

April 16th will be a significant day in UUC history. We want you there!

On Saturday, April 16th, every member will have the opportunity to help chart the course of UUC's future for the next five years and beyond.

As the culmination of a visioning process initiated by the Board of Trustees, every member, including our youth, is invited to the visioning workshop, **"Looking Toward Our Future."** The goal of this group activity involving our entire congregation is straightforward but profound.



As a community, we will create a fresh vision for our future.

As a group, we will articulate a new vision, mission, and a set of high-level objectives to be presented to the congregation for approval during May's Annual Meeting. Since our congregation has already done much visionary work in the past several years, we are in a great position to do this with excellent results. Barry Finkelstein, a consultant with UUA, will guide us through the "Looking Toward Our Future" workshop, a process used successfully with other UU congregations around the country.

How do you sign up for "Looking Toward Our Future?"

You can sign up for the workshop online (see www.uuclearwater.org).

You have a choice of participating in a morning session, from 9 am to noon, or an afternoon session, from 1 pm to 4 pm. Please sign up as soon as possible, as we need to organize the breakout groups so that all voices will be heard and represented fairly.

Lunch for everyone will be provided from noon to 1 p.m. Childcare will be available.

If you have questions about the workshop or visioning process in general, contact Vision Task Force members: Scott Milinder at scottuuc@gmail.com (727) 421-2818; Denise Seeber at Denise_Seeber@tampabay.rr.com (727) 474-2647; Pat St. Clair, stclairpm@hotmail.com (727) 535-1250



**Clearwater UU
Annual Auction
April 2, 2011**

**Plan to join us for an evening of
great food, entertainment and fun!**

Doors open at 4:00 pm for the start of the silent auction and reception featuring a variety of delicious appetizers and cash bar.

At 6:15 pm, the live auction will begin, followed by a Happy Hour event with cash bar, great conversation, dessert and the musical styling of keyboardist Bill Barrett.

Inside this issue:

- 2 Rev. Abhi Janamanchi
- 3 Pres. Terrence Stapleton / Membership News
- 4 Religious Education: Christine Pensa
- 5 Music Director Dr. David Katz
- 6 Worship Services
- 7 Social Justice Council
- 8 Open Issues Forum / Denominational News
- 9 UUA General Assembly
- 10 Above & Beyond / Circle Dinners
- 11 Monthly Theme, Books & Movies



Easter is a festival that calls us to celebrate the tenacious, improbable miracle of life.

The Nobel Prize winning Polish poet, Wislawa Szymborska, puts it beautifully:

**“The commonplace miracle:
that so many ordinary miracles abound.
The usual miracles: unseen dogs barking in the dead of the night.
A miracle: just look around you! The inescapable earth.
An extra miracle, extra . . . yet ordinary:
The unthinkable can be thought.”**

Everything is a miracle, she says. Furthermore, this miraculous, billion year uprising of life on this earth shares its miraculous quality with amazing people like the son of Mary, who defied arbitrary authority and tried to create a different society. He did this even though it cost him his precious life. Yes, the unthinkable can be thought!

The miraculous, the improbability of a crocus in winter is no less marvelous than the uprisings of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Vaclav Havel, or the Egyptian people; these are one with the unlikely miracles of life itself.

The Greek word for “resurrection” is “Anastasias.” It means “to stand up and be counted in your life.” So, to be resurrected means to take a justice-rooted stand and to live by that stand throughout the days of our life. Jesus lived such a life before he died, not after it. So did Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. So did countless men and women throughout history.

They all lead resurrected lives now. Their honesty, their commitment to truth, to peace, to non-violence, their ability to love their enemies, their sense of integrity, and in short, their entire lives, will never disappear, even, I dare say, long after people no longer remember them by name.

This is what the Easter event signifies to us today. It means that the same commanding and transforming power that was in Jesus, that helped him to be a new-being, can also be in us making us servants of a Life that is larger than our own. It means that we too can be resurrected, again and again, be born again, not simply at some future time or future life, but here and now. That’s the good news of Easter.

