; **Governors:** Robert Bennett, Chris Fisher, Sharon Gray, Lisa Leonhardt, Kay Riegler.

Member Services

Pat Nuding

Greeters

Fran Way

Adult Education

Pat Nuding, Bill Snider

Care and Support

Joyce Ramay

Finance

Joyce Ramay

Stewardship Committee

Doug Cartwright

Minister: The Rev. Margaret L. Beard

Cell: 239-223-5392 Email: minister@allfaiths-uc.org

Minister Emeritus: The Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson; Student Minister: Katie Romano Griffin



Program Support

Robert Bennett

Sunday Services

The Rev. Margaret L. Beard

Buildings and Grounds

Kay Riegler

Congregational Staff

Regina Kilmartin, Office Manager

Dan Tudor, Music Coordinator

Joe Gayton, Sexton

Increasing Love & Justice

by The Rev. Margaret L. Beard



There is so much violence in the world. What can any of us do? I think about it and so do you. Some of the violence is overseas and some of it is in our community and in our country. After the recent shootings at the Planned Parenthood Health Center, a colleague

of mine posted a letter from an employee at a Planned Parenthood Health Center out west. The letter is shared with permission and "in hopes that it helps us do more than weep." I want to share it with you.

"We don't know yet if Planned Parenthood was in fact the target. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if the gunman meant to shoot up a bank, the nearby nail salon, Planned Parenthood, or any other business or organization. His motives don't matter. What matters is the trauma Planned Parenthood employees in Colorado Springs and across the country are now dealing with.

"During my five years at Planned Parenthood, my colleagues and I dealt with near-daily protests, hate mail, and threats of violence, vandalism, and more. We dealt with the murder of Dr. George Tiller and the emotional toll it took on many of us. We dealt with having FBI agents in our workplace because we had received yet another threat. We were called murderers and baby killers, and we were accused of manipulating birth control methods so more women would become pregnant.

"It is unbelievably exhausting to work for an organization that's under constant attack, both figuratively and literally. You learn survival skills you never thought you'd need to know. You learn all the different routes home in case someone follows you. You memorize the protesters' schedule so you know when to avoid the "scary" ones. You begin to carry pepper spray just to walk to work. None of it ever really gets easier. It just becomes habit.

"As exhausting as the work is, it's also incredibly rewarding. We received a lot of love from our community. Clergy members, volunteers, and neighbors frequently stopped by to show their support. Women regularly came by the Planned Parenthood booth at community events and thanked us for our help. They thanked us for finding their cancer, for providing their birth control, and for offering compassionate health care when they were dealing with an unplanned pregnancy. They cried as they shared their gratitude, and they showed us pictures of their families. And that's why we continued to do the work.

"We were worn out, run down, and beat up; but we were providing hope, and sometimes that in itself is enough.

I'm proud of the women and men I worked with every day, and I'm hopeful our community continues to support Planned Parenthood and its employees. #StandWithPP." What can we do when we hear about a tragedy like this? I want to do more than weep. For those of us who pray, please do so. For others of us let's hold them in our hearts and on our mind. The lives of those in Colorado Springs have been altered beyond measure. We can also expand our prayer and concern to all those who work in Planned Parenthood Centers across our country. They live with an element of fear and anxiety, not knowing where or when something like this will happen, again."

I plan to call our local center and ask, how I and we may be of service. Katie and I have training in debriefing after a trauma. Maybe that could be helpful. Even if our local people were not there in Colorado, they have experienced a trauma secondhand. There are probably a number of ways that we can stand with them. What are your thoughts? Please let me know because I'd like us to do more than weep.

— Margaret



BOARD NOTES *continued from page 2*

The Board will recommend a permanent practice to close All Faiths offices between Christmas and New Year's Day and to provide paid vacation time for staff.

"I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder."

— G.K. Chesterton

The next board meeting will be held on January 20, 2015. Members who are interested are invited to attend.

