



Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg, FL

ALARUMS & DIVERSIONS:

“Extremist Hijackers”

Rev. Katy Korb

I joined a rally urging the Florida Legislature to accept the \$51 billion for the expansion of Medicare on the first day of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Today the government was shut down to blackmail the executive arm to at least put off the implementation for another year. There is also the threat not to extend the debt ceiling forcing the United States, for the only time in its history, to dishonor some of its debts. All this to keep a law passed by Congress and upheld by the Supreme Court from taking effect. And after a clear endorsement of the President's leadership at the last general election. What are they thinking? Or are they?

I have never been very partisan in my politics. I have strong opinions, but except in the area of civil liberties they are mostly pretty moderate, with some conservative and some liberal leanings. The main reason for registering as a member of one political party over the other was simply so I could vote in primary elections. However, the party of Lincoln has clearly been hijacked by people who don't care what disasters they cause or suffering they produce in order to get what they consider their conservative agenda or to block a perceived liberal one. It's not even as if Obamacare is that liberal. I have some sympathy (though admittedly not a whole lot) for those who oppose it because they find it not liberal enough. I, too, wholeheartedly support a single-payer plan for universal health care, but not enough to want to scuttle the first baby steps toward a more comprehensive and compassionate health system. There are true believers in any issue who simply cannot accept that honest, responsible differences can be compromised, and those hard-liners can be on either side of the question.

“Hijackers”, p.4

UUSP MISSION

“Providing a compassionate and welcoming community,
inspiring spiritual and intellectual growth,
and serving as a beacon for social activism and service.”

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

-Greg Burton, President, Board of Trustees

During the summer, the Board sent a survey to the membership. The high response rate underscored the commitment to our Church. As the survey revealed, events of two years ago continued to be felt. We were aware of the pain many felt and of their dissatisfaction with the atmosphere on Sundays. Those of you who have been coming these last few weeks know how this has changed. There are many reasons.

First, we have worked with the calibration of the microphone to better enhance Katy's voice. We also test it before every service. The difficulties with hearing her seem to have been solved. This has allowed a wonderful interaction between Katy and the congregation to develop.

The other concern that was prevalent in the results was a profound concern that we would not be able to have an exciting music program. With the arrival of Nic Filzen, those concerns have evaporated. We look forward to making UU St. Pete a known venue for great music - and not just during Sunday service.

The statistical results will be posted on the members section of the website. The results were not unexpected, but did provide us with guidance as the changes to date show. They also helped up set the following goals for the fall:

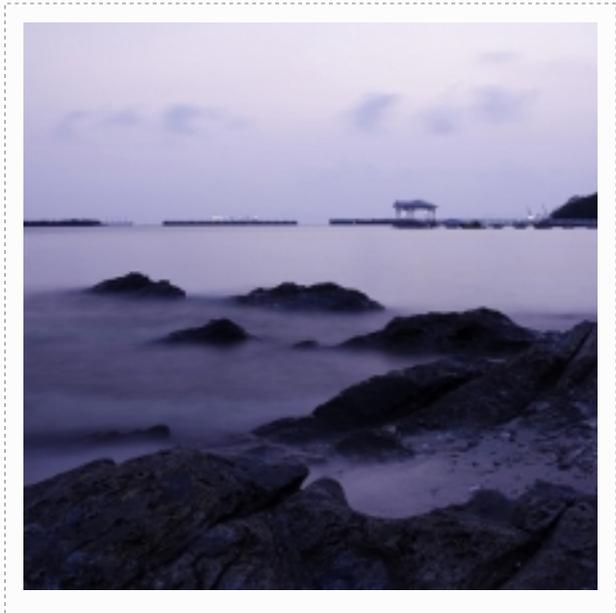


Photo courtesy FreeDigitalPhotos.net

ITEM	DATE / TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Fundraiser social	Nov. 2, 2013	Ian O., Keevy M., Nick W.
2. Role model good church; trustee statements	Thru fall	BOT
3. Strategic planning	Started 9/24	Marcia P.
4. Gilmour Gadflies	1st Sun. of each month, beginning 11/3 at 6pm	Dani S.
5. Music fundraiser	Late fall / early spring	Greg & Nic F.
6. Board retreat	Tuesday, 11/5, 12:30-4:30pm	Greg & Katy
7. Endowment & BOT joint meeting	"Soon"	Greg
8. Trust group with Connie Goodbread	10/19, 10am-2pm	Katy
9. Town Hall meeting to discuss A/C funding	"Soon"	Greg
10. Growth Task Force	"Soon"	Katy
11. Survey summary to congregation for feedback	Posed to website "soon"	Greg