In faith, Abhi

FLOWERS FOR SUNDAY SERVICES



Call Carol Heichel if you wish to place flowers on the pulpit with an announcement in the Sunday Bulletin.

You may reserve a special date on the flower calendar outside the office doors. Bring your own arrangement or order a bouquet for \$40.

You may also choose to contribute the \$40 to RCS (Religious Community Services) and a token rose cluster will be provided.

To schedule a flower contribution please contact:

Carol Heichel (727) 738-8982 or e-mail clheichel@hotmail.com

FROM OUR PRESIDENT TERRENCE STAPLETON



Terrence
Stapleton

Philosopher and poet George Santayana famously remarked, **“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”** Religious leaders should find the aphorism no less relevant.

While the UUC has every reason to be proud of its past, it must ask if its current vision statement will attract future generations of those who seek a liberal religion community committed to our principles. Will our beliefs compete with instantaneous communication and a spreading anti-religion trend? Can we Unitarian Universalists serve our members and community in our quest for a just, virtuous, and moral society?

On April 16, a Vision Workshop will be held (see cover for details) for the specific task of finalizing our UUC Vision Statement providing a foundation for a vision you will be asked to approve at the May 15, 2011 Annual Meeting.

The moderator will be a professional consultant from the UUA. Our consultant brings many years of experience helping UU churches define their unique Vision Statements and has assisted the UUC in the past to define a pathway ready for a common vision for our religious community.

With your approval of the Vision Statement at the Annual Meeting, certain action items will immediately be incorporated into our planning process while other long term programs, such as a large scale capital fund raising drive, will be assigned to special investigation committees for analysis and recommendations.

We cannot allow the past to define an uncertain future. It is of critical importance that every member attend the Vision Workshop. Bring your dreams with you.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have three more membership events before the UUC church year ends on May 31st. We are hopeful these events will appeal to our visitors and friends who would like to more seriously consider membership but may have found our event schedule difficult to attend.

The next UU 101 will be held on Sunday, April 10th, after services, from 1 pm to 2:30 pm in the Chorale Room. Join us for this introduction to Unitarian Universalism. A pizza lunch will be served.



The next Pathways to Membership Program is scheduled for Sunday, April 17th, from 1:00 pm to 2:30 am in the Library.

This special session has been created by Abhi to replace the three sessions normally held on consecutive Thursday evenings. This session will be a wonderful way to meet other people who most likely share many of the reasons you have for attending UUC. You will be given the opportunity to see where you may contribute to the ministries of UUC. Hopefully, you will be inspired and enjoy the fellowship of our wonderful community. Sign up sheets are at the welcoming desk, guest table, or on our [web site](#).

A New Member Recognition Ceremony will be during the Sunday Service on May 15th.

That Sunday is also the Annual Meeting Day, and it would be wonderful to see a large group of new members join UUC before the meeting.

If you have any questions about these programs, please see me at UUC, email me at wescon@tampabay.rr.com or call me at 727-596-7123.

Or speak to any members of the Membership Committee: Diane Fraser, Faye Paris, Ann Scott, Denise Seeber, Barb Shimer or Tricia Weimer.

Bill Snell - Membership Chair

Hello Friends,



Spring is here!

These days, lots of children and youth spend time inside watching TV, going online, or texting friends when they could enjoy the great outdoors. **I can't think of a better way to enjoy this beautiful time of year than to be outside having fun with friends.**

Beginning April 3rd, there will be a morning scavenger hunt.

Each Sunday morning from 10:15-10:30 am there will be a short scavenger hunt (with prizes) for all ages on the playground. The purpose of this activity is to encourage our children to become more connected with the world around them, arrive on time, and look forward to their day at UUC while having fun!

