

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

President's Note .....	1-2
Dec. Board Summary .....	2
Historical Tidbit .....	2-3
Small Group Circles.....	4
Cares and Concerns .....	4-5
Artist Spotlight.....	5
January Speakers .....	6-7
FUF Schedule .....	8
Calendar .....	9



**Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship**  
1150 Fairhope Ave.  
Fairhope, AL 36532  
[www.FairhopeUU.org](http://www.FairhopeUU.org)

**A NOTE FROM THE FUF PRESIDENT**

Happy 2026 New Year! We are alive, alert, awake, enthusiastic!

I am your new President and as such I have the duties of Sunday Service Leader and contributor to the monthly newsletter. With this beginning of the new year and the Fellowship's fiscal year, I and the other 2026 Board of Trustees thank you for your votes of confidence in us. We pledge to do our very best to represent you and the mission and values of the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship.

I am relatively new to the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship, but I come with 20+ years as a Unitarian Universalist, previously very active in the Unitarian Church of Underwood Minnesota. That congregation was much the same size and composition as the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship - lay led, dependent on volunteers, a liberal congregation located in the midst of more conservative thinking, maintaining a strong history from its founding.

I have come to appreciate the rich history of the City of Fairhope and the meaning of Fellowship, a friendship community unique unto itself. I hope to bring attention and equal measure to the Unitarian Universalist aspect of our faith community.

Unitarian Universalism is a living tradition that has changed in many ways from the original Christian roots of its Universalist and Unitarian heritages, and it continues to evolve today. UUA is using new language to describe who we are through these shared values, all centered around LOVE: Interdependence, Pluralism, Justice, Transformation, Generosity, and Equity. We continue to reference our seven Principles and Living Traditions as we live our faith in our

*(Continued on page 2)*

communities.

Here at Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship, we are excited about our mission and values, expanding membership, special events, and program offerings. We welcome your participation and ideas for that continuance!

Humbly,

Mary Anderson, FUF President

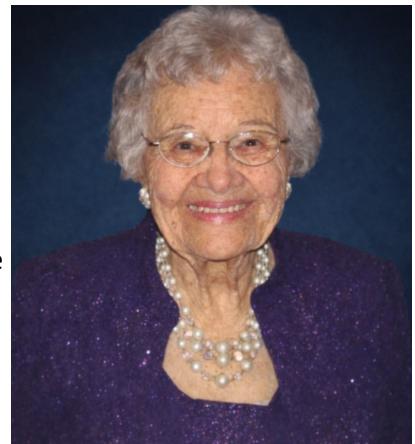


## **FUF HISTORICAL TIDBITS: OTTILIE HALSTEAD**

### ***"Ottolie Halstead Remembered: She Quietly Enriched People's Lives"***

While meeting to do the 2026 budget, members of the Finance Committee wondered about the "Halstead Account" with \$37,000 remaining on deposit. Inquiry went out and this is what was learned:

Ottolie Wintermeyer Halstead was a long-time member of the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship. Among the many others who donated to erect the fellowship hall, Ottolie provided funds for 100 chairs, the screen, and other furnishings. A native of Germany and resident of Fairhope, she passed away November 15, 2019, at the age of 105. Upon her death, she left again a large bequest to the Fellowship. That explains the large account with sums remaining designated to be used for building and grounds maintenance.



Although Ottolie lived a simple, frugal life she had inherited wealth from her brother, Kurt G. Wintermeyer. He instructed her in his will to use the inheritance for the benefit of the community. And so, she did. She was a big supporter of the Audubon Society, Fairhope Library, and Fairhope-Point Clear Rotary Youth Club. She donated to create the Halstead amphitheater, the Interpretive Center at the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Boram Health Center, and made numerous gifts to Faulkner State College. Her friends say she saw a need and volunteered her time and finances to fill that need. She often did so anonymously, other times with her name attached.

