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Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship

1150 Fairhope Ave.
Fairhope, AL 36532
www.FairhopeUU.org

A NOTE FROM THE FUF PRESIDENT

It's been an interesting ride! Two years as President and 21 months as your Board Chair. The positions are quite different from each other. Being president is fun (usually)! I have enjoyed greeting people and providing TLC when needed. I think we have, indeed, aspired to "we welcome you."

Board Chair is more like herding cats! One of the biggest successes we have had this year is to review our structure and realize that we no longer fit its size! By retuning how we work together (enough of the individual silos), we have grown stronger, more interactive and successful. The revised Volunteer Handbook reflects this.

I've kept a log of major accomplishments. Here are a few:

#1: Revising our organizational structure to an appropriate size and usage has been key. But, I already said that. (Must be the dual job thing going on!)

#2: We have improved security with cameras and new lighting. We are finding out just how many folks use the Food Pantry - and it's a lot! Thank you for continuing to help fill it for your neighbors and community.

#3: We have invested available funds to earn more revenue. This is part of our fiscal responsibility and is working well.

#4: Membership includes knowing who we are (UU), our history and how we became FUF. That got a big boost with the new member power point and history gathering. The new member folder and information is first rate.

There's more but I am happy to have Mary Anderson and Nick Coulson take over for my split personality. Thank YOU for your support, guidance and love.

Blessings Be,
Irene

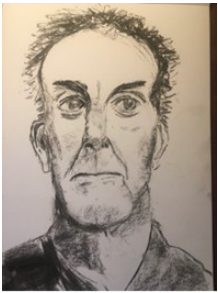
ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

We hope you will join us for our **Annual Member Meeting** during the program on **Sunday, December 7 at 11:00 a.m.**

Your presence truly matters. At this meeting, we'll confirm the Board nominees (see below), vote on the proposed budget for the upcoming year, and address several important items that guide the direction of our Fellowship. We encourage all members to attend so your voice can be part of these decisions!

Friends of the Fellowship are warmly invited to attend, but per FUF Bylaws, only voting Members may participate in the official votes.

The Nominating Committee puts forth the following nominees for the 2026 Board of Trustees to be elected at the annual meeting of the Fellowship Sunday, December 7, 2025:



For Chair of the Board – Nick Coulson

Nick Coulson is a retired architect from UK who has lived in Fairhope for 30 years. He loves the Fellowship and the values it stands for. He has been happily organizing programs for the Fellowship for 2 ½ years. After these years on the Board as 2nd Vice President/Program, he now feels ready to take on the task as Chair of the Board, trying to bring the wonderful cast of characters as Board members to some semblance of agreement and move the Fellowship forward.



For President: Mary Anderson

I moved from Moorhead, Minnesota to Daphne, Alabama in late January 2024 and found the Fellowship soon thereafter. The previous 20 years, I had been actively involved in the Unitarian Church of Underwood in Minnesota, serving on the Board and numerous other volunteer positions. Coming here, I had vowed not to get myself so involved again but that didn't last long. I am currently the Chair of Member Supports and have led several other projects.

I was raised on the farm, went to a small country Lutheran church, attended Augsburg Lutheran College in Minneapolis, married, had children, then grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I worked as a public servant for over 30 years, and I served on the boards of several non-profit organizations.

Now in my 80's, I am a stay-at-home girl. What I like doing most is planning and organizing projects, and meeting and greeting folks at the Fellowship.

I look forward to serving on the Board of Trustees and under the duties of President, acting as your Sunday Service leader.

For 1st Vice President – Mary Matthews

I am from Eastern Kansas and lived there until moving to Baldwin County.

The duties of the First Vice President are to fill in for the President if he/she can't be at the meeting.

I have been a member of FUF for 15 years. I've been on the Board for three years in two different positions, 1st Vice President and Corresponding Secretary.

I am one of the three people who run the monthly potluck, and I regularly stock paper and other supplies as in-kind contributions. I also produce the Weekender and the Sunday program by gathering information, formatting the

documents, sending them to the printer and picking them up, sending them to the Administrative Assistant for emailing. I also pass out the programs each Sunday and have visitors sign in for mailings.



For 2nd Vice President/Program – Mark Preston

I was born in NYC, 1961, and grew up in Bergen County, New Jersey. I graduated Ridgefield Memorial High School, 1979. I attended NYU and graduated Baruch College, BA in Computer Science, 1983.

