



UUCFM Office Manager <officemanager@uucfm.org>

UUCFM October Monthly Newsletter

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To: Test sarah Houghton <officemanager@uucfm.org>

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The Communicator

October, 2024

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Volunteer of the Month

Pat Katz

Volunteer of the Month.

Pat Katz is our October Volunteer of the Month. We are very grateful to Pat for stepping in to lead Membership. She is a welcoming presence in the Narthex as we come to the service, and newcomers speak of her warm reception when they first came to visit. She is faithful in following up with connection cards and sees that possible members know when we hold UU and You. Pat and Dave came to us

from the east coast of Florida to help their daughter with the care of her growing family. Pat completes the triumvirate with Lynn Lacy and Joyce Jaecques at our Welcome Table and helps us all feel we are coming to a place where we belong when we come to our service.



Spotlight on the Board

Second in a series

Bill Petrarca

Bill Petrarca, a recent president of UUCFM and universally recognized as the go-to guy to get things done, saved the day for us by putting a mention in INDEED that we were looking for a UU minister. How remarkable that a UU minister residing in Costa Rica

would take a look at that notice! The rest, as they say, is history. As remarkable as Bill's professional achievements are, what is even more significant is that much of his work has been centered in philosophical thought, particularly the work of Henry Nelson Wieman, an American philosopher and theologian.

Bill grew up in Akron, Ohio, in a close-knit neighborhood where the kids played together, and everyone knew everyone else. He remembers Monopoly games that went on for days. The board sat on the porch night and day and games lasted for so long that the kids had to manufacture their own bills because those that came with the game ran out. So long, in fact, that they created bills for half a million dollars out of paper bags. The stakes were high!

One characteristic of this Italian, Catholic community was its warm welcome to immigrants. Bill recalls how neighbors and family sponsored and provided for immigrants from Italy as they were assimilated into the community. He also remembers fondly the support of the neighbors and extended family when his father died. The procession of cars exceeded 200.

Bill's career shows widespread interests and a broad spectrum of talents. It is hard to keep up with all he has done. He started out at Bell Labs in New Jersey working on anti-ballistic missiles; he got into computers just as

this field was taking off. Programmers were in demand but since colleges and universities were just developing curricula, he became computer literate and sometimes found himself in the position of translator between the nerds and us regular folk. Back in Ohio, he got a job with NASA developing a safety database after the tragic fire in the Apollo 1 Command Module which killed three astronauts. He then went into banking just as it was automating and was in on the first ATM. He became a strategic manager, but the laws in those days prohibited banks from having branches. They could only expand by buying up adjacent property. So, having gone as far as possible at the bank, Bill turned to consulting.

Bill and his wife, Jane Strathman, began their own consulting firm, SAI, in Columbus, Ohio. They found an area where there is high demand, and which continued to operate even after they retired to Fort Myers. Their mission was to teach communication skills. Major clients were Microsoft and a large health care chain.

Wieman's ideas appealed to an empirically oriented person like math-major Bill. Wieman, who eventually became a Unitarian minister, held the view that God or the divine was not a supernatural being but rather the process by which we transform to the greatest good. His thought provides the basis for Peter Mayer's song where we sing "Everything is holy now." Bill had become interested in and subscribed to Wieman's thought before he came to UUCFM. Here he has found a community in

harmony with his views. He is dedicated to seeing our principles flourish. As Bill changed and adapted numerous times in his career, he has the exciting idea of helping our community find a fresh, original way of advancing our ideas and values, an idea which makes us curious and very hopeful about the future.



October Sharing Partner

Eva's Closet and Foundation

Our mission at Eva's Closet and Foundation (ECF) is to provide assistance to people in need, regardless of situation or circumstance, without judgement. We fulfill this mission by serving more than 1,500 individuals each month who are suffering from homelessness, poverty, and other risk factors in Southwest Florida. ECF provides necessities to clients at no cost, including, but not limited to, clothing, shoes, hygiene items, baby supplies, food, household supplies, and school supplies, with grace honor and respect.

A Representative from *Eva's Closet* will be speaking at service on Sunday, October 6.

Community Sharing Partners

Rev. Sue Gabrielson presents a check to Neighbors Network of Lee County, our July Community Sharing Partner.



Rev. Sue Gabrielson presents a check to Gary Robbins with RESET, our August Community Sharing Partner.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

“Fill the Gap” Campaign to Start

As the Fall colors of the out-of-town license plates begin to turn, our Stewardship Committee is ready to begin its “Fill the Gap” campaign. You may remember that our 2024-2025 budget had a \$25,000 hole in it. With the “Fill the Gap” campaign, we are asking members and friends to consider a one-time donation to help plug the hole and help balance our budget.

