



NCUU NEWS



The January, 2018, monthly newsletter of the Nature Coast Unitarian Universalists
7633 N. Florida Ave. (Hwy. 41) Citrus Springs, FL 34434 352-465-4225
Facebook: Nature Coast Unitarian Universalists www.naturecoastuu.org

President's Message

A New Year is an opportunity to make resolutions to make the year ahead a better one for ourselves and for those we love. It's also an opportunity for cleansing ourselves of all negative energies that dwell in our lives.

2018 is almost here, and NCUU's Earth Centered Small Group Ministry is planning a ceremony to welcome the New Year; it's our annual "Banishing Ceremony" also referred to as a "Smudging Ceremony".

Smudging is the common name given to the sacred smoke Bowl Blessing, a powerful cleansing technique from the native North American tradition. Smudging calls on the spirits of sacred plants to drive away negative energies and restore balance. It is the art of cleansing yourself and your environment using simple ritual and ceremony. For thousands of years, smudging has been a part of Native American Tradition, but now its power of cleansing is available to everyone.

This Native North American tradition dates back millennia, and most traditional cultures, from Zulus to the Maoris, from the Chinese to the Balinese, have age-old forms of cleansing and blessing rituals. Incense wafting in a Catholic church cleanses the atmosphere just as surely as the medicine man's bowl of sacred smoke, or smudge. The bells that ring out or drums that beat can lead us on sacred journeys to the spirit world.

Aside from the beneficial and practical aspects of burning herbs, humans have become aware that smoke ascend to the heavens, to the world of spirits, almost as if it were acting as a spiritual messenger.

On Sunday night, December 31 at 7PM in our Memorial Garden, the Earth Centered Small Group Ministry will hold such a ceremony, and all are welcome. We will have a bonfire and party to welcome 2018.

As Joan said in her eblast to all of us, "The purpose of the banishing (smudging) ritual is to symbolically rid ourselves of negative energies from the past, and make room for positive energies to come in the New Year. Through drumming and ritual, we will connect our energies to the energy cycle of the changing season."

We will also participate in an ancient New Year custom from Scotland that involves wishes for our fellowship to be accomplished in the New Year. Afterward, we will enjoy a potluck of goodies, finger

foods, wine and hot cider. So, bring a drum or noise maker, a folding chair, and a snack to share.

To all who will join us, approach this ceremony with a pure heart, an open mind, and a sense of adventure. It could change your entire life.

Happy New Year everyone, and may you enjoy good health, prosperity, and happiness in 2018.

Pam

SUNDAY SERVICES

01/07/18 Barry Pendry

Topic: Resolutions, why we make them and why we break them: Strategies for keeping promises to ourselves.

01/14/18 Laura Pedersen

Topic: Is God Watching?

The Biblical story of Noah's Ark embodies in its petrifying and theatrical simplicity the universally recognized notion of divine retribution. Since the dawn of civilization humans have relied on such beliefs to create moral order. We'll explore whether the willingness to believe in some type of karma or payback expands or limits the potential for cooperation in our communities, our country, and around the globe.

01/21/18 Rev. Dr. Marni Harmony

Topic: DOING THEOLOGY FROM THE UNDERSIDE

Focusing on an often-forgotten part of the Biblical story of Moses, we'll explore the importance of listening carefully—especially to see whose voice is loudest and whose might not even be heard.

01/28/18 Peter Freeman

Topic: The Worm at the Core

Dealing with The Knowledge of Death

The Sunday Service Committee meets on January 29 at 10 AM. (Last Monday of the month)

January Birthdays

If your birthday is in January, and your name is not on this list, please notify the editor:

erickson872@att.net; 847-682-7527. Birthdays will be celebrated at our Potluck Dinner on January.

01/02 Jeanne Wright
01/05 Dan Eisaman
01/06 Bert Gagnon
01/18 Sheila Woods
01/23 Gordon Hart
01/27 Joan Burnett



Religious Education

A faith development class is being offered in January. The class is called "Life Fulfillment" and will be facilitated by Peter Freeman on January 6, 13, 20 and 27 from 10:00 AM until noon.

Peter says that the course will help you find what you need to bring into your life to feel more fulfilled. You will find out how to bring what you need into your life, and learn new ways of being whilst you are doing these things.

A sign-up sheet will be available.

Joan Burnett

Citizens for Informed Teens

In 2012, the General Assembly of the UUA chose "Reproductive Justice" to be the issue that all UU congregations would be encouraged to study. Although a new issue was chosen in 2016, a small group from our congregation has continued to focus on reproductive justice. We are the committee we call "Citizens for Informed Teens". Our mission is to ensure that babies are born to committed and prepared parents. To make that mission a reality, we have been raising awareness of the lack of comprehensive sex education in our Citrus County schools. We have made presentations to health care professionals, school personnel, and many civic organizations. What we need now is for some of you to join us. We need your ideas, your passion and your willingness to work toward a worthy goal. If you think this is something you might like to become involved in, let one of us know, Linda Myers, Sheila Woods or Joan

Burnett. We will invite you to our next meeting and familiarize you with the work we have done and what we hope to do in the future. There is still much that can be accomplished.

Joan Burnett

Denominational Affairs

The 2018 General Assembly of the UUA will take place in Kansas City, Missouri on June 24-28. NCUU will be able to send two delegates to be our voice. Please consider being one of those delegates. Ask anyone who has attended a GA about how transformational that experience can be. Former delegates were, Pam Ricker, Irene LeMon, Linda Myers, Edythe Reid and Joan Burnett. Registration begins on March 1, 2018. The Denominational Affairs Committee has funds to cover the expense of your registration fee. Please give this opportunity serious thought.