I worked in television casting company from 1981 to 1985. I started a career in real estate in NYC in 1985 and then co-owned and operated Preston Properties/JM Preston Properties 1988-2020.

I volunteered part time in NY as a child abuse investigator/New York State Peace Officer 1995-2005. I was a member of the Actors Fund of America Inner Circle (Charitable organization for the theatre community) from 1990 to 2010. I was also a member of the Amateur Comedy Club, a private theater company established in 1883, where I co-chaired special projects and produced numerous shows, from 2003 to about 2015. I joined the Episcopal Actors Guild in 2007 and am a lifetime member. I served on the executive board for several years and produced several events for them prior to leaving New York for Alabama in 2020.

In the years between 2013 and 2019 I also had several bands - Mark Preston and the Traveling Men, Mark Preston and the Acoustic Travelers, and The Mark Nelson Preston Quintet. We played numerous shows throughout the New York area over the course of seven years. We did release several singles, and there is an album I recorded right before Covid hit which was complete, just not released, that I do plan on releasing soon!

Since coming to Alabama, I did some real estate for a few years but after an eye disease diagnosis I had to stop working and now I dedicate a good deal of my time to the Fellowship!



For Treasurer – Sandra Tormoen

Sandy Tormoen is the president of the board of The Baldwin County Trailblazers and an avid cyclist, walker, hiker, and sunset admirer. She serves as the finance chair for the Eastern Shore Democrats and is the chair of the Finance Committee for the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship. She is also a member of the Baldwin County League of Women Voters.

Sandy retired as an executive from the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond after a 25-year career in Information Technology, Economic Research Administration, and regional and community outreach, with a focus on access to capital and credit for low-and moderate-income households.

She has three grown children, two grandchildren, another granddaughter on the way, a large extended family including her sister, Dr. Suzanne Tormoen, and many dear friends, near and far.

Statement:

NERD ALERT! Numbers might not be for everyone, but I am one of those who truly enjoys the responsibilities of budgeting, tracking, and managing finances. I also love using powerful software tools like Excel and Quicken to analyze financial data and generate reports that support transparent and sound decision-making. If elected, I would use my knowledge and skills in this area to help achieve the Board's and the Fellowship's goals."

Continued on page 4...

**For Recording Secretary –Jeanine Normand**

I, Jeanine Normand, aka DrJazz Normand, was born in New Orleans. I'm a musician and a lesbian-feminist activist. I've been a member of FUF since 2002. I served last year, 2025, as FUF recording secretary; and I will continue in the same post this coming year.

I studied premed in university, with a scholarship in theoretical math, minoring in quantum physics. I lived in France twice, where her students at the Sorbonne in Paris gave me the sobriquet, "Dr. Jazz."

I have been active member of the League of Women Voters for nearly three decades. I coproduce several international, lesbian literary Zooms and in-person conferences. Historical archivist, I codesigned the website for the Southern Lesbian Feminist Activist Herstory Project: www.SLFAHerstoryProject.com. A professional journalist, PR writer, author, and editor, I maintain, edit, and write for this and other websites.

My aim is to engage in overthrowing patriarchal values (power over), and reinstalling matriarchal (power shared) values, which means fighting to protect women's rights, civil rights, DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), and disability rights. I draw inspiration, hope, and courage from all of the remarkable, notable, and brilliant people that I have met through the years in our FUF beloved community. Alabama is where I can get in lots of "good trouble." I am grateful for the opportunity to make a positive difference by serving on the board.

**For Corresponding Secretary – Jeanine Herring**

I am proud to put forth my name for the position of Corresponding Secretary for the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship Board of Trustees.

I grew up in Louisiana and started working for South Central Bell in the early 1970's. I transferred to Atlanta and remained in telecommunications until 2015. I moved from Atlanta to a town outside of Beaufort, South Carolina and enjoyed my time there until 2024 when I moved to Fairhope to be closer to family.

I grew up Southern Baptist in Louisiana. Moving to Atlanta I found spiritual growth in two different Unity churches. I then studied under Rev. Dr. David Ault in Science of Mind (Religious Science) and became a licensed Practitioner for the Spiritual Living Center in Atlanta.