In the weeks ahead, the Stewardship Committee will be communicating how you can help. (We’ll be using our new Breeze system to make it easier for everyone.) Our goal is \$25,000. A couple years ago when we had the special

REACH campaign to help fund our new Minister, the Congregation responded most generously! To meet our continuing commitments to our new Minister and our fabulous staff, we need to come together once more to “Fill the Gap” with great rejoicing.

This is a transitional year for us as we prepare to decide on and implement the recommendations of the Futures Team – building new community connections and sustainability for UUCFM.

Keep an eye on this space and the weekly newsletters for further information about “Fill the Gap” campaign.

In service,
The Stewardship Committee

News from the Futures

Community Conversations

The Community Conversations, held on September 12 as part of the process led by our consultants, Sacred Places, brought out a wide range of members of our community, from other congregations (Unity and All

Faiths) to real estate professionals to our present partners, (the Symphony, the Scouts and the Quakers) to numerous community organizations. Rev. Sue and Bill Petrarca divided our guests into two groups and led them on a tour of our buildings and grounds. Leaders from Sacred Places then held discussions where these “stakeholders” offered ideas and concrete suggestions of how our property could be used for our benefit and for the benefit of our neighbors.

The Committee had a debriefing session and will sift through all the possibilities to find ones best meeting our needs and in harmony with our principles.

Stay tuned!





UPCOMING EVENTS & UUCFM HAPPENINGS

**To view UUCFM's October
calendar of events, please see the
attachment to this email.**

Board of Trustees Meeting

The Board Meeting will take place on Tuesday, **October 15th at 5:00 p.m.** The link to attend is <https://zoom.us/j/98592017228>

Upcoming Worship:

October's Soul Matters Theme is: *Deep Listening*

October 6 - Out and Allied - National Coming Out Day. A Representative from Eva's Closet will be speaking at service.

October 13 - Reflecting On the Chapters of Our Lives - Yom Kippur

October 20 - Listening for the Still Small Voice.
****Potluck***

October 27 - Remembering Our Beloved Dead

New Event!

Join us for a Bone Builders Class in Hobart Hall.
Visit www.leeneighbors.org to register.

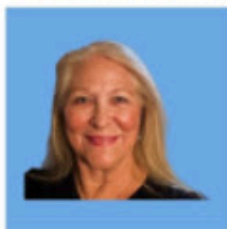


Announcing a NEW program in Lee County RSVP/NNLC Bone Builders

Bone Builders is an osteoporosis prevention and education program that seeks to improve balance, flexibility and muscle strength for participants 55 and older. The free program is co-sponsored by AmeriCorps Seniors Retired & Senior Volunteer Program and the Dr. Piper Center for Social Services and brought to the community by Neighbors Network of Lee County in conjunction with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers.

Classes will consist of 20 sessions, meeting twice a week on Monday and Wednesday from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM in Hobart Hall on the campus of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers. The first session begins on **Monday, October 28, 2024** and concludes on **January 22, 2025**. No classes will be held on **November 4 and 6; December 23, 25, or 30; or January 1.**

Presenter: Meg Macy



Meg has experience for several years as a volunteer trainer for a number of fitness programs. She has taken many in-person and online courses specific to bone health. We are fortunate to have Meg develop and spearhead this program that will be expanded throughout Lee County!

If you have any questions, please contact:
megmacy5@gmail.com

Location

Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Fort Myers
13411 Shire Lane
Fort Myers FL 33912

Must register at
leeneighbors.org

CLASS SIZE: 15 PEOPLE



Sometimes Saturdays Workshops with Rev. Sue

Hobart Hall

October 12th - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Putting Things in Order - Planning for the inevitable. We are all going to die, how can we help our loved ones by planning ahead (any age folks are welcome). There is a \$15.00 materials fee for this course and you must register with Sarah in the office by October 7th. Please bring your own lunch.

November 16th - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Just for Fun - Bring your favorite board or card games. We will play for a couple of hours and then share lunch together. Bring your own lunch.

Connection Circle for Women

Enrollment is now open. The first session will be **October 13** in the Virginia Seaman Library on campus. There will be eight sessions. The meeting time is 12:00-1:30 after Sunday Service. Join a caring group of women who share their feelings and thoughts about religion, spirituality, and meaning in their lives. It is a judgement-free gathering that welcomes all points of view.