Of course, there is an ulterior motive. **These scavenger hunts are also great practice for our annual Children's Easter Egg Hunt and youth egg toss on April 24th.** We will begin accepting donations of individually wrapped candy, toys and trinkets on March 27th in the Social Hall. Cash donations and items for older children and teens are especially needed.

Why should the kids have all the fun? Come join us!

Volunteers are needed to fill eggs, make posters and help supervise the Easter activities. A sign up sheet will be in the Social Hall near the Religious Education table.

I hope to see you on Sunday with a smile!

Christine Pensa
Religious Education Coordinator

If you would like to know more about the Religious Education Program at UUC, contact Christine Pensa at: christinep@uuclearwater.org



Spring Garden Party

Saturday April 23, 2-8 pm
Terry Stapleton's Home
580 South Florida Ave. Tarpon Springs

Children's Games * Egg Hunt * Great Food
Soft Drinks * Music * Dancing * Swimming
Golf * Horse Shoes * and much more.

Please RSVP: tstap41@msn.com



Russian choral music, particularly from the 19th century, is stirring and impassioned.

Interestingly, I don't think it gets the attention it deserves in the United States, perhaps due, in part, to the language challenges, both to American performers and audiences.



One of my favorite Russian choral pieces from the 19th century is Pavel Chesnokov's "Salvation is Created."

Chesnokov's (1877-1944) quickly gained prominence as a fine choral composer. By the age of 30, he had written roughly 400 sacred choral works. However, with the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the dawn of communism, his sacred music aspirations had to be abandoned. He wrote another 100 secular choral works before the church in which he had been choirmaster was destroyed by Joseph Stalin and his communist regime in order to erect government buildings.



Pavel Chesnokov

Given the tenor of the times in which Chesnokov lived and what he must have experienced as a man of obvious great faith, how ironic that Chesnokov's best known work in the United States is "Salvation is Created."

Certainly, Chesnokov could not find his salvation in Russia, torn asunder by political dictates and moral turpitude in his own time. One could also logically conclude that by eventually giving up composition all together, he had become disheartened at not being able to express what was truly in his heart.

In many aspects, this may sound like a very sad story. However, as a musician I can relate to what the composition of those pieces did for Chesnokov. Even though he could no longer write what he wanted to write, he had created works which sustained him through his life, even when his life became challenging.

To me, the concept of salvation, or being saved from what has become an impossible situation, is the hope which sustains. For Chesnokov, that salvation involved a sacred, Christian base. For some of us, this might make sense, while for others it may not. However, the idea of holding on with the help of something we value can be applied to all of us. Chesnokov's beautiful creations sustained him even when he could no longer compose the way he wanted to. It also sustained his personal human dignity, even when that was threatened by a brutal regime.



The communists could take all his worldly possessions and his rights from him, but they could not take his faith, his beliefs, his convictions and the ideas and music that he had already been permitted to compose before the communists took over.

Music's power of human expression is clear here. It was clear to Chesnokov's life and it is clear in mine. I look forward to finding that human power of expression through salvation during our Building of a Beloved Community in April.

Blessed Be and Shalom, David

Worship Services — Sundays at 10:30 am

April 3 Saved By Deeds Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Worship Associate: Heike Smith

Exploring the core message of Unitarian Universalism and its relevance for today's world. This is another "auction" sermon from 2010 purchased by Arnt Monge. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in deeds, not creeds. The single, consistent thread that winds through all of our principles and purposes is the call to action and engagement with the world around us.



April 10 Pushed Out: Immigration Reform in Florida Dr. Joyce Hamilton-Henry

Worship Associate: Bill Dishongh

SB 1070 was passed in Arizona to curtail illegal migration into the United States. This has resulted in increased racial profiling, raids, incarceration and deportation of undocumented immigrants. The service will address a similar trend in Florida and its impact on immigrants. Dr. Joyce Hamilton-Henry is the Director of ACLU's Mid-Florida Regional Office in Tampa. Hamilton-Henry, a native of Jamaica, holds a doctorate degree in social policy from Brandeis University, and she earned her bachelor's and master's of Social Work degrees from the University of Connecticut. She worked, for over 20 years, as an adjunct professor at the University of Hartford and director of the Office of Multicultural Programs.