I love living in this area and I enjoy exploring different spots around town. I enjoy painting classes at the Eastern Shore Arts Center, working with my dog and spending time with family and friends.

I look forward to having a positive impact on the Unitarian family.

*In addition to these elected to the Executive Board, the Board will appoint the past president (**Irene Wegner**) and may appoint an addition Member at Large and up to two specified committee chairs to serve for one-year terms as At-Large Members.*



FUF HISTORICAL TIDBITS: JEAN LAWRENCE

Some art pieces have been moved around from the sanctuary to the foyer to now feature the work of Jean Lawrence. Jean and her husband, Ed Lawrence, were active members of the Fellowship between 1997-2019. Ed served two years as President of the Fellowship and was a driving force here and within the community.

A respected artist, Jean had attended the Art Institute of Chicago and was a major advocate for the arts. It was Jean who spearheaded arts initiatives at the Fellowship Hall from its beginning.



Now displayed in the foyer are three pieces in tribute to Jean and Ed Lawrence. The paintings represent one category of Jean's artwork. When young Jean acknowledged that she was fascinated by "swamps," thus began her paintings of wetlands. She saw strangeness and beauty but also became aware of the importance of wetlands to the environment. She saw ambiguity in that they are neither water nor firm land; she saw the beauty in their starkness, bleakness and changing light.

In an article dated April 19, 2009, the AL.com had a feature to promote the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship's exhibition of art with commentary by FUF members and artists, Jean Lawrence and Pinky Bass. In this article Jean said:

Art, along with music, lectures and film, is synonymous with the intellectual vigor of the [FUF] diverse membership ... [The art] fits in perfectly in that Unitarians don't believe only one thing. We have all sorts of ways of representing. ... Everyone looks at the art exhibit; they talk about it. We have very active discussion groups—people are intellectually alive. We think of it as a kind of oasis, a place where we can be who we are, and we don't have to hold our tongues. Nobody is proselytizing. We have Buddhists, Jews and Christians, atheists, agnostics and who knows what else? And we all just get along. It's amazing.

Jean's legacy at Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship continues. Today, Mark Oehler is the Chair of the Arts Committee who continues to arrange art exhibitions. Pinky Bass recently oversaw the popup art sale which was a huge fundraising success. Art remains a feature of the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship's celebration of life and common search for — meaning.

—Written by Mary Anderson with information provided by Pinky Bass and Michael Patrick



THANKSGIVING POTLUCK

Thank you to all who helped with and participated in our Thanksgiving Potluck! Great food and fellowship was had by all.

December Programs

Join us for Fellowship every Sunday!

10:45am—Musical Prelude

11:00am—Program with Guest Speaker

Coffee Hour to Follow

December Potluck will be on 12/21

Theme: Holiday Potluck—Bring your favorite holiday dish!



December 7

Annual Member Meeting

This is the major opportunity for the FUF Board members to outline the developments over the past year and plans for the future to members. It is the opportunity for members to vote in a new Board and to comment on and question what they are hearing. Stay for pizza and holiday decorating after!

December 14

A Brief History of Vaccination

Dr. Goetter will talk about the trials and tribulations of vaccines.

Dr. Goetter is a retired physician, Board certified in internal medicine and pulmonary disease. He has served on the Alabama State Board of Health for 9 years.



Dr. Bill Goetter



December 21

Bah Humbug!

See the true story of the origin of our American celebration of Christmas with a cast of Fellowship members. Irene Wegner will direct this 5th Annual event. Contact Irene if you are interested in being in the cast!

December 28

Hopes and Resolutions for the New Year

We'll meet in an oval seating arrangement so everyone can see and engage with one another. As the microphone is passed around, each person will have the opportunity to share a brief reflection, hope, or resolution for the year ahead. Participation is welcome but never required.



"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE—A LIVE RADIO PLAY"

On Sunday, December 14th, at 2pm, the Special Events Team brings you the first presentation of the Fairhope Radio Players with their production of "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play". This beloved American holiday classic comes to captivating life as a live 1940s radio broadcast. With the help of an ensemble that brings a few dozen characters to the stage, the story of idealistic George Bailey unfolds as he considers ending his life one fateful Christmas Eve.



FUF Groups

All are welcome to join any group!

Weekly

Silent Meditation Group

No meetings the first three Sundays of December;
resumes December 28 at 9:45am.