*For a summary report of the AC project, please visit the following:
<http://uustpete.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2013-10-04-uusp-ac-project-overview.pdf>*

Relighting the Chalice of Small Group Ministry at UU Saint Pete

Have you ever thought or said, "All I ever wanted was the chance to talk with others about life's journey?" Are you looking for a special place within UU St. Pete to belong (*intimacy*), a place to seek meaning (*ultimacy*) about living and dying, a place to find inspiration? Then come join Small Group Ministry, where a group of 8 to 10 within UU St. Pete make a commitment to meet monthly to share our journeys thru life. Currently, we have one group that does meet on the 3rd Monday evening of the month; snowbirds will organize again later this fall. **We would like to see more groups form.** If you are interested in attending, or have questions about Small Group Ministry (also called Covenant Groups), please call or email Dave Coale, (dcoale628@icloud.com or 727-204-4699) or contact our Minister, Katy Korb. See also the write up about Covenant Groups on the UUSP website: <http://uustpete.org/group/covenant-groups>



Photo courtesy FreeDigitalPhotos.net

The Gilmour Gadflies Return!!

We're starting up our dinner socials again. For those new to UU St. Pete, *The Gilmour Gadflies* is a loosely-defined group of people who go out to dinner together once a month. The concept is simple: a restaurant is chosen, a date is set, the maximum number of people the restaurant can accommodate is noted and then whoever wants to go signs up and the list is closed when we reach the number set for that restaurant. We've done this, on and off, for a few years, and always have fun. It's a great way for people to get to talk and relax together and for members and newcomers to mingle.

We'll dine out on the first Sunday of each month, starting on November 3rd at 6 PM at the Old Northeast Tavern. Don't worry about signing up now – there'll be notices and details in the OOS and Infonet later in October. For now, we just wanted to let you know what's coming and give you a chance to look at their yummy menu online.

We'd also appreciate hearing from you with restaurant suggestions. The guidelines are few and simple: 1) we want to avoid the very cheap and the very expensive; 2) independent places are usually more interesting and fun than chains; 3) the restaurant has to be capable of seating and serving 20-30 people who would order off the menu. However, if anybody knows of a particularly good buffet place, we might give that a try – and more people could come.

We're looking forward to enjoying dinner with you!

-Deb Robinson and Dani Skrzypek

Special Guest Letter

by John Dalton

I attended a few services at UU St. Pete and found the members to be very friendly, likable, and impressive people. However, my Sunday morning inertia won out. But, for the sake of maybe contributing something, I offer the following.

I am a retired psychologist. Throughout my career, I had people asking me to define the boundaries of "normal vs. mentally ill" or, similarly, who needs professional treatment and who doesn't. I was sometimes a tad annoyed at the question, partly because it seemed simplistic, and partly because it was a good question for which I had no ready answer.

I have finally hit upon an answer which makes sense to me: We are all part-time crazy - it is just a matter of how many hours per week you spend at it. You'll never hit zero, but the fewer hours, the better.

Whether to get professional assistance depends on how much time you are willing to spend being irrational. Being 100% sane is just not normal nor achievable.

Ed. note: What a fabulous reminder to all of us that our "crazy moments" are perfectly fine. Thanks be to Rev. Katy for helping us through them, and thanks to Mr. Dalton for the contribution!

Check It Out!

MONDAYS: Shaolin Kung-Fu, 7pm
N.A., 7pm

TUESDAYS: Handbells, 6pm

WEDNESDAYS: Mindfulness Meditation, 7pm

FRIDAYS: Picnic on the Playground, 6:45pm

SUNDAYS: Choir Rehearsal, 9am

Discussion Group, 10am

Service, 11am

Move to Amend, 6:30pm (alt. Sundays)

“Hijackers” (cont'd. from p.1)

The hijacking of the Republican Party reminds me of what happened to the Southern Baptists some years ago. I went to Stetson University, which was, in those days, affiliated with the Florida Baptists and through them the Southern Baptist Convention. It was full of liberal Baptists, believers in evolution and willing to be open to various interpretations of Biblical text, even encouraging some heretical thinking among the students. They no longer have any specific religious affiliation, although they do still indicate that attention to one’s spiritual development is encouraged. When the Southern Baptist Convention was taken over by the fundamentalists it was no longer possible to be a liberal and a Southern Baptist. So the liberals, instead of staying and fighting, left – individuals, congregations, the whole Texas State Baptist Convention – disaffiliating from the Southern Baptists and allowing it to become less and less mainstream. I wonder if that will happen to the Republican Party or if its moderates will finally stand up and say a resounding “No!” to the increasing irresponsibility of the self-described conservative leaders. It would take as much work as the radical right was willing to put into it to do it. Just leaving is a lot easier. I hope they will care enough to rescue this historic political party from final irrelevance as their support continues to dwindle. We need a responsible conservative voice as well as a liberal one.