April 17 The Flower Communion: A Service For All Ages Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Worship Associate: Heike Smith

The Flower Communion service was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in the Czech Republic. The service involves the following: each person brings a flower to the service; people leave their flowers in vases at the entrance. Early in the service, the bouquets of flowers are carried in by children. Toward the end of the service, each person comes forward and chooses a flower different from the one they brought.

The UUC Adult Chorale will present parts of the work MASS by Leonard Bernstein today as part of a year long preparation to present more of the work in 2012.

Considered by some to be a work of genius by a genius while considered by others to be offensive and vulgar, MASS is Bernstein's attempt to convey his desire for peace in a diverse world. Musically, the piece is an amalgam of all that is Bernstein: classical, jazz and musical theater.

April 24 Resurrections of the Spirit Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Worship Associate: Heike Smith

We are called to create and discover meaning until the end of our days. In the course of that living, there will be wounding and healing, deaths and resurrections. Being open to both and willing to live in and through both is the purpose of a life well-lived.

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Social Justice Council News

Economic Justice Team – Linda Stoller Immigration as a Moral Issue Action Alert



Two Arizona-type immigration bills, SB 2040 and HB 7089, are being proposed in Florida's current legislative session. Although it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to enforce immigration law, these bills encourage local law enforcement to spend time and money arresting "suspected undocumented immigrants" in a time when law enforcement agencies are already having to cut budgets. In addition, it targets our neighbors, making immigrants fearful of being deported. This is not the way to develop sensible immigration laws and policy in this country.

As Unitarian Universalists, we are encouraged to learn more about immigration reform and to express our opinions on this proposed legislation. To learn more about immigration reform, sign up at the social justice table after the service on Sunday.

To express your views on this legislation please email:
Mike Haridopolos,
President of the Florida Senate at haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov
Dean Cannon,
Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives at dean.cannon@myfloridahouse.gov

Environmental Justice Team – Dotti Doyle

The Green Team met on March 19th. **We are drafting a letter to President Obama and Florida's Members of Congress asking that they reconsider energy policies in light of the recent tragedy in Japan.** More resources should be devoted to sustainable energy than to nuclear power and fossil fuels.

Work on UUC's Demonstration Garden is planned for sometime in April.
Further information will be provided in the Weekly News.

Earth Day

Celebrate Earth Day by attending the first in a monthly **"Earth Cinema Circle"** **Saturday night, April 23rd, at 7:00 pm,** with a showing of two short films, **The Story of Stuff** and **Trashed**.



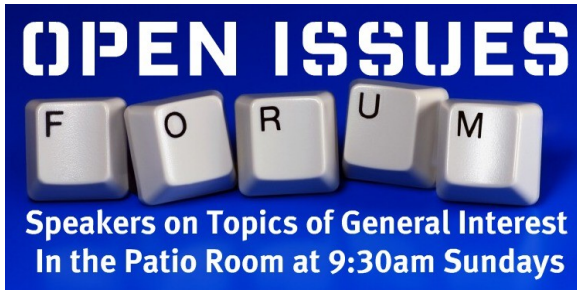
◆ Annie Leonard's 20-minute film, **The Story of Stuff**, presents the environmental and social impacts of "our obsession with stuff." Not preachy or judgmental, Annie creates a new way to think about the choices we make in our own lives and how they connect to everyone and everything.

◆ Pulitzer Prize-winning author Russell Baker once said "The American Dream is to turn goods into trash as fast as possible." Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Bill Kirkos' film **Trashed**.