Contact: Nick Coulson

Uke Open Jam

Meets every Monday from 2-4pm. All are invited to
come jam with us.

Contact: Carl Couret

Men's Discussion Group

Join us every Tuesday at 9am at the Kind Café in
Fairhope. Contact: Don Joffe

Back Porch Folk Singers

No invitation necessary
3-4:30pm every Wednesday

Contact: Phil Strniste

Thursday Group

Meets every Thursday 5pm at the Market by the Bay on
Church Street. Contact: Michael Patrick

Tai Chi

Meets every Saturday at 4:00pm. (When the Fellowship
has a Saturday event, class will shift to Sunday).

Contact: Andrea Cherry

Bi-weekly

Women of Wisdom Discussion Group

WoW meets every other Thursday at 11am in the TED
Talk room. Members select the topic. Lunch to follow at
a local restaurant. For more info contact Vivian
McMurry, Jean Normand, or just show up!

Monthly

Non-Fiction Book Group

Meets at 9:30am on the 1st Thursday of the month.
Contact: Robin Fabel or Michael Patrick

Fiction Book Group

Meets at 4:30pm monthly on the 4th Thursday, but will
meet on the 3rd Thursday in December (12/18) due to
Christmas.

Contact: Nick Coulson

Small Group Circles

Afternoon Circle meets 1:30pm on 12/17 at the Joffe's
Evening Circle meets 6:30pm on 12/18 at the
McMurray's

To join, an empty chair awaits you.
December's topic is "Family Hand-Me-Downs "

CARES AND CONCERNS

If you experience a health setback and could use some assists or if you know of a Fellowship friend or member who is experiencing such setback, the Care and Concerns Team is here to help.

Team members and friends can provide meals, transportation, cards of support, and/or visits while you are on the mend.

Call/text Susan Hammack @ 205-527-3328

Email the Fellowship office office@fairhopeuu.org or leave a voicemail at 251-929-3207.

You are not alone. We are in this together.





December



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 2pm-Uke Open Jam	2 9am-Men's Group (Kind Café) 4-9pm-(Reserved) Baldwin Co. Dems	3 3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings	4 9:30-Non-Fiction Book Group 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay) 6pm-Hall Reserved (Radio Play Practice)	5 12:30pm Board Meeting 1pm-ESIC	6 4pm-Tai Chi with Andrea
7 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Annual Member Business Meeting. Pizza & Decorating Party to follow	8 2pm-Uke Open Jam	9 9am-Men's Group (Kind Café) 6pm-Hall Reserved (Radio Play Practice)	10 3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings 6pm-Hall Reserved (Radio Play Practice)	11 11am-Women of Wisdom 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay) 6pm-Hall Reserved (Radio Play Practice)	12 1pm-ESIC	13 4pm-Tai Chi with Andrea
14 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program 2:00pm- "It's A Wonderful Life" Radio Play 	15 2pm-Uke Open Jam	16 9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)	17 1:30pm- Small Group at the Joffe's 3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings	18 4:30pm-Fiction Book Group 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay) 6:30pm- Small Group at the McMurray's	19 1pm-ESIC	20 4pm-Tai Chi with Andrea
21 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00- Bah Humbug! 12pm-Potluck	22 2pm-Uke Open Jam	23 9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)	24	25  	26 1pm-ESIC 	27 4pm-Tai Chi with Andrea
28 9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program	29 2pm-Uke Open Jam	30 9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)	31 3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers	<p>*All events are at FUF unless otherwise noted.</p> 		

Deadlines for Publications

Weekly Bulletin and FUF Weekender

Wednesdays by 5pm

Submit to Mary Matthews: matthewsmary29@yahoo.com

November Newsletter

Submit by end of day, December 23

Email your UU-relevant articles, bits of wisdom, scheduled events, quotes, poems, or images!

Submit to Ashley Weller: Office@FairhopeUU.org

Thank you
for reading!



Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship

Mission Statement:

To explore new ideas,
To search for truth and knowledge,
To take care of the Earth,
To enjoy fellowship with open-minded thinkers,
To support and care for each other,
And to create an atmosphere of love and
understanding among our members and for those
who come after us.

Vision Statement:

Grounded in love,
guided by reason,
committed to spiritual growth and justice.

*Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship welcomes and embraces
people of any age, race, gender identity or expression,
sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, language,
or cultural background.*