

OUR COASTLINE

Official Newsletter of the Unitarian Coastal Fellowship
Morehead City, NC



SEPTEMBER 2021

Dear friends,

Change is in the air: a change in seasons, and also a change in ministers. The coming month will be filled with surprises, as I learn about you and the way you do things, and as you learn about me and the way I do things. These first few weeks and months will be all about getting to know each other: after all, I can't analyze a system without first getting to know it as thoroughly as I can! I hope you will be patient with me and my many questions, and the many things that I inevitably will forget to do (because I don't yet know that I was supposed to do them).

On a more sober note, I must say that it is a gift to have a congregation who had planned to meet online for the next few months in any case. Pandemic conditions feel different now than they did at the beginning of the summer, and my colleagues who had made plans to reopen their congregations this fall are having to re-strategize yet again. I know that many of us miss meeting in person and are tired of calculating risk for simple things like having meetings or even going to the supermarket. I am grateful that as Unitarian Universalists, we are willing to struggle with balancing the sacredness of life with the sacredness of fellowship, knowing that both of them are important to us as humans and as spiritual beings.

And so, as we move forward with getting to know one another, please, don't hesitate to let me know what you're comfortable with. Typically, I would invite people to show me their favorite spots—a restaurant, a museum, a park—as a way for me to not only get to know the people, but the place that I will be calling home for the next two years. I have never been kayaking; perhaps one of you would like to show me how? I'm also very ready and willing to learn how to fish! I enjoy cycling and have a nice road bike, but I'm dreadfully out of shape; perhaps one of you can show me an easy trail? Or, if the idea of meeting in person gives you any pause whatsoever, I'm happy to meet via zoom. (And yes, I am vaccinated.)

Change is in the air, and all we can do is meet it with as much care, openness, and flexibility as we can muster. You will find—if you haven't already—that I am a big fan of *fun*. Despite everything that's going on, there is still joy and wonder to be found in the world. Whatever anxiety we may have about the future, there is still the present to be had, and that is a gift.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

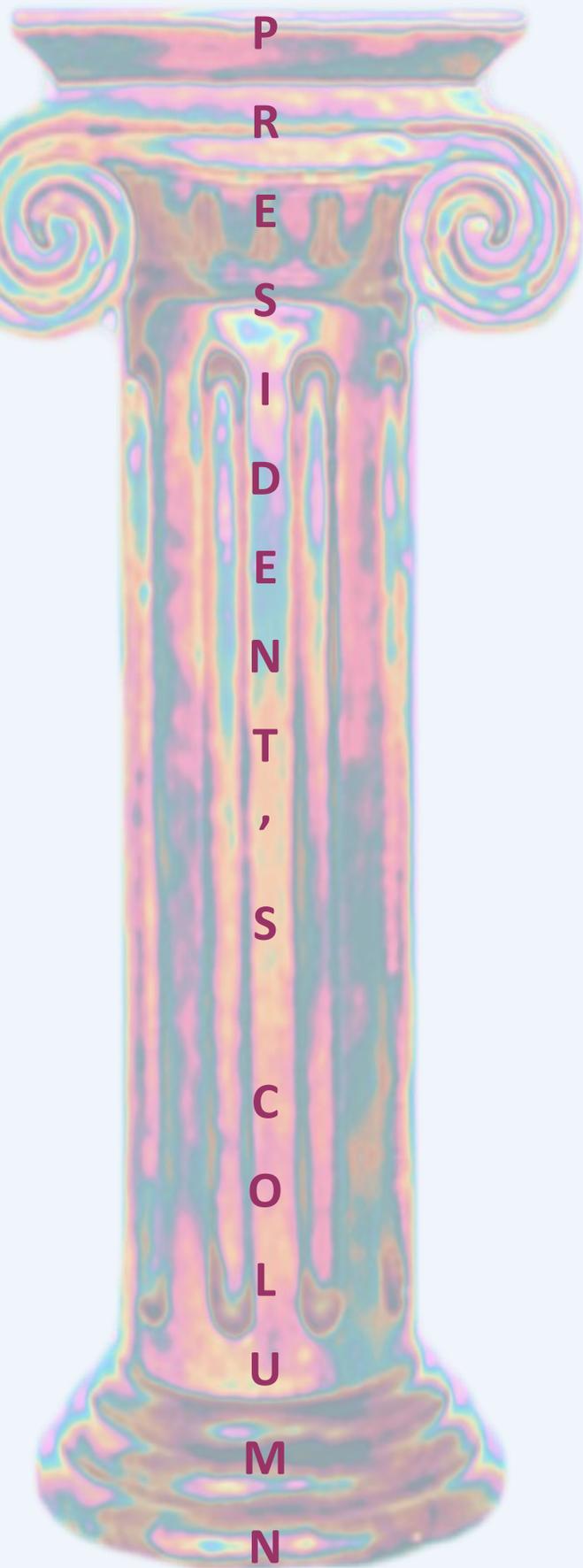
Our congregation's vision is to be a visible presence in the community, growing a just world through spiritual enrichment, compassionate action, and free religious inquiry.