Thank You

As we come to the end of 2015, All Faiths would like to sincerely thank all of our members who volunteer their time and talent to keep our home beautiful and clean, our cabinets stocked, our grounds beautiful, and our doors open. We would not be able to fulfill our mission or carry on our good work in this fine community without you.



*Happy
December
Birthday to you!*

- Dec. 2 Irene (Cracker) Hart
- Dec. 6 Sharon Gray
- Dec. 14 Carol Siferd
- Dec. 15 Rev. Emily Morse Palmer
- Dec. 16 Maggie Mullins
- Dec. 18 Nancy McGlasson
- Dec. 31 Karen Nathan

And coming up...

- Jan 1 Shea Fierro
- Jan 5 Colleen North

*See your name or someone else's
name missing?
Call Regina at 226-0900.*



**Singles
Group
Events**

Contact: Annelly Hudanick,
annelyblue@hotmail.com

**ALL FAITHS SINGLES HOLIDAY
EXTRAVAGANZA!!!
Sat., December 5th at 1pm**

The most anticipated
day of the year!

Christof's Restaurant
10231 McGregor Blvd.

PLEASE RSVP
to Annelly
239-549-2263
annelyblue@hotmail.com

Ongoing Events at All Faiths

Monthly Movie, Tues., December 15 at 10:30 am

A Christmas Story - (see page 10)

Contact: Robert Bennett, rbnftmy@aol.com

The Program Support Council hosts a movie every month. They try to pick documentaries with interesting topics for discussion. Suggested donation, \$2.

Free Inquiry Group (FIG) – December 17 at 6pm

With Guest Speaker Billy Huff: Transgender Issues

Meeting on the 3rd Thursday of the Month

Contact: Sharon Gray, geema1@yahoo.com

FIG of SW Florida is a group of humanists, rationalists, skeptics, free thinkers, atheists and agnostics. The first segment of each FIG meeting is a social time with pizza provided by the club (bring your own beverage and /or dinner). Second segment, tons of insightful topics and discussions.

Eat, Drink & Be Merry Potlucks

Approximately 5:30 or 6pm at various locations

Call the office (226-0900) for more information.

If you are interested in attending a potluck – or hosting one! – please sign up at the Activities Table. *This is a terrific way to meet new people!*

Meditation - Wed. at 7pm & Friday at 10:30am

Wed. Contact: David Hauenstein, david-hauenstein@usa.net

Friday Contact: Jeanne Ezell, jeannezell@gmail.com

Join friends to develop your mindfulness, compassion, and sense of serenity.

Special Events at All Faiths

Holiday Open House at the Cartwrights

December 12 - 11am to 3pm

(see page 7 for details)



December 2015

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9:15am Adult R.E. 10:30am Service |  | | 7pm Meditation |  | 10:30am Meditation | 1pm Singles Holiday Party (Pg.4) 7pm ACMA Concert Harpeth Rising, w. Bill Steel opening |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 9:15am Adult R.E. 10:30am Service Hanukkah begins at sundown | Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day | | 7pm Meditation | 10am Finance Mtg. | 10:30am Meditation | Cartwright's Open House 7pm ACMA Holiday Party |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 9:15am Adult R.E. 10:30am Service 11:45 pm Congregational Meeting to Approve Gap Budget | 12:30pm Newsletter Mtg. 1:30pm Program Supp. Mtg. | 10:30am Movie: A Christmas Story | 1:30pm Climate Action Team (CAT) Mtg. 7pm Meditation | 6pm Free Inquiry Group | 10:30am Meditation 6pm Holiday Party and Open Mic Night | |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 9:15am Adult R.E. 10:30am Service McGregor Clinic Coll. | Winter Begins | | 10:30am Membership Comm. Mtg. 7pm Meditation |  5pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service | Christmas Day | Kwanza Begins |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |  | |
| No Adult R.E. 10:30am Service | Office Closed | Office Closed | Office Closed | Office Closed New Year's Eve | | |

JOYS, SORROWS & MILESTONES

With our apologies for any omissions, here are the joys, sorrows & milestones of our members expressed in November:

Laurie Babcock's grandmother died. We extend our sympathy to her and her family.