Joan Burnett

JOYS AND CONCERNS

The Joys and Concerns insert inside the Order of Service has not been used lately. It was decided that if you have a Joy or Concern that you want read aloud, but haven't the time to write it down before the service starts, take an insert home, write down what you wish to write, and return it to the Service Leader the following week. That way you may be sure your Joy or your Concern will be read to the congregation.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PARADE

Please hold the morning of Monday, Jan 15, the MLK Jr. parade in Crystal River. We will meet at 11 am, Monday Jan. 15, in Crystal River. There is a map available with the sign-up sheet in the foyer.

This is a fun event and an important outreach to our community. I hope you will join in. Carpooling to the event makes it even easier. We hope to have the convertible, again, for non-walkers.

If you would rather join a group parading in another area, please do so.

Linda Myers

Grounds & Gardens Day

Membership News

The **First Friday of every month** is **Grounds & Gardens Day** at NCUU.

Do you like to work outside in the yard and garden? Whether weeding, trimming, planting, raking, the NCUU Yard and Garden Crew *always* needs help. Please come Friday morning, **January 5**.

Gordie Dinmore and Bree Hill are usually there by sun-up. (*The rest of us usually are not.*) We're normally done by 10:30 - 11:00.

Sally Smith-Adams

Where There's a Will, There's a Way

We hope to create a durable presence for Unitarian Universalism, in Citrus, Marion, and other nearby counties, that will extend over decades, beyond our lifetimes. Accordingly, please consider including the Nature Coast Unitarian Universalists in your will. This will help to ensure a lasting legacy, for future generations as well as for ours.

The Finance Committee

Pot Luck Dinner

Our Potluck Dinners are held on the third Friday of each month. We hope to see you on Friday, January 19th.

Ladies' Luncheon

The NCUU November Ladies Luncheon will be Tuesday, January 30, (last Tuesday of the month).

Sign-up sheet, directions, and menu sheet are in the foyer. If you have any questions, contact Peg Gotz (527-4113) or Julie Macdonald (465-5646)

Social Justice Committee

The Social Justice Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month. The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 3rd, 2:30-3:30 at the church. Everyone is welcome to come to our meetings.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee invites you to thank Amy Haiken and Gordon Hart for their long hours of hard work on our newly revamped website. Please be sure to check it out at ncuu.org. If you have calendar changes or additions or have questions, please contact either Amy or Gordon and inform them.

We welcome ideas for how to grow our congregation with new members and keep our present members informed and participating in this caring and lay led fellowship.

If you are interested in joining NCUU, please contact Connie Hart at conlhart@gmail.com.

The Membership Committee meets on the last Wednesday of the month, January 31, at 10:00 A.M.

Connie Hart

Earth Center Small Group Ministry

The Earth Centered Group will hold its annual



"Banishing Ceremony" on New Year's Eve, (Sunday, Dec. 31) at 7 PM in the Memorial Garden at the pit.

We will banish our bad Karma, and take in good cheer. Don't miss this fun event.

The Earth Center Small Group Ministry is a lay-led small group that deepens and expands the ministry of our NCUU Congregation. We focus to build and deepen community relationships.

The members of our group have made a commitment to one another and to the spiritual, physical and emotional well-being of our group's participants.

Please also join us on Wednesday, January 17, at 3 PM (Third Wednesday of the month).

Joan Burnett

Religious Education Assistance Needed

We love to have children come to NCUU with their parents. If you would like to help out with the children present once a month for 20 minutes during the service, please contact Connie Hart; conlhart@gmail.com. Many thanks.

Board of Directors

Our Board meeting is Monday, January 8, at 2 PM. If you want to place an item on the Board agenda,

please send it to the clerk, Holly Alexander about a week in advance. (Second Monday of the month)

Social Service Help Line

Wellcare a health insurance company, has set up a help line for social services. If you need assistance, call 1-866-775-2192

Wireless amplifying headphones are now available at the rear of the sanctuary. See Gordon Hart or Gordie Dinmore for assistance on Sundays.

Send Sunday Morning Announcements to:

ncuuannouncements@gmail.com

Deadline is the Friday before Sunday service.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please remember that the deadline for February's Newsletter is **January 28.**

Send to: erickson872@att.net

NCUU Committees

- Building Carol & Gordon Dinmore
- Calendar Linda Myers
- Caring Committee.....Carol Dinmore
- Choir Director Sally Smith-Adams
- Denominational Affairs Joan Burnett
- FacebookConnie Hart
- Finance Stan Brumaghim
- Librarian Tom Hibberd
- Membership Connie Hart
- Music Sally Smith-Adams
- NewsletterKerry Erickson

mailto: erickson872@att.net

- Nominating Committee..... Connie Hart, Rob DeRemer
- PhotographerGordon Hart
- Piano: Connie Hart, Sally Smith-Adams, Sheila Woods
- PublicityOPEN
- PropertyCarol Dinmore
- Religious EducationJoan Burnett
- Social ActivitiesAvailable
- Social JusticeAndrea Rae, Tom Hibberd
- Sunday ServiceOPEN
- Treasurer (Acting) Nick Kalfas

NCUU Board of Directors

President Pam Ricker

- Vice-President..... Sheila Woods
- Clerk Holly Alexander
- DirectorsIrene LeMon Tom Hibberd, Gordon Dinmore, Nancy Pettus, Rob Deremer, and Ellen Saunders



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Happy New Year! 2018