Discussion will be held between and after the films. Refreshments will be served. Love offerings are welcome. The next meeting of the Green Team will be **Saturday, April 23rd from 9:30 to 11:30 am.** **All are welcome.**

Dotti "GreenJeans"



April 3rd (Canceled because of auction cleanup)

April 10th. Marilyn Hafling. "Homeless Families & The New Homeless"
 Marilyn is a Board member of Family Promise Pinellas and a member of UUSP's Homeless Ministry. She came here from Minnesota 32 years ago as a social worker and was involved in family law practice for several years.

April 17th. Dorothy Wylie. General discussion, "Labels Matter"
 Often unintentionally, headlines, words and phrases used to report the news tend to foster bias. Labels are important as shorthand, but they can impede the 4th Principle of UUism: "A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning." Please bring your examples.

April 24th (Easter) John Chase. "How did the Swiss do it?"
 For a 100 years, the Swiss have resisted international pressure to wage an American-style drug war. Since 2002, when Switzerland joined the UN, the International Community is slowly accepting the Swiss success. It is a case history that needs to be told, more easily now that it is available in English.

May 1st Kathy Krohn and the RE team. "The Future of our Faith - the Children of UUC"
 We strive to build a beloved community, one child, one family at a time, with a dynamic religious education program that engages the minds, hearts and hands of the children. Our ministry is to grow children with caring spirits, able to contribute to the world around them without dogma but with principles to guide them. Bring your questions about how young UUs are being educated to meet the concerns of these modern times.

Denominational Affairs

by Judy Wade

On Saturday, March 19, the West Central Cluster sponsored an immigration panel discussion attended by more than 40 members from several of the cluster congregations. Ramon Carrion, Carolina Krawarik, Joan Lund, and Tempe Taudte shared their experiences with last summer's protest against the Phoenix immigration profiling practices. Our own Bill Dishongh did a great job as facilitator of the informative discussions.

Floridians may soon find themselves in a similar legislative struggle over immigration. Unitarian Universalists already have a group focused on educating and activating UU congregations statewide in civic engagement for immigration, as well as other legislative issues related to the UU Principles. In 2008, the Unitarian Universalists Legislative Ministry of Florida (UULMF) aligned with organizations to **oppose** the Marriage Protection Amendment to the Florida Constitution. In 2010, they **supported** the redistricting reform Fair Districts Amendments 5 and 6 to end gerrymandering in Florida. These amendments passed statewide.

They are currently sponsoring a statewide speaking tour on the issue of media reform. The Mission of UULMF is to foster transformative communities of Unitarian Universalists working together on legislative issues and carrying out action plans consistent with UU values and desired legislative outcomes.
Make plans to attend the Florida District Meeting on April 8 - 10. The meeting will be hosted by the Orlando UU Congregation which is only 70 miles from Clearwater.





**The UUA General Assembly (GA)
will be held in Charlotte, NC
June 22-26, 2011**

By Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

**The UUA General Assembly will mark
the 50th anniversary of the
consolidation of the American Unitarian
Association and the Universalist Church
of America.**

(The actual date of the anniversary is May 15.)

Anniversary events at GA include the opening ceremony, featuring past UUA presidents and international guests, a lecture on the past and future of Unitarian Universalism, a panel discussion on UU social justice history, and a “New Epiphany Revival Show,” led by UU composer and performer Nick Page.

There will also be uplifting worship services at GA. The Service of the Living Tradition honors ministers who have been received into fellowship, religious education leaders, retired ministers, and deceased ministers. The sermon will be delivered by my friend and colleague, the Rev. Dr. Michael Schuler, who is the senior minister at the First Unitarian Society in Madison, WI. Abhimanyu and other youth will be leading Synergy worship, an inspiring multigenerational service of bridging and collaboration.