A WELCOMING CONGREGATION

We are an intentionally diverse community welcoming of an enriched by people of varying cultures, economic and ethnic backgrounds; by people of varying sexual orientations, gender identities and family compositions; by people of all races, ages and beliefs.

Blessings, ~ Rev. Michelle Ma

Happy September My Friends,



Keeping the congregation and our new home at 2900 Bridges St. safe and financially secure is one of the Board's priorities as we prepare to occupy our new campus. The UUA has prepared a policy framework to maintain congregational safety called the Safe Congregation Policy. Many other UU congregations have already instituted this policy. Now, this Board plans to follow suit by implementing a Safe Congregation Policy for UCF. We have selected three of the areas in that policy framework to start—Congregational Communication; Children and Youth Safety; and Building Safety. To begin, we are working on the Building Safety Policy and plan to have it in place in time to move onto our new campus. To now, no policy has existed to guide us in maintaining the safety of our building. We have had to create solutions as problems have surfaced and have learned many lessons along the way. Those lessons will be used as we move forward.

UCF's Building Safety Policy will address various crises that could happen to our congregation and our campus. Step-by-step plans will be created for approaching those crises and the residual effects on the congregation. The Board recognizes that anything that threatens the safety of our campus threatens the congregation's sense of security and vice versa. Therefore, any good policy should account for the congregation's feelings resulting from a crisis.

The Board is first addressing non-man-made crises, such as natural disasters and pandemics. First, the condition of the building after a disaster must be assessed and who and what is needed to return it to its normal condition. Financial and legal solutions will be included.

Second, the policy will address maintaining the community of our congregation and residual feelings dealing with the loss or interruption in our ability to have normal programs and services. What are our back-up plans if we can't use the building? This policy will include answers to this question and many others.

The Board will then move on to address man-made crises, such as burglary, vandalism, or destruction of property. Similar policies will be made, adding considerations for increased effects on the congregation's feelings of insecurity after such an occurrence. Furthermore, in such cases, UCF will have to access external authorities such as the police and possibly legal representation. In fact, the Board plans to create a relationship with the MHC Police Department as part of creating this policy. This will certainly facilitate better communication and better results for UCF. Can the police teach the congregation increased safety measures in the face of potential crisis?

This policy will include answers to this question and many others.

Maintaining your safety, your sense of security, and the safety of our campus is driving the Board's work on this first element of our new Safe Congregation Policy. Please send us your good thoughts as we do this work.

All the Best!

Melva

September Worship Services

10:30am Sunday mornings by Zoom

Log-in information is in each week's Saturday UCF Update

or email Marilyn Cullison at mscullison@gmail.com

September 5: "The Work of Interim Ministry" - Rev. Ma

Rev. Michelle will acquaint us with her style and role as interim minister in this very first Sunday of her ministry with the Unitarian Coastal Fellowship. Bring your curiosity and playful nature as we begin to learn what this work is about!

September 12: "The Sea Touches All Shores" - Rev. Ma

The story goes that when Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry was developing the character of Sulu—portrayed by George Takei—he didn't want the character to have a nationally specific surname. He wanted the character to represent the peace of the Star Trek universe. When he looked at a map of Southeast Asia and saw the Sulu Sea, he thought to himself, "Ah, the waters of the sea touch all shores." Please join us, in person, at Fort Macon State Park, at the end of the road across from the Fort in the Beaufort Inlet Overlook Pavilion. We will reflect on the universality and importance of water at this year's Ministry of Waters service. Stay tuned for updates regarding the location, COVID restrictions and weather for this in-person worship service. We hope to make this our first hybrid- both an in-person and Zoom Worship Service!

