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Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship

1150 Fairhope Ave.
 Fairhope, AL 36532
 FairhopeUU.org

A NOTE FROM THE FUF PRESIDENT

“Fellowship”

Once again, I cringe as I stammer out “ch-ch-chur-Fellowship!” I look around to see who may have heard my blunder of almost saying the “C” word, at FUF seemingly forbidden. For some of traditional and non-traditional backgrounds using the word “church” can evoke fond memories or trigger bad experiences of being left out or admonished. The last thing UUs want is “churchy”- telling us how to behave, what to believe, who can belong, who is saved, who is lost, who I should hate, who I should love, how and what I should worship. To others, “church” may mean family tradition, a community social center, a supporting environment.

Many descriptive words can describe a religious group that gathers: Church, Parish, Congregation, Fellowship, Society, Synagogue, Mosque. I’d guess for the Fairhope founders, the word “Fellowship” was very intentional. This gathering of like-minded, free-spirited individuals of varied backgrounds came together in “fellowship” on Sunday mornings. Here they exchanged intellectual ideas, commented on world events, shared life philosophies. They may have been agnostics, atheists, former faith affiliates, or ritual practitioners, but they came together determining that their values equated to “Unitarian Universalists.” The bylaws adopted in 1982 and last amended in 2019 state: “The name of this religious society, incorporated as The Fairhope Unitarian Universalist Association, shall be the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship.”

So, whether this Hall be considered your friendship community, synagogue, mosque, church, cathedral, rippling stream, lapping ocean waves, forested canopy, rugged bluffs, undulating prairie, a crackling warm fire – in seeking our

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needed moments of respite, solace, companionship – may this Fellowship ultimately be a gathering refuge, a place of belonging and caring.

A Place of Belonging and Caring

It is not by chance that you arrived here today.
You have been looking for something larger than yourself.
Inside of you there is a yearning, a calling, a hope for more,
A desire for a place of belonging and caring.

Through your struggles, someone nurtured you into being,
Instilling a belief in a shared purpose, a common yet precious resource
That belongs to all of us when we share.

And so, you began seeking a beloved community:

A people that does not put fences around love.
A community that holds its arms open to possibilities of love.
A heart-home to nourish your soul and share your gifts.

Welcome home; welcome to worship.

By Kimberlee Anne Tomczak Carlson

Humbly and proudly,
Mary Anderson
FUF President



FEBRUARY BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

At our February 10 meeting, the Board continued focusing on caring for our building, strengthening our governance practices, and planning meaningful programs and events for our community.

Funding was approved for important exterior maintenance, including power washing, exterior caulking, and refinishing the front doors. We are exploring options to address driveway resurfacing and drainage concerns. The Board continues researching Directors & Officers (D&O) insurance as part of our broader effort to follow nonprofit best practices and strengthen record retention.

There are a few special events scheduled through early Spring — including the Membership Appreciation Day February 22, March 18 screening of *Sallie's Ashes*, Stand-Up Comedy Jam March 28, and the April 4 Rummage Sale. We're also exploring the possibility of hosting a virtual gathering for the UUA General Assembly in June and inviting neighboring congregations to participate.

The updated Facility Use Policy has been approved to reflect our current practices. Beginning March 17, regular Board meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of each month at 4:30 pm.

As always, we are grateful for the many members who step forward to serve and support the life of our Fellowship.



GIVING IN GRATITUDE

The program on February 22 to recognize volunteers and provide connection opportunities revealed just how much is happening at the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship and who is doing it. Special volunteer recognition was given to Irene Wegner, Maggie Joffe, and Carl Couret, who all took on extra roles over the past few years.

To end the program, individuals anonymously described in handwritten notecards, "Gifts in Gratitude":

 <p>What gifts do you <i>receive</i> from Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship?</p>
<i>friends, belonging, community,</i>
<i>hope, inspiration, purpose,</i>
<i>interesting diverse programs,</i>
<i>music, food, laughter, love</i>

 <p>What gifts do you <i>give</i> to Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship?</p>
<i>time</i>
<i>money</i>
<i>experience</i>

 <p>What gifts do you give to your family and community that reflect your UU Principles?</p>
<i>showing respect, open-mindedness,</i>
<i>speaking, living and acting with</i>
<i>compassion, generosity, and joy,</i>
<i>standing for democratic principles</i>

Just reading the note cards is a gift itself and some will be displayed. Signup sheets will continue to be available in the areas in which volunteers are still needed.

Thanks to all the Fellowship's volunteers with special thanks to the Member Support Committee for planning and presenting this festive celebration.



Member Support Committee:

Susan Hammack, Irene Wegner, Vivian McMurray, Mary Anderson, Charlene Lee, Annette Chioma.

Not Pictured: Deborah Little and Maggie Joffe





IN MEMORY OF MIKE DARBY

Michael "Mike" Darby, passed away aged 77 on January 30, 2026, in Pensacola, Florida, after a long battle with Parkinson's disease.