Another highlight of GA is the Ware Lecture. The lecture has been given every year since 1922 by a distinguished person selected by the UUA President in consultation with the GA planning committee. This year's Ware lecturer is Karen Armstrong, one of the world's leading commentators on religious affairs and a best-selling author. Her early work focused on the monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but she has since begun to explore the eastern religions. (Previous Ware lecturers have included Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., UU poet Mary Oliver, UU humorist Kurt Vonnegut, Elaine Pagels, Rashid Khalidi.)

Culturally, historically and theologically, the Unitarians and the Universalists had their own separate identities and orientations. The consolidation of these two faiths was a bold experiment. But what they held in common was a commitment to the power of a progressive faith to have a positive impact on the lives of people.

In the end, it was that shared commitment to the liberal ideals of freedom of belief, hope for the future, and working to improve society that prevailed. As we mark the 50th anniversary and envision our future, we need to ask ourselves what were the dreams and hopes of our forebears; how have we lived up to them; where have we fallen short, and, what are the lessons from our past that we can take forward to create a better future?



Registration for GA opened March 1. For registration and housing information, please visit <http://www.uua.org/ga>.

I hope many of you will join thousands of Unitarian Universalists from across the country to reflect on our association's achievements since the merger, and to chart a new course for the future.

2010-2011 Program Focus for UUC

“**Building the Beloved Community**” is our worship and lifespan learning program year focus for 2010-2011. This year, we will reflect, consider, and act upon nine religious and spiritual themes. Each theme plays a part in the development of a well-grounded religious and spiritual life. They provide us with a set of common stories and ideas that become elements of an ongoing community conversation.

September: **Mission and Ministry**
October: **God**
November: **Gratitude**
December: **Hope**
January: **Justice**
February: **Unitarian Universalism**
March: **Faith**
April: **Salvation/Resurrection**
May: **Growth**



APRIL: Salvation/Resurrection

Books:

Kathleen Rolenz, Christian Voices in Unitarian Universalism

John Shelby Spong, Resurrection & Born of a Woman

Robert Funk, Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium

John A. Buehrens, Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals.

Robin R. Meyers, Saving Jesus from the Church: How to Stop Worshiping Christ and Start Following Jesus.

Marcus Borg, Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary.

John Dominic Crossan, The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus.

Movies:

The Shipping News, starring Kevin Spacey, Julianne Moore

A Beautiful Mind, starring Russell Crowe

Bi-Centennial Man, starring Robin Williams

Dogma, starring Matt Damon, Ben Affleck

The Last Temptation of Christ starring Willem Dafoe, Harvey Keitel

Websites:

www.johnshelbyspong.com

www.sojo.net

www.uua.org

www.uuclearwater.org

www.au.org

www.aclu.org

Each month, Rev. Abhi lists books that complement his theme for the month. The Maxwell Library at UUC has some of his recommended books:

Christian Voices in Unitarian Universalism by Kathleen Rolenz
2 copies of **Understanding the Bible:**

An Introduction for Skeptics by John Buehrens

The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus

by John Dominic Crossan

The Maxwell Library has other books by authors on the list:

Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism

by John Shelby Spong

The Acts of Jesus: What Did Jesus Really Do by Robert Funk.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME DATED MATERIAL

SUUSI 2011
Joy!
July 17-23 Radford, VA
Southeast Unitarian Universalist
Summer Institute

OCTAGRAM

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists
Of Clearwater and the Octagon Arts Center

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Octagram Editor **Lary Crews**

**DO YOU HAVE A COMMENT OR
A QUESTION RELATING TO THE
MINISTER OR MINISTRY?**

If so, please contact one of the Members of the
Congregational Committee on Ministry:

Jenn Bouchie 470-9422
Sue Boone 531-5236
Jackie Brown 772-6764
Lucille Odeneal 743-1304

Please send OCTAGRAM submissions by email to
Octagram@uuclearwater.org. Deadline for
each month's issue is midnight of the third Sun-
day of the month prior to the month of issue.

**Sunday Worship Service
information is on centerfold.**

Visit: www.uuclearwater.org