September 19: "Learning to Listen" - Rev. Ma

One of the things Rev. Michelle learned as a hospital chaplain was how to listen: not just to the words that someone is saying, but the emotions behind those words. What might happen if we listened to our and each other's emotions more? What could we learn?

September 26: "Imagine, Organize, Create" - Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson, UU Minister

It's hard to fully grasp the magnitude of this moment for our democracy, our earth and our humanity. Though we may be wrestling with doubt and weariness, our faith calls us to interrogate the limits of our

imagination for what is possible. Last year we activated more UUs for the work of justice than ever in the history of our faith. This Sunday we'll reflect on what we've learned and imagine what's next.

Bio: Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson serves as the Executive Director of UU Justice NC, The Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry of North Carolina. In this role, she has the pleasure of working alongside UUs across the state to do justice work spanning racial, economic, immigrant, environmental and electoral justice.

Joys and Sorrows

The Worship Team asks that you hold nurses and other healthcare workers, children, and teachers returning to school, and the people of both Haiti and Afghanistan in your hearts and minds today and going forward.

Sarah Sutherland would like to honor the military men and women who gave their lives during the humanitarian evacuation in Afghanistan. Not only have their family's lives been forever changed, but also the Afghanis families as well. Let us all remember them in our hearts.



Pastoral Care Tip - September

Deep breathing has been shown through research studies to shift the body's response from the stress (fight or flight) state to the relaxed (rest and digest) state.

Sit in a comfortable position or lie flat on the floor.

Put one hand on your belly below the ribs and the other hand on your chest.

Breathe in through your nose. Count to four as you inhale.

Notice that the hand on your belly moves, while the hand on your chest remains fairly still.

Breathe out through pursed lips as you count to six.

Repeat this roughly twelve times, or for a total of two minutes.

Take note of any difference in your physical and mental well-being when you are finished.



Board Business

Last month, we reported that we'd hired an attorney to fix a typographical error on the deed for our Bridges property. The attorney has completed that work and the accurate deed has been filed with the city. We also have a copy of that deed in our safe.

The Board voted to postpone the installation of the charging stations in our parking lot at Bridges. The price of installing those charging stations at this time is prohibitive. In addition, Smithson's charge for installing the electrical wiring for them is more than we want to pay. Nevertheless, all of the preparations have been made to install those stations in the future. A concrete pad will be created and the conduit will be run to the breaker box to make it easy for us to install the stations in the future.



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Children's Religious Education

Hi everyone!

It doesn't seem possible that children are back in school and summer vacation is a thing of the past for many. Even with the COVID 19 pandemic still going strong and the Delta Variant sweeping the nation and hitting those not vaccinated, please everyone stay safe and be well.

The walls are going up on our new church and it's beginning to feel we are rounding the second bend. The new building team has been very hard at work overseeing the project and we thank them very much. Sunday school rooms are being figured out, and our new interim minister, Rev. Michelle Ma will soon be with us starting September 1st. There is much excitement in the air.

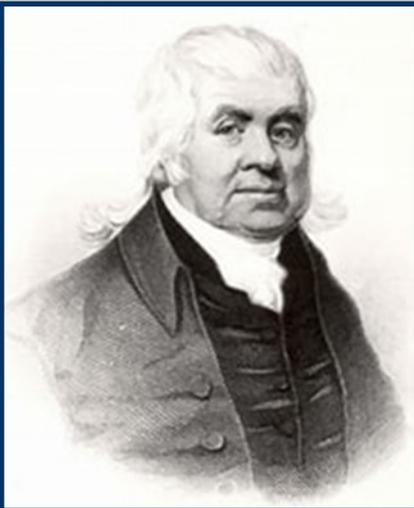
This month is our second of a seven-part series of our UU History and how we came to be.

John Murray Comes to America – 1770

The Wind of Change

By: Janeen K. Grohsmeyer

Over two hundred years ago (when the United States of America was still the thirteen colonies), there lived a man named John Murray. John Murray and his wife, Eliza, lived in the country of England. They were very religious people. Every Sunday they got up early, got dressed, ate their breakfast, and went to church. Sometimes, John Murray would preach a sermon and talk to the people about God.