Jeanine Normand remembers that Ottolie donated money to the Coastal Alabama Community College to provide a baby grand piano and other renovations for their Fairhope Centennial Hall theatre. Because of her, they were able to start a concert series – at Ottolie's request, Dr. Jazz was the FIRST musician to perform in the long running concert series.

Ottolie enjoyed birding and still in her later years loved being entertained by blue birds outside her window. She played bridge brilliantly every other Saturday with Pat Cassidy, Gisela Kynist, and Elaine Snyder-Conn.

One unverified story as to Ottolie's wealth is that her brother, Kurt G. had a silver mine in Mexico. He died and left the mine to her. The Mexican government seized the mine. She went to Mexico, hired a lawyer, and won, making her rich.

Ottolie honored her brother with the Kurt G. Wintermeyer Trail located on County Road 17 in Foley. The Trail is about a mile of boardwalk providing access to the Weeks Bay Pitcher Plant Bog byway of a peaceful, wheelchair-accessible hike through a unique carnivorous plant habitat.

There are few other references to Kurt G. Wintermeyer other than quotes from this writing found at [Whispers of Nature: A Journey Through the Kurt G. Wintermeyer Trail - Mystical Trekking](#):

While the natural beauty of the trail is undeniable, understanding the history, or rather, the \*lack\* of readily available history, adds an interesting layer to the experience. Who was Kurt G. Wintermeyer? That's the question that buzzed in my mind as I walked the path. There are no plaques, no information boards detailing his life or legacy. It adds a certain mystique to the trail. Was he a local conservationist? A beloved community member? A soldier who loved this patch of land? The absence of information invites speculation and allows you to create your own narrative surrounding the name. This creates an additional allure and draws one into an interesting search.

But perhaps, his legacy is not written in stone but etched in the very existence of the trail. Perhaps he simply wanted to share the beauty of this place with others, a simple act of generosity that continues to benefit countless visitors. I started my own search for Mr. Wintermeyer and couldn't find much...

Ottolie's legacy lies with her gifts of generosity that continue to benefit so many and one that gives name to her brother who helped make it happen.

*Written by Mary Anderson with information provided by Michael Patrick, Pinky Bass, Jeanine Normand, Elaine Snyder-Conn, and Phil Strinste*



## **DECEMBER BOARD MEETING SUMMARY**

The Board approved the updated Volunteer Handbook which was presented for a membership vote at the Annual Membership Meeting on December 7. The Board also approved refinishing the front door to help maintain and improve our building.

The congregation met the goal needed to receive a generous matching donation this December. Membership continues to grow, with 90 members and 15 friends currently part of our community.

Several December events were discussed including the Annual Membership Meeting on Dec. 7, a pizza and holiday decorating party that same afternoon, and the live radio play of "It's a Wonderful Life" on Dec. 14. The Board also agreed to serve as a co-sponsor of the Eastern Shore Chamber Music Festival in 2026, offering our facilities as a venue.

The Board discussed the proposed updated Facilities Use Policies and Fees. The Board will also be updating the Administrator's contract to reflect the recently approved salary change.

Looking ahead, the Board will continue gathering bids for driveway gravel work, discuss D&O insurance at a future meeting, and work on identifying volunteers to assist with Sunday morning preparations.

Approved Board meeting minutes will be available once finalized.



## **SMALL GROUP CIRCLES**

*Afternoon Circle meets 1:30pm on 1/21 at the Joffe's; Evening Circle meets 6:30pm on 1/15 at the McMurry's*

*January's topic is "Aging." To join, an empty chair awaits you.*

Each small group conducts a community project and a church project. With Pete Wegner's carpentry, the Wednesday afternoon Small Group Circle has installed a Peace Pole. The word "peace" in four different languages is depicted on each side of the pole. The installation was quickly completed with the help of Beau, Pete and Irene's grandson. The installation will be complemented with new flowers in an upcoming project.

Beau and Pete had also constructed and installed a new mailbox for the Fellowship.