Born in Leeds, England, Mike moved to Silverhill, Alabama in 1980. He was widely known among classic car enthusiasts for his exceptional skill restoring antique British cars.

He operated Darby Classic Restoration beginning in 1998, earning the respect and friendship of fellow enthusiasts across the region. He was an active member of several local car clubs.

Fluent in French, German, and Spanish he worked in car and boat maintenance travelling internationally in his early career.

Mike and Nancy met on a passenger boat on their way to Sweden and married in 1977. They built and lived aboard their 29-foot sailboat in the England before moving to Alabama.

There they designed and built their own home, living in Silverhill till 2023. They were active members of the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship for a decade, especially with the Back Porch singers.

Mike will be remembered as a kind man with a subtle sense of humor, always willing to lend his time and talents to help others. He was a mean player of Mexican Dominoes.

Mike is survived by his wife, Nancy Darby; his daughter, Stella Darby (Asaf Karagila); his stepson, Kevin O'Flaherty (Mary Bolster); his twin sister, Liz Johnson (David); and his brother, Graham Darby.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Mike's memory to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research or Parkinson's UK. Please do not send sympathy cards to Nancy as her Alzheimer's disease means these well-intended messages may add to her distress.



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.



FUF HISTORY & RECORDS

Tom Czekanski, FUF member and former museum curator, is in the process of digitizing the archives of the Fellowship. If you have records at home pertaining to the history of the Fellowship, please let Tom know so they can be evaluated for inclusion in the archives. tczekanski@aol.com

Upcoming Events



Join us for this free screening of Sallie's Ashes

6:30pm Wednesday, March 18

Tickets are free, but space is limited—be sure to reserve your ticket!



7:30pm Saturday, March 28

Tickets are only \$15 and can be purchased online or in person



One of our biggest fundraisers of the year!

FUF Rummage Sale — Saturday, April 4

Start rummaging through your closet and garage and see what gently used items you are willing to donate! Furniture, housewares, and clothing tend to sell well. Please no electronics or toys.

We will set up on Friday, April 3 for Saturday's sale. FUF storage space before April 3 is limited—please contact Elaine Synder-Conn or Suzanne Tormoen before bringing large items.

Volunteers are always appreciated for the set-up, sale, and the breakdown! Let Elaine or Suzanne know if you're willing to help.

Phil Herring and Gwen Snyder are also looking for clean used pots to transplant vegetables and ornamental plants for the yard sale. If you have some you are willing to donate, please bring them to FUF as soon as possible!

March Programs



Irene Wegner

Irene, husband Pete, and various dogs have enjoyed biking the Gulf area for the past 13 years.

March 1

Ed Harris: UU Minister and Civil Rights Activist

UU minister Ed Harris was one of the white liberal activists involved in the Birmingham civil rights unrest. He founded the ACLU there and worked for equal rights. For his troubles he was attacked repeatedly. Narrowly missing more attacks, he and his family fled the city to safer locations in the north where members of FUF knew him. He was an engaging storyteller, principled leader, and author.

Irene has been an active UU for the past 50+ years, including serving as President and Board Chair of the Fellowship. A former teacher, Director of Religious Education, and a state Community Organizer for AARP, she has enjoyed using storytelling to connect with others.

March 8

Religion, Morality, and Science in the 21st Century

This presentation will address the meaning of religion and its relationship, morality, and science in the 21st Century.

Dr. Kenneth Hudson is a Sociology Professor at the University of South Alabama. His current research addresses questions about religion, ideology, science and social inequality.



Dr. Ken Hudson



Diane Thomas

March 15

Ticking Time Bomb at Plant Barry

Overview of the threat of 21 million tons of toxic coal ash next to the Mobile River in the Tensaw Delta and possible permanent pollution unless action is taken now.

Born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Diane received her PhD in Clinical Psychology in 1973 and practiced for 20 years. Some of her volunteer activities include Chairman of the City of Fairhope Personnel Board, Read Aloud Baldwin, and Coal Ash Action Group for the last three years. One of Diane's most notable accomplishments was hiking on the Appalachian trail when she was 58.

March 22

A Brief Overview of the Civil War in Baldwin County

Mr. Czekanski will provide a brief overview of historic events in Baldwin County Alabama during the Civil War from the occupation of Fort Morgan to the Battle of Mobile Bay and the Surrender of Ft. Blakely, the last major battle of the war.

A retired museum curator, Tom has been employed by Beauvoir, The Last Home of Jefferson Davis, The Louisiana State Museum and The National WWII Museum. He participated in Civil War reenactments for over 15 years as both a Confederate and Federal Soldier recreating battles at historic sites across the country including many locations in Baldwin County. He is currently enjoying retirement in Silverhill with his spouse Annette Chioma.