Now, their church was not a place to be happy. No one smiled. No one laughed. No one sang. Because the followers of that religion, called Calvinism, believed that almost all of the people were going to hell. They believed that God would let only a few people into heaven. No matter what people did, even if they were really, really nice and tried really, really hard to be good, they still couldn't go to heaven. No matter what. And so, the religion in that church was a very serious business, and the people were expected to be serious, too.

But one day, John and Eliza Murray heard of a man named Mr. Relly. Mr. Relly was of a different religion, a religion that said people didn't have to go to hell, a religion where people could be happy. Finally, after talking about it for weeks, John and Eliza decided to listen to what Mr. Relly had to say. The next Sunday, they got up early, got dressed, ate their breakfast, and they went to Mr. Relly's church instead of their own.

At that church people smiled. Someone actually laughed. When it came time for the sermon, Mr. Relly got up to preach. He said, "God loves all his children. God doesn't have favorites. Everyone, everyone in the universe, has the chance to go to heaven and be saved from the fires of hell. Salvation is universal." Mr. Relly was a Universalist, and after hearing his sermon, John and Eliza decided they were Universalists, too.

But the people at their old church weren't Universalists. "Mr. Murray!" they said, very stern. "Have you and your wife been going to hear that heretic, Mr. Relly?"

"Yes, sirs, we have," answered John Murray.

“And do you believe such nonsense, that all people have the chance to be saved?”

“Yes, sirs, we do.”

“Mr. Murray!” they said, appalled. “You mustn’t say such things!”

“Yes,” said John Murray, “I must.”

And the said, “Oh, no, you won’t!”

And he said, “Oh, yes, I will!”

And they said, “Well, you can’t say them here! You and your wife both have to leave!”

Poor John and Eliza Murray! None of their old friends would talk to them, and they were lonely and sad. Then Eliza had a baby, which made them happy for a while, but then the baby got sick and Eliza got sick, and John had to borrow money to pay the doctors. He borrowed more and more money and went to more and more doctors, but they couldn’t help. His wife and his baby died. And then he was arrested, because he couldn’t pay back the money he had borrowed.

So there John Murray sat, all alone in a cell, with no job, no money, no family and no friends. He decided he had failed God and failed his family and failed himself. He decided he was never going to be part of a church again. He decided that was never going to peach again

Ever.

After a few days, Eliza’s brother paid the money that John owed, and so John was set free. But John wasn’t happy in England anymore. He wanted a new life in a new land. He bought a ticket on the sailing ship *Hand-in-Hand*. The ship had great white sails that were filled by the wind, and the wind blew and blew. The wind blew John Murray all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, far away from England and to a new land.

But the wind blew John Murray to a place he hadn’t planned to go—he ended up in New Jersey, instead of New York. The *Hand-in-Hand* became stranded on a sandbar off the coast, and the sailors couldn’t move the ship because the wind kept blowing them into shore. Because there wasn’t much food on the ship, John Murray climbed out and waded ashore through a marsh. Near Barnegat Bay, he met a farmer named Thomas Potter, who invited him into his house and gave him supper.

Now, Thomas Potter also believed in a loving God, and he believed in Universal Salvation. He believed in it so much, that ten years before John Murray had shown up on his doorstep, blown in by that wind, Thomas Potter had built a little church all by himself. For ten years, he had been waiting and waiting for the right preacher to come.

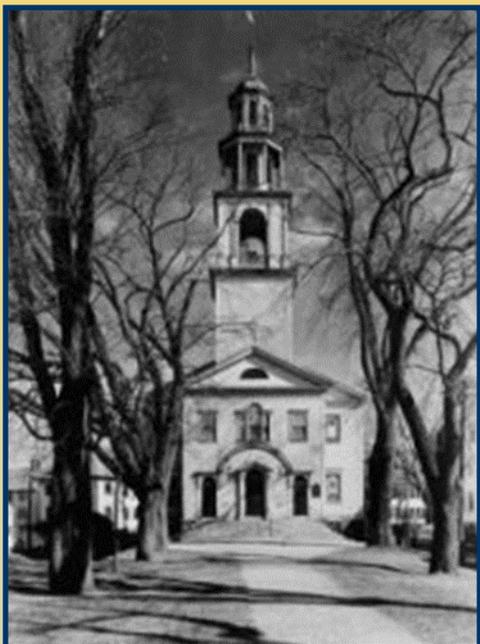


And now the preacher was here! But John Murray did not want to preach. Not at all. Thomas Potter argued with him and talked to him and prayed over him, and still John Murray didn’t want to preach. “I swore I would never preach again,” John Murray said. “Ever.”