Mary Corrigan shared her joy that she has a new grandchild.

Sharon Gray reported that she has a new step-great grandchild.

Lisa Leonhardt shared her joy that one of her students has been adopted into a Forever Home.

Kendra Maroon lost her cousin who was removed from life support. His parents had lost their grandson earlier this year and now have buried their oldest son. We extend our sympathy to Kendra and her family.

Vivian Sawaya's son, Mitchell, had surgery to remove a bone growing from his hip into the groin area, and will be going to rehab to regain his ability to walk. We hope that the surgery and therapy are beneficial.

THE SERMONS

- December 06** "Don't Let the Light Go Out"
The Rev. Margaret L. Beard
- December 13** "Spirituality and Climate Change"
The Rev. Margaret L. Berad
- December 20** "As the Wheel Turns" (a solstice service)
Katie Romano Griffin with Rev. Beard
- December 24** "Its Christmas Eve!"
The Rev. Margaret L. Beard and others
- December 27** "Vision Quest for the New Year"
Joyce Ramay
- January 03** "A Web of Connections"
The Rev. Margaret L. Beard with The Rev. Eric Cherry
- January 10** "Love Your Neighbor as Themselves"
Suzanne Fast with Rev. Beard

ALL FAITHS UNITARIAN CONGREGATION NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**to Approve Budget
for January 1 through March 31, 2016
Sunday, December 13, 2015
11:30 A.M.**

All Faiths Sanctuary

All Members of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation are encouraged to attend a special Congregational Meeting for Budget Approval, which will be held after the service on December 13. This meeting is necessary because of our recent vote to change our fiscal year to run from April 1 through March 31, beginning in April 2016. We will approve a budget for the "gap" between the December 31 end of the 2015 budget year and the April 1 beginning of the 2016 fiscal year. This is the agenda:

1. Treasurer's report – income and expense for January through November 2015
2. Presentation of proposed budget for the first three months of 2016
3. Discussion of finances and budget
4. Approval of the "gap" budget for January through March 2016

It is important that we have widespread participation, so please do plan to stay for the meeting.

Jeanne Ezell
Secretary
Board of Governors



SUPPORT MCGREGOR CLINIC ONGOING FOOD & CLOTHING DRIVE

We will be collecting non-perishable food and clothing for the McGregor Clinic on the 3rd Sunday of every month. Our next collection will be on December 20. Joyce Schaffer, Coordinator

Needed are: Women's/Men's Underwear, Men's Clothing, Cereal, Peanut Butter, and Tuna.

INTERN NEWS

by *Katie Romano Griffin, Intern Minister*



In the Christian calendar, Advent is beginning. As a small child in an Episcopal church, I remember that on days when I was assisting with the service, I was allowed to open the felt door on the Advent calendar in the priest's office. Images of holiday symbols of hope, love and community that were meant to add to the season of hope and expectation that came with the impending birth of the Christian's Savior were revealed with each passing turn of felt. I remember how much that simple act of turning the days helped me tune into something larger than me. It helped me feel hopeful.

As this season of Advent is upon us once again, I have been wondering how my Unitarian heart can welcome this season of hope and great expectation. In the face of mass consumerism and deeply troubling world news, what new practice will help me to stay focused on a deeper meaning in this time of year? What might help me to be centered in my spirit around hope?

I have been meditating with these questions and decided that I will commit to practicing daily this December the Prayer of the Chalice which I adapted from Francis Nuttall's version. I welcome you to join me in this practice of reading the prayer and then sitting in stillness and silence for five minutes each day to contemplate more hope and more peace in the world. I would also love to hear about how you delve more deeply into this season of hope and giving.