-Katy



R.E. Shuffleboard Party!
559 Mirror Lake Dr. N.
Friday, 10/11, 7pm

5th Annual Pumpkin Carving
Gilmour Hall
Sunday, 10/27, 12:15pm

West Central Cluster Picnic
18412 Burrell Rd., Odessa, FL
Saturday, 10/19, 11am

For more, check the UUSP calendar, order of service, Facebook, and Twitter!

GET INVOLVED!

There are TONS of ways you can pitch in, help out, and have FUN!
Talk to the chair of the committee that interests you, or just crash their next meeting!

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED, WELCOMED, AND APPRECIATED!

BUILDING & GROUNDS
Fred Russell

PROGRAM COUNCIL
Marcia Piacentino

CARE MINISTRY
Chair vacant
(that means it could be YOU!)

SCOPE
Nick Wheeler

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS ED.
Michael Pohl

SOCIAL JUSTICE
Homeless Subministry:
Reggie Craig
Migrant Subministry:
Karen Coale

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP
Chair vacant
(that means it could be YOU!)

UU SERVICE COMMITTEE
Marilyn Barber

HOSPITALITY
Sue Price

WORSHIP COMMITTEE
Penny Duff

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
Dave Coale

MUSIC
Nic Filzen, Director

THANK YOU to EVERYONE
who serves! Your hard work is
appreciated and awesome!

Standing on the Side of Love with Immigrant Families
Impact of Government Shutdown on Current Immigration System
- UUSP Social Justice Committee – Karen Coale, Chair

The Department of Homeland Security will still operate. and the borders will remain open. Customs will continue to operate, including processing green card applications, but E-verify will not be operating. Delays should be expected as each agency, especially Customs, rely on other agencies that may be closed.

Already strapped Immigration Courts will be slowed down. Federal courts have enough income from fees to remain open for about 10 business days after shutdown.

New H-1B filings will be affected; existing H-1B visas likely will not be.

Visas to the United States and passport processing will be delayed. During the last government shutdown in 1996, approximately 20,000-30,000 visa applications by foreigners went unprocessed for each day offices were closed and 200,000 applications for passports of U.S. citizens stalled.

Surprisingly -- In the midst of this Government shutdown, a group of Democrats just (October 2, 2013) presented a **new Comprehensive Immigration Bill in the House of Representatives** that addresses the urgent need to fix our broken immigration system and creates a real path to earned citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants who have been calling America home for decades. This bill is co-sponsored by Rep. Joe Garcia from South Florida.

Clothing for Farmworker Children

Farmworker families will begin returning to the Plant City area in mid November --- and at that time we will commence our monthly visits to camps in the Plant City area – bringing children’s clothing, books and school supplies. In October we will begin collecting donations of gently used and new children’s clothing --- no adult clothing as the National Farm Work Ministry handles that. Please place your donations in Conway Hall East by the shelves. Will need some help sorting the clothing as well as trekking to Plant City for our monthly winter visits. We could also use donations of new school supplies as the children return to this area after the school year begins and most free supplies have already been distributed.

Food for Immigrant Families

Thanks for your donations in September and October that are given to our local immigrant families. Just place your non-perishable food in the wagons at each Church sanctuary entrance.

Migrant Immigrant Committee Planning Meetings

We meet most months on the 4th Tuesday from 5:30pm to 6:50pm in the Church Office. Next meeting will be October 22nd. All are welcome – use Arlington Avenue entrance.

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

As we walk this journey to a fullness of congregational life, there are a number of steps we can take to achieve growth in a loving, nurturing way. One excellent (and extremely enjoyable!) way is with a **workshop scheduled for next Saturday, October 19, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm**, entitled “Nurturing Relationships”. We are really excited to have Connie Goodbread, Lifespan Program Consultant with the UUA Mid-South Region, conducting the workshop. Rev. Katy and Penny Duff attended her workshop at the District meeting last spring, and found it a lively, interesting, and growing experience. **DON'T MISS THIS RARE AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITY!** We will serve lunch, and ask only that you RSVP to the office or Penny Duff so we can plan enough vittles for everyone.

“

Truthful words are not beautiful; beautiful words are not truthful. Good words are not persuasive; persuasive words are not good.

-Lao Tzu

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