Tom Czekanski



**Jacqueline Allen
Trimble**

March 29

Why Poetry Matters in an Unjust World

Even though empathy has been said to be detrimental, it is in fact what makes us human, bends the arc of the universe toward justice, champions equity, and encourages our compassion for each other. Poetry has long been a reflection of that empathy. It is often our earliest interaction with language and teaches us what is required, while challenging and calling out our baser impulses. Poetry matters in an unjust world.

Jacqueline Allen Trimble is the Poet Laureate of Alabama, a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow (Poetry), a Cave Canem Fellow, and a two-time Alabama State Council on the Arts Literary Fellow. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals including *POETRY*, *The Louisville Review*, *The Offing*, *Salvation South* and *Poet Lore*. Her work has been widely anthologized, most notably in Kwame Alexander's *This is the Honey: An Anthology of Contemporary Black Poetry*, and has been featured by the Poetry Foundation's Poem of the Day, American Academy of Poets' Poem-a Day, and Poetry Daily.

Also an essayist, Trimble's work has appeared in numerous collections. She also wrote for the South African television series *Die Testament* for two seasons. Published by NewSouth Books, *American Happiness*, her debut collection, won the 2016 Balcones Poetry Prize, and was recently re-released in paperback. Her newest collection, *How to Survive the Apocalypse*, was named one of the ten best poetry books of 2022 by the New York Public Library. Trimble is Professor of English and chairs the Department of Languages and Literatures at Alabama State University.

Join us for Fellowship every Sunday!

9:45am—Silent Meditation 10:45am—Musical Prelude

11:00am—Program with Guest Speaker

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

open to all!

FUF Groups

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



New Class Alert!

Ever wonder how your past religious experiences help to make you who you are today? New to UUism?

What brought you to FUF?

“Owning Your Religious Past” is an exploration of these questions. It’s five 1½ hour sessions and we will likely meet on Tuesdays, late afternoon.

And of course it wouldn’t be a UU course without food!

We are still open to 4 more folks joining us.

Interested? Contact Irene Wegner!

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: Kathryn Firsching

Small Group Circles

Afternoon Circle meets 1:30pm on 3/18 at the Joffe’s

Evening Circle meets 6:30pm on 3/19 at the McMurry’s

To join, an empty chair awaits you.

March’s topic is “Success”

Contact: Mary Anderson, Joanne Preston,

Maggie Joffe, or Vivian McMurry



Sunday	Chalice Lighting	Special Reading
March 1	Virginia McClintock	Suzanne Tormoen
March 8	Mike Griffin	Elaine Snyder-Conn
March 15	Ken Kralik	Sheena Patrick
March 22	Nick Coulson	Mark Preston
March 29	Bellamy Watson	Juanie Noland



MARCH



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1</p> <p>9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Prelude 11:00-Program Potluck Sunday</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2pm- Uke Open Jam</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9:30-Non-Fiction Book Group 11am-Women of Wisdom 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1pm-ESIC</p>	 <p>Set your clocks ahead by 1 hour tonight!</p>
<p>8</p> <p>9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Prelude 11:00-Program Daylight Savings</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>2pm- Uke Open Jam</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)</p>	<p>11</p> <p>3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>1pm-ESIC</p>	 <p>Happy Pi Day!</p>
<p>15</p> <p>9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program 12:45-4pm-Grandmothers' Circle</p>	<p>16</p> <p>2pm- Uke Open Jam</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9am-Men's Group (Kind Café) 4:30pm Board Meeting HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY</p>	<p>18</p> <p>1:30pm- Small Group at the Joffe's 3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings 6pm Sally's Ashes</p>	<p>19</p> <p>11am-Women of Wisdom 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay) 6:30pm- Small Group at the McMurry's</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>1pm-ESIC Fairhope Arts & Crafts Festival 10am-5pm</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Fairhope Arts & Crafts Festival 10am-5pm</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program Fairhope Arts & Crafts Festival 10am-5pm</p>	<p>23</p> <p>2pm- Uke Open Jam</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>3pm-4:30pm-Back Porch Folk Singers 4:45-5:45- Eastern Shore Strings</p>	<p>26</p> <p>4:30pm-Fiction Book Group 5pm-Thursday Group (FH Market by the Bay)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>1pm-ESIC</p>	<p>28</p> <p>7:30pm Stand-up Comedy Jam 2</p>
<p>29</p> <p>9:45-Silent Meditation 10:45-Musical Prelude 11:00-Program Potluck Sunday</p>	<p>30</p> <p>2pm- Uke Open Jam</p>	<p>31</p> <p>9am-Men's Group (Kind Café)</p>	 <p>Colorectal Cancer Awareness</p> <p>March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Talk to your doctor about which screening is right for you.</p>			

Deadlines for Publications

Weekly Bulletin and FUF Weekender

Wednesdays by 5pm

Submit to Mary Matthews: matthewsmary29@yahoo.com

April Newsletter

Submit by end of day, March 25

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

Submit to Ashley: Office@FairhopeUU.org



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.