Prayer of the Chalice (adapted from Francis Nuttall by Katie Romano Griffin)

Spirit of Life, moving in, as and through me.
Light, hope and love fill me always. These
sacred gifts overflow the Chalice of my
heart into the hearts of all I connect
with each day, revealing to us all
the beauty, the joy,
the wholeness
the hope
of life,
and
the
enduring peace
that the wisdom
of acknowledging our
interconnectedness brings.

Amen. Blessed Be. May it be so.

ARE YOU NEW TO ALL FAITHS?

Two types of orientation meetings are available for people who are new or may consider themselves "brand new" or "fairly new" at All Faiths.

On Sunday, **December 20**, right after the service in the sanctuary a "Getting to Know YoUU Q & A" session will be held with the Rev. Beard and a board member. This will be a brief and informal time for new people to ask questions about All Faiths and/or Unitarian Universalism.

Sometime in January we will have a morning workshop on "UU 101." This will be an orientation session for folks moving toward membership or who have recently joined. It will include UU History, All Faiths history, how we are organized, what being a member means—rights and responsibilities, the process of joining, opportunities for involvement and going deeper. Stay tuned for more information.

As new people join we will schedule a "New Member Welcoming Ceremony" in a Sunday Service. If you are thinking about joining All Faiths or are interested in more information, please contact someone on the Membership Committee or the minister, Rev. Beard. Thank you!

CARTWRIGHTS TO HOST FOURTH HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE



Doug and Diane Cartwright will once again host their annual Holiday Open House at their home Saturday, December 12. Friends and members of All Faiths are invited to drop by anytime between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and share drinks, refreshments, and conversation in this festive time of year.

The Cartwrights are located at 4596 Little River Lane off Orange River Blvd. in the Orange Hills subdivision located about a half mile east of Cracker Barrel at Exit 141 of I-75. Their phone is 561-9848. They encourage car pooling; however there is ample parking along Little River Lane. A sign-up sheet is available in the Fellowship Room so that the hosts can gauge the amount of food and refreshments to have on hand. Come ring in the holidays with your church family and friends.

TOGETHER ON THE JOURNEY

by Jeanne Ezell

Each month the newsletter team will profile an All Faiths' veteran and/or new member. This month we feature Sharon Gray.



Sharon with Natasha

Sharon Gray A First-Year Baby Boomer Member Since 2013

My story begins shortly after WWII, when I was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, during the first year of what was later called the Baby Boom generation. My parents divorced when I was very young, and I was raised by a single mom, quite a difficult task in the 50s. Paid less than any man in her machine shop, Mom struggled with two jobs

and two daughters. We moved almost every year, from northeast New Jersey to more rural northwestern New Jersey, so I was often the new kid in school. When I was eleven, Mom had another daughter, from a failed relationship.

I became a teenage bride and mother. . . and a high school dropout because in those days girls who were married or "with child" were not permitted to remain in high school. My daughter was born in the last year of the Baby Boomers. I eventually had two more children, my last born in 1970. My husband was a conservative, born at the end of the Silent Generation. My views were quite different from his; our friends and family called me a "Commie." We moved to Southern New Jersey in 1971 for his work. The next year my mom died in open heart surgery, and we inherited my 14-year-old sister.

My life went on like a soap opera, with lack of money, divorce, mental illnesses, alcohol and drug abuse, and physical and sexual abuse. After nearly twenty years of marriage, my husband and I separated and then divorced. My three children and I became TANF federal assistance and Food Stamp recipients. I had gotten a GED and in 1980 finally graduated with a BS in Environmental Public Health. My first "real" job was as a state-licensed inspector with a county health department.