Earlier in the year, the Thursday evening Small Group Circle cleaned out under the trees and cut back the hedge covering the stained-glass chalice.

*Many thanks for all those who contributed to these new, attractive features!*



## **CARES AND CONCERNS**

To complete one of those New Year's resolutions seldom finished, the Member Support Committee offers you this help: an "Emergency Contact Form." Simply fill it out and post it in a conspicuous place on your refrigerator. Should the worst happen, your information will be readily available for first responders, family members, and/or concerned friends. You have it in hand for your medical needs.

At the same time you are assembling information for the form, you might want to gather in an identified location the documents needed for end-of-life decisions to give you and your loved ones' peace of mind. The "Emergency Contact Form" can be [downloaded here](#) or picked up at the FUF Welcome Desk or Office.

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.

*Member Support Committee: Mary Anderson (Chair), Annette Chioma, Susan Hammack, Charlene Lee, Deborah Little, Vivian McMurry, Irene Wegner*



## **FUF ARTIST GALLERY SPOTLIGHT**

### *Bryant Galloway Whelan*

Bryant Galloway Whelan is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work reflects her sense of awe and wonder for forms of nature and their intrinsic beauty. Through her work she hopes to inspire others to see nature through an expanded lens, inspiring a reverence for its beautiful biodiversity.

A lifelong artist, Whelan earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Auburn University and only began making art as a full-time practice in 2023 upon retirement as Executive Director of Eastern Shore Art Center in Fairhope, Alabama. Whelan has won numerous awards for her work as well as been awarded artist residencies in Nantucket, Cape Cod, and Seaside, Florida. Whelan is a member of Fairhope Signature Artists and Mississippi Art Colony and enjoys teaching classes and workshops in experimental printmaking techniques. When not in her studio Whelan is likely on a coastal beach foraging for seaweed and beach fauna, walking in the woods gathering flora, seed pods and moth wings, or traveling to explore remote natural environs.



*Join us for an  
Artist Open Reception  
4:00pm - 6:00pm Sunday, January 25*

# January Programs



**Join us for Fellowship every Sunday!**

90:45am—Silent Meditation

10:45am—Musical Prelude

11:00am—Program with Guest Speaker

*Coffee Hour follows; Potluck on the last Sunday of the month*



## January 4

### **FUF Programs Over the Ages**

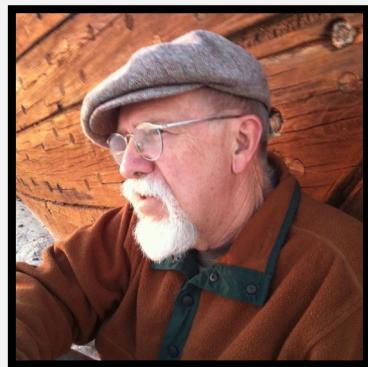
Sharing their history, a panelist of FUF members will talk about what has proved successful and challenging for Sunday Service Programs over the years. Having no minister, FUF as a lay-led congregation creates the opportunity to engage a variety of speakers on a variety of subjects. Rather than centering on individual tastes and preferences, collective gathering is an act of generosity and hospitality. Not every program may be to the liking of everyone, but just our presence that hour may be what our fellow congregant needed. The next program may be the very one that speaks directly to YOU. Your input on Program Planning will be welcome.

## January 11

### **In His Name, She Said**

Sonny Brewer will discuss his latest book, one which addresses a Gospel mystery.

Sonny Brewer is a writer and storyteller. He is the author of four novels, including *The Poet of Tolstoy Park*. His latest book is an illustrated storybook, *In His Name, She Said*.



**Sonny Brewer**

**January 18**

## **Good Grief Without God: A Spiritually Inclusive Approach to Loss**

Religious folks often balk at the idea that anyone could make it through a loss without a faith to support them, and yet people of all persuasions – spiritual, secular, and everywhere in between – cope successfully with loss every day. In this talk, Claire will share her learnings as a hospice bereavement coordinator offering spiritually inclusive grief support in the Pensacola area, with particular attention to the gap in community bereavement resources for non-religious or spiritually wounded grievers.