If you have questions or if you feel moved to join, contact Helen Leddy (helen.leddy@gmail.com) or Diane Buckley (dineby@aol.com.) You are welcome!

CUUPS - Soups & Sides

As we come to the time of celebrations in October, CUUPS will be again offering our Soups and Sides.

On Sunday, October 13, following Sunday Service, CUUPS will have available a selection of soups and appropriate sides to go with. There will be vegetarian and vegan food as well, so all will be satisfied. We are asking a \$5 donation to cover supplies. This goes along with coffee service. The theme will be October Abundance and Harvest. Please join us for a bit of fun and good eating.

CUUPS Team



Potluck

Please join us for Potluck on **Sunday, October 20**, following Service. If you are able, please bring a dish to share. For more information please contact Dorothy Van Howe, dorothyvanhowe@gmail.com.



Potluck Fun

The trio sang the original words by Lesley Peterson at our Potluck on September 15.

*"When all children have the meals they need
To learn and grow, thrive and succeed
When all books are welcome on the shelf*

When a girl can grow up to be President"



Transforming Hearts

The Board and Worship Associates of UUCFM are taking a six-session course, facilitated by Mary Cline Golbitz and Cat Pivetti, called Transgender Inclusion in Congregations. The course was developed by the Transforming Hearts Collective. Here is how it is described at the website:

This course is for everyone from novices on trans identity to those with decades of life experience. Rather than simply offering a “trans 101,” this class pushes participants to the next level of congregational welcome, relationship-building, and skills-building. It counters mainstream narratives about who trans people are; supports understanding of non-binary identities (such as genderqueer, agender, and Two-Spirit); and employs a deeply intersectional approach. Congregational teams are particularly encouraged to participate.

We have purchased this course and intend for it to be made available to the congregation. Participants are learning how to deepen and implement our commitment to inclusion.



UUCFM Social Justice Activities & Committees

Social JUUstice Book Group: Contact Cat
(equalrightscommittee@UUCFM.org) for information and
for links.

Poetry Group: Writing through Oppression: Alternate Tuesday afternoons (2:30-4:30) and Saturday evenings (6:30-8:30). Contact Cat (equalrightscommittee@UUCFM.org) for information and for links.

Social Justice Action Team: Please join us on the last Sunday of the month, via Zoom, at 5:00 p.m.

Freedom to Read Library: Our UUCFM library team intends to protect the availability of books about diverse populations, even as those books are being banned. We are now seeking volunteers to staff the library after services.

Letters-to-the-Editor Workshops: Next date and time to be determined. We need volunteers to write to papers across Florida and beyond, as we see the oppression of many groups being intensified every day.

Post-carding: Online (TBD) and occasionally in Hobart Hall. Send postcards (or letters/emails) about your support for or opposition to causes and/or oppressive conditions to your representatives or to those who are running against them. Ask us for help or volunteer to staff a table. (Please be aware that there are some political actions or statements that we, as a faith community,

cannot say or advocate. Most of the causes must be addressed as letters from an individual, not sent in the name of our Congregation.)

Combating Fascism Group: For more information contact Cat, equalrightscommittee@UUCFM.org

Equal Rights/ Welcoming Congregation Committee: Help us become an ever more welcoming and inclusive congregation. Our work is urgent now, since Queer, Trans, and Gender Non-Conforming people are under attack by multiple groups, and as we speak out about the content of some of the dangerous strategies being employed against us and against other oppressed groups. Help us support a universe that will arc toward Justice. Contact Cat (equalrightscommittee@UUCFM.org) for information and for links.

Men's Group

Men's Group meets on the third Thursday of the month. Please join us at Cross Creek Golf Club at 11:30. Our next meeting will take place on **October 17th**. All are welcome! Good menu; low prices; great companionship. Please contact Dave Katz for more information, dkatz762@gmail.com

Weekly Music Rehearsals

Music rehearsals take place every Wednesday night in Classroom 3. 5:30 p.m. for Instrumentalists and 6:00 p.m. for Singers. All are welcome. Contact Jon at music@uucfm.org. for more information.

Monday Book Group

Please join us at 1:00 p.m. on Mondays via Zoom. Contact [Mary Studer](#) for the Zoom link.

Monday Meditation Group

Please join us for Meditation Sessions on Monday evenings, on Zoom, at 6:30 p.m. For more information please contact Mary Studer, mstuder929@gmail.com.