By the early 80s, my daughter had moved to Florida. With two preteen boys still at home, I entered graduate school and commuted 55 miles each way to Drexel University in Philadelphia. I graduated in 1984 with an M.S. degree in

Environmental Science & Engineering/Industrial Hygiene. By the 90s my career expanded to the private sector in the environmental and industrial health and safety field. In 1992, my children grown and gone, I became a grandmother thanks to my middle son and his girlfriend.

By 1997 I realized I needed help and joined a twelve-step program. I made many friends there but always had a problem with turning my life over to "my higher power." During that time, I also found some secular programs online to follow. In 1998 I took a severance package from an electric utility, bought a camper van, and for a few months drove across the United States with my Fritz the cat. That was the most spiritual experience of my life: being in solitude, in national parks and reservations, driving on Blue Highways. . . and working on the steps.

Early in the twelve-step program, struggling with this higher power, I heard a commercial on NPR about UUA: "Imagine a religion that embraces many beliefs. . . including yours. . . encouraging you to seek your own spiritual path." Now, that was something I could buy into! The literature I requested was interesting, and I found a small struggling congregation about an hour away, unfortunately a little too far for me to participate in the non-Sunday activities and I stopped going.

In 1998 I received a call from a UUA congregational growth coordinator: Would I be interested in getting together with others to explore the idea of getting a UU church in our area? I said that I was only going to keep the computerized mailing list, but that responsibility grew. Those of us in the beginning of the congregation were driven, worked hard, and held everything together. In February 14, 1999, our South Jersey Shore Congregation had its first service, and our second name change. We had a full time minister in six months, with UUA funding that lasted for about four years. They now have a half-time interim minister and are conducting a ministerial search.

Meanwhile, I also committed to various causes. I protested the Iraq invasion, co-founded a humanist group, worked in the peace and social justice movement, was involved in human and animal rights, and became politically active. In the middle of all this, in 2004, I became the custodian of my twelve-year-old grandson, starting over with a teenager-teachers' conferences, high school band competition, Boy Scouts (he became an Eagle Scout) and more. Justin is now 23, stationed at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station and transferring to San Diego in January 2016. With my two sons also in California and my sister in Maine, I have both East and West Coast destinations for traveling in my travel trailer.

continued on page 9

In 2010 I retired and in 2011 moved to Fort Myers, where my daughter lives. She runs her own specialty health food store, The Skinny Pantry. She and her husband are also legal guardians to the two girls of a single mom who is unable to provide for them. My time is filled with helping people with their computers, fostering kittens from Lee County Animal Services, getting some traveling in, being the Treasurer of the Free Inquiry Group of SWFL, and being involved in All Faiths Congregation.

I had heard Wayne Robinson when he was the minister at UUCFM in 1998 and I was in Fort Myers visiting my daughter. In 2011, while visiting and real estate shopping, I read one of Wayne's letter's to the editor and found he was still in the area, leading another congregation, All Faiths. There I found friendly, loving people who were also working hard to keep a congregation growing and stay strong. I became a full-time member of All Faiths in 2013 and now serve on several committees and on the Board. I also attend functions, have friends and tend my vegetable garden bed at our sister UU congregation, UUCFM. I'll be looking forward to all the changes, challenges and opportunities that the next few years will bring to our All Faiths Unitarian Congregation. ■

[Special Note: Subsequent to this article being written, at the November 30, 2016, Board Meeting, Sharon also agreed to serve as Treasurer until the end of that term in March 2017. Thank you for all you do, Sharon.]

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA?

by Carol Elrod

See alligators and crocodiles of all sizes from one foot to 15 feet long, guaranteed, at Gatorama near Palmdale. It's a 1950s, roadside Florida attraction located on U.S. 27 one and a half miles south of the little town, which is on the west side of Lake Okeechobee. This is a perfect place to take the grandchildren and yourselves! Gatorama is wheelchair accessible. Hundreds, if not thousands, of gators live at Gatorama, but you'll be safe on the boardwalks.