Claire Helton is a hospice bereavement coordinator with a background in chaplaincy & congregational ministry, and is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola. She finds life in creating spaces for deep reflection, community-building, and personal transformation, and puts that passion to use as a Mentor with *OutoftheBox* ([www.outofthebox.org](http://www.outofthebox.org)), a group dialogue tool she currently uses to facilitate her own spiritually inclusive grief support group called *Mindful Grief*, which meets in Pensacola.

**January 25**

## **From A Hacker's Perspective**

**From a Hacker's Perspective** explores cybersecurity and how we can stay more secure as our daily lives become increasingly connected in a digital world. Using real-world examples and attacker tactics, the talk helps attendees better understand the risks we face and how those risks translate into everyday decisions.

Chad Bedwell is the Operational Technology (OT) Cybersecurity Lead for Mott MacDonald, a global engineering firm, specializing in securing critical infrastructure through ethical hacking and attacker-focused defense. He is passionate about helping people understand digital risk by explaining how real-world attackers think and how that knowledge helps protect the systems that keep the world running.

**Chad Bedwell**

# FUF Groups

Groups are open to all!

## Weekly

### Silent Meditation Group

Sundays 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 3:30pm. (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.

*Contact Vivian McMurry or Jean Normand*

## 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

*Contact: Nick Coulson*

### Small Group Circles

Evening Circle meets 6:30pm on 1/15 at the McMurry's

Afternoon Circle meets 1:30pm on 1/21 at the Joffe's

To join, an empty chair awaits you.

January's topic is "Aging "

*Contact: Mary Anderson, Joanne Preston,  
Maggie Joffe, or Vivian McMurry*





# January



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
*All events are at FUF unless otherwise noted.						
<b>4</b>  9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program	<b>5</b>  2pm- Uke Open Jam	<b>6</b>  9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)	<b>7</b>  3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings	<b>1</b>  9:30-Non-Fiction Book Group 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)	<b>2</b>  1pm-ESIC	<b>3</b>  3:30pm-Tai Chi with Andrea
<b>11</b>  9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program	<b>12</b>  2pm- Uke Open Jam	<b>13</b>  9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)  5-7pm—Side Room Reserved	<b>14</b>  3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings	<b>8</b>  11am-Women of Wisdom 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)  <b>6-8pm—Hall Reserved</b>	<b>9</b>  12:30pm Board Meeting  1pm-ESIC	<b>10</b>  3:30pm-Tai Chi with Andrea
<b>18</b>  9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program  <b>12:45-4pm- Grandmothers' Circle</b>	<b>19</b>  Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2pm- Uke Open Jam	<b>20</b>  9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)	<b>21</b>  1:30pm- Small Group at the Joffe's  3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers	<b>15</b>  4:30pm-Fiction Book Group 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)  6:30pm- Small Group at the McMurry's	<b>16</b>  1pm-ESIC	<b>17</b>  3:30pm-Tai Chi with Andrea
<b>25</b>  9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program <b>Potluck Sunday</b>  <b>4-6pm- Artist Reception</b>	<b>26</b>  2pm- Uke Open Jam	<b>27</b>  9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)	<b>28</b>  3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers	<b>22</b>  11am-Women of Wisdom 4:30pm-Fiction Book Group 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)	<b>23</b>  1pm-ESIC	<b>24</b>  <b>2-4pm-Hall reserved</b>
				<b>29</b>  5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)	<b>30</b>  1pm-ESIC	<b>31</b>  3:30pm-Tai Chi with Andrea

## Deadlines for Publications

### Weekly Bulletin and FUF Weekender

**Wednesdays by 5pm**

Submit to Mary Matthews: matthewsmary29@yahoo.com

### February Newsletter

**Submit by end of day, January 21**

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.*