The Buddhist Group

Rissho Kosse-Kai

Rissho Kosse-Kai of Fort Myers has been at UUCFM for over 10 years. We are a lay-led group that meets every Sunday from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in Room 3.

We open our service with recitation from the Lotus Sutra and then have either a study session or group sharing of lives and listening with compassion. We often close with a short meditation. Some Sundays we have a Zoom service and on others just an in person gathering.

For information on the specific activity for a given Sunday, please check our website at [Rissho Kosei-Kai of Fort Myers](#). Everyone is always welcome and we appreciate being part of this congregation. For more information please contact Mary Tracy Sigman at marytracysigman115@gmail.com.



Celebration of Banned Book Week Led by the Library Committee

During Coffee Hour, the library committee displayed an enormous list of books banned in just one county of Florida and we voted on our favorite banned book. You got an amazing cookie in return for your vote. (The Library Committee seems to really want you to read.)

Here are the Results:

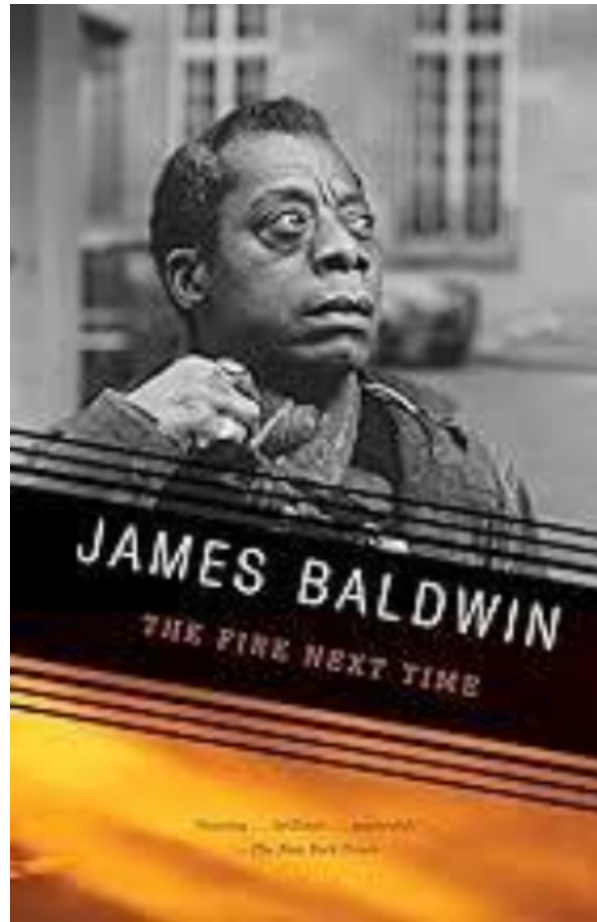
We had a tie for #1: each with 3 votes

- * **Anne Frank**
- * **Handmaids Tale**

Also Voted for:

- * Worm Loves Worm
- *The Hate You Give
- *Prodigal Summer
- *Beloved
- *Bel Canto
- *Native Son
- *Heather Has Two Mommies
- *Six of Crows
- *Ready Player One
- *Middlesex
- *Fahrenheit 451
- *Kitchen Gods Wife





Check It Out: Freedom to Read Library!

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin

We just celebrated the centennial of James Baldwin's birth, so I thought I would read *The Fire Next Time*, a book you can find and check out in our library. *The Fire Next Time* consists of two sections, first a letter to his nephew James, who is named for him, and who at fourteen reminds Baldwin of both his father and his brother, the boy's father. The second much longer section concerns Baldwin's struggles to deal with religion and his effort to explain the Black experience to white people and to find a way

forward. This book is part essay and part memoir. We learn that as a young person, Baldwin had no idea that he or any other Black person could become a writer. He saw his possible choices as becoming a preacher or becoming a pimp. His invention of a route to succeed through writing is a great gift to American literature.

Baldwin's love for his nephew is mingled with pain as he knows the racism this young man will have to face and how it will attack his self-esteem and limit his choices as he moves through life. Baldwin tells him, "This is the crime of which I accuse my county and my countrymen, and for which neither I nor time nor history will ever forgive them, that they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know it." Then, understanding that many readers will be white, he says he can almost hear them saying, "How bitter you are." He defends himself from this charge and ends his argument by saying, "We can make America what America must become."

The title of the second part is "Down at the Cross."

Baldwin's father was a minister and when James turned 14, he went through a long religious crisis.

Signs of hell were all around him. He judged himself harshly and was consumed by guilt. He became a "young minister" and discovered his own oratorical skills. His sermons were rousing even if his faith did not match his eloquence.