This attraction is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and has two shows a day – at 11:45 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. When we were there, a naturalist took us around and told us all about the beasts. There is a store on the premises, where you can buy alligator meat (It tastes like chicken.), belts and handbags.

The entry fee per adult is \$14.95, and children over a certain size are \$8.95. Discount for senior citizens. If you want to learn more, check out www.gatorama.com.

ANNUAL PLEDGE DRIVE TO LAUNCH ON JANUARY 17



The Stewardship Team has announced it will launch the Annual Pledge Drive with a series of house parties beginning January 17. The pledge drive will conclude on Founders' Day, February 21, with an event celebrating our vision for the future.

All Faiths is trying to build a sustainable budget from information gained from pledges from our members. While it is understood that economic conditions can change from day to day or month to month, *it is vital that an annual budget be based on fact - not hope.*

All members of All Faiths will be invited to participate in a series of house parties at individual homes and at All Faiths itself. Those who cannot attend one of these parties will have an opportunity to have a personal visit from a visiting steward who will engage the member in conversation about the future and the vision of All Faiths. The purpose of these house parties and the visitations is to obtain pledge cards from every member so that a viable budget can be built for fiscal year 2016-17.

More information will be available in the January newsletter.

ALL FAITHS NOMINATING COMMITTEE HARD AT WORK



Carol Elrod, (standing) chair of the nominating committee and committee members (from the left) **Carol Siferd**, **Midge Magstadt** and **Lewis Robinson**, are hard at work choosing nominees for Board Chair, Vice Chair and three Governors to be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting in March.

HANDMADE BOLIVIAN CRAFTS NOW ON SALE AT ALL FAITHS

December 6 - after service



It's that time of year again, when crafts made by Bolivians go on sale at All Faiths for the holiday season - while supplies last, that is. These beautiful crafts make wonderful gifts and sell out quickly. The non-government organization, **Mano a Mano**, provides the crafts to All Faiths. This organization was founded by our own All Faiths members, **Joan and Segundo Velasquez** and we can be very proud of what they are accomplishing in Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in the world.

Here are some of the many projects undertaken by Mano a Mano primarily in remote locations: distribution of medical supplies (from the US), construction of medical clinics, roads, water reservoirs, schools and housing for teachers; instruction in and demonstration of farming techniques to greatly increase food production; and airplane service for medical services as well as air drops of emergency supplies where and when they are needed.

Joan and Segundo will be delighted to provide information for those who are interested in helping with the projects, either in the US or in Bolivia. Please read more by visiting the website, manoamano.org.



Mano a Mano founders, **Joan and Segundo Velasquez**

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM NEWS

by Joan Marshall



Joan Marshall, with other All Faithers holding a banner on McGregor Boulevard in support of the Paris Climate Summit.

As you read this, countries from around the world are meeting in Paris, seeking ways to cooperate in rescuing the world from the ravages of climate change. Based upon preliminary commitments, we know this will only be a first step on a path toward sustainability. But it will be a monumental achievement if humanity can agree upon a framework for global cooperation in this fight to protect our planet. The Paris agreement will no doubt be far from perfect and its implementation will not be guaranteed; it will require continuous pressure and vigilance. Still we will finally be moving in the right direction.

Closer to home, our Climate Action Team is working diligently to get more Floridians for Solar Choice petitions signed. Our deadline is the end of December. At our next CAT meeting at 1:30 p.m. on December 16th we will be discussing another urgent issue...the threat of fracking coming to Southwest Florida. There will be numerous bills concerning fracking before the 2016 Florida Legislature in this winter's session which we need to either support or oppose. We will be laying out a plan of action to help defend our community against this threat to our environment.

The struggle against climate change is not an easy one, but we draw encouragement from a continuously growing grassroots movement that is global in scope and inclusive in nature. We are part of a rising consciousness around the world of a shared responsibility to care for the earth that sustains us all. To learn more about this movement you might want to check these websites: www.350.org; www.ourvoices.org; www.climaterealityproject.org; www.theclimategroup.org. These are only a few of the hundreds of groups dedicated to meeting the challenge of climate change.