As an adult he rejected the religion of his youth. An important part of the second section is his dinner with Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad. By this time, Baldwin had made a name for himself; the Nation of Islam was actively courting him. Baldwin is unwilling to supplant one rigid set of dogma with another. He understands why this group refers to whites as “devils”, but he feels both groups “deeply need each other.” He cannot subscribe to a belief system where all whites are villains because he knew 2 or 3 white people whom he could trust.

The title of the book refers to an old hymn in which God give Noah the rainbow but warns that there will not be another flood. “No more water, the fire next time.” Since this book was written, we grew proud with hope after the election of Obama. Little did we know that there would be a new surge of racism and that in our own state we would see diversity, equity and inclusion legislated out of our schools. I end with a quote from the book. It gives an idea of how Baldwin sweeps the reader along with the beauty of his rhetoric. It also seems as relevant now as when it was written in the early sixties. “If we – and now I mean the relatively conscious whites, and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others—do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world.”

Reviewed by Marge



LET US COUNT THE WAYS MEDICARE PLANS HAVE CHANGED FOR 2025



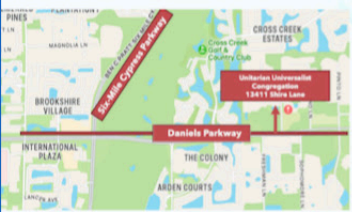
Are you confused by A, B, C, and D? AND very interested about changes for 2025? If so, you're not alone. That's why we're bringing licensed insurance experts to provide details, changes, options and exceptions to the latest A, B, C, D Plans. Medicare enrollment begins October 15, 2024.

Hosted on the beautiful UUCFM Campus, in Hobart Hall, this program will provide lunch and a unique learning opportunity. Bring your questions, your confusion and your NEED TO KNOW to this first Let Us Count the Ways seminar of the season and let our experts count the ways.

DATE AND TIME: OCTOBER 17, 2024, 11:30AM-1:30PM

Location:

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers
13411 Shire Lane, Fort Myers, FL 33912**



*Mary Poster
Hope PACE
Moderator*



*Andrea Munao
Sales Associate
Informed Choice*



*Ulla-Undine (Dee) Merritt
President/Owner of Logical
Insurance Solutions*

**REGISTRATION
REQUIRED**

239-671-9870

<https://leeneighbors.org> and
select "Events"



the Right to Clean Water

Thank you for supporting the Florida Right to Clean Water initiative! If this is new to you, please [check out our website](#) for an understanding of what we're doing and, importantly, why!

We're planning and organizing an all-out effort to get as many volunteers out to the polls as possible for the upcoming election – both on election day (November 5th) and early voting opportunities (October 26th - November 2nd).

Questions, concerns, great ideas? Email Mel at admin@floridarighttocleanwater.org!

Again, we're grateful for every type and amount of support you're able to offer. Thank you!



**Push to
the Polls**
for the
**Florida
Right to
Clean Water**

Vote
&
Sign!

Sign up at
FloridaRightToCleanWater.org
and make a major impact!

Do your part and help collect
100+ signed petitions on
election day or early voting
for the Right to Clean and
Healthy Waters!

You'll get everything you
need, including training, so
grab a couple / few friends
and **sign up today!**

The Lee County Right to Clean Water Group will have a representative speak during the **October 20 Sunday Service**. She will remind you of our mission and invite you help our cause by volunteering to get petitions at the Polling Place of your choice on November 5. We are hoping to garner 100,00 petitions statewide on November 5, and this would be a huge boost for our ultimate goal of almost 900,000 petitions.

If you would like to get started ahead of time, here is the link to sign up at the Polling Place of your choice:

[Click to Sign Up for Lee Petitions at the Polls](#)



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greater Naples.

6340 Napa Woods Way

Naples, FL 34116

In-Person registration: info@floridiansfordemocracy.org

Virtual registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fmjqaa89VSHG10qfTLB1g?amp_device_id=853e3ccc-eba5-470b-9500-3eece89a6e12#/
registration

Phone: (239) 561-2700



Email: officemanager@uucfm.org

Saturday, October 5, 2024, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Learn about Six Proposed Amendments to Florida Constitution.
*Office hours: M-Th 9-1:30

Connect with us on Facebook and Instagram

Lakes Regional Library

15290 Bass Road Fort Myers, FL 33919



[Manage Email Preferences](#) Register for in-person and virtual: <https://>