ZIMMERMAN CONCERT & CLIMATE ACTION TEAM GETTING THE WORD OUT



Over 40 people attended the **Roy Zimmerman** (above) Concert on November 20th. Many of Roy's songs tie in closely with our Climate Action Team initiatives.



Above, Climate Action Team (CAT) members **Steve Fisher** (left) and **Lynda Thompson** (right, wearing one of her signature hats) collect petition signatures for Floridians for Solar Choice.



Joan Marshall, CAT co-chair, wearing her Floridians for Solar Choice tee shirt, with Roy.



After service on November 29th **Joan Marshall**, (far right) Co-Chair of CAT, gathered congregants near McGregor Boulevard to participate in a "virtual" march to support Climate Change/Paris Summit Awareness marches taking place all over the world.



Floridians for Solar Choice

**AMERICANA COMMUNITY MUSIC
ASSOCIATION (ACMA)
DECEMBER CONCERT
LINE-UP AT ALL FAITHS**

**December 5
Harpeth Rising
w. Bill Steel opening**

**December 12
Holiday Party**



"IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC"

Tuesday Movie

Tuesday, December 15 - 10:30 a.m.

A Christmas Story



Ralphie has to convince his parents, his teacher, and Santa that a Red Ryder B.B. gun really is the perfect gift for the 1940s.

Director: Bob Clark
Writers: Jean Shepherd (based on the novel "In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash," a best-seller published in 1966.) Shepherd also wrote the screenplay.
Stars: Peter Billingsley, Melinda Dillon, Darren McGavin |

DECEMBER CLEANING CREW SCHEDULE

Before Sunday, Dec. 06 Joyce Ramay and Ed Kleinow
Before Sunday, Dec. 13 Chris and Steve Fisher
Before Sunday, Dec. 20 Bill Snider and Sharon Gray
Before Sunday, Dec. 27 Cloyd and Jeanne Ezell

Thanks to these member volunteers who show up month after month, keep our beautiful building looking presentable, and save us approximately \$5,200 a year.

FINANCE REPORT

by Joyce Ramay
Chair, Finance Committee

We appreciate all the contributions that our people make to sustain the services and programs of All Faiths. With your financial support, we can continue to grow and to provide a haven for people who share our joy in openness, diversity, and continual exploration for truth, justice, inspiration, and wisdom. If you can make an extra contribution before the year ends, it will help us to reduce or eliminate the deficit that we have had for the first ten months.

We will hold a special congregational meeting after services on December 13 to approve the budget for January through March of 2016, to cover the three months before we implement our new fiscal year starting on April 1st.

Cash Assets as of 11-5-15

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Iberia Bank | 8,460.42 |
| Iberia Op. Reserve | 18,425.03 |
| Raymond James Legacy | 31,488.11 |
| Pay Pal | <u>70.00</u> |
| Total | 58,443.56 |

October 2015

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Income | 13,249.00 |
| Expenses | <u>16,750.63</u> |
| Loss | (3,501.63) |

Oktoberfest fundraiser had a net income of **\$963**. We appreciated the work of Kendra Maroon, Annely Hudanick and others in organizing this event.

10 months 2015

| | | |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Income | 164,528.85 | 102% of Budget |
| Expenses | <u>177,982.09</u> | 102% of Budget |
| Loss | (13,453.24) | |

Deadline for the **January** Issue of *Connections*
December 21

(Brief announcements may be accepted later, and will be included *if* space and time permit.)

OFFICE HOURS: 10 am to 3:30 pm, Monday thru Thurs;
closed on Friday; 9 am to 11 am, Sunday.
Phone: 226-0900; E-mail: office@allfaiths-uc.org
Office Manager: Regina Kilmartin