But Thomas Potter said, “I believe that the wind that brought you here to my door was the breath of God. I believe God sent you here to preach in the church I have built. I believe that the wind will never change until you have preached to the people a message from God. Tell me, sir, if that wind does not change by Sunday morning, will you take that as a sign from God himself that you should preach again?”

John Murray thought and thought about that, and finally said, “I will”.

The wind blew. The wind blew and blew for days, and it kept the boat from leaving the shore. The wind didn't change. So, on Sunday morning, on the thirtieth of September in the year 1770, while that wind



was still blowing, John Murray got up early, got dressed, ate his breakfast, and went to church.

And he preached.

He preached in the church Thomas Potter had built, and he preached of a loving and caring God. He preached of Universal Salvation, the idea that all people everywhere in the universe could go to heaven and be saved. He said, ‘you possess only a small light, but uncover it, let it shine!’ And afterward, when the people came to him and thanked him for his sermon, John Murray changed. He changed his mind about joining a church again, and he changed his mind about being a preacher.

In 1779, in the town of Gloucester, Massachusetts, John Murray became the minister of the very first organized Universalist church in America. He traveled and preached in many places in the United States and became known as one of the founders of American Universalism.

The church that Thomas Potter built doesn't exist anymore.

It was torn down years ago. But Universalists are still there – Unitarian Universalists now. If you go to New Jersey, there on the shores of Barnegat Bay, you can stay at a special Unitarian Universalist retreat center named Murray Grove, in honor of John Murray, the man who decided to preach again and to let his light shine.

More About John Murray

(Born: December 10, 1741

Died: September 3, 1815)

John Murray is sometimes called the Father of American Universalism, but Universalism had emerged in central New England well before his arrival. Elhanan Winchester, Adams Streater, Caleb Rich, and the Davis family were influential in the New England movement. John Murray and James Rely and their brand of Universalism came from Methodism. John and Eliza Murray were excommunicated from their Methodist church in 1760.

In 1774, four years after his sermon in Thomas Potters church, Murray settled in Gloucester, Massachusetts, though he continued to travel about from place to place, preaching. In 1770, Murray and seventeen others of Gloucester split from the First Church of Christ Congregation and formed the Independent Church of Christ (see right – picture circa 1930). They built a meetinghouse and held their first service on Christmas Day, 1780. Five years later, after being harassed both legally and physically by other denominations, Murray was instrumental in choosing the name “Universalists.” This helped the new faith gain legal recognition and protection and earned John Murray the title “Father of American Universalism.”

In 1778, John Murray and Judith Sargent Stevens (her husband, John Stevens, had died the year before) were married. She became well known for her writings. In 1793, Murray settled in a parish ministry on Hanover Street in Boston. He remained there until his death in 1815.

The Universalist Society of Boston is now the Unitarian universalist Associate (UUA) headquarters in Boston, MA on Farnsworth Street.

For more interesting information about Thomas Potter and John Murray's story click on the link here, [Thomas Potter and John Murray Story – Murray Grove](#). There are pictures of the Potter Homestead and Rev. John Murray ministering.. Next month we go to 1819 and The Baltimore Sermon, titled Those Awful Unitarians. But...were they really that awful?

gather

Women's Discussion Group

The Women's Discussion Group will now be meeting on the second Monday of each month.

Our September meeting will be Monday, September 13 at 12:30. We will be back on Zoom, so bring your lunch and fire up your computer and join us. Our topic is chosen from a "hat" each month and September's has not yet been revealed. Stay tuned and it will be revealed.

If you would like more information about the Women's Discussion Group or would like to be added to our email list, contact Susan Roberts at landfall2@mindspring.com or 843-217-1885.

UCF Book Club

For our September discussion the UCF book group has chosen The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd, the author of The Secret Life of Bees and The Invention of Wings. In this book Kidd imagines Ana, a strong, thoughtful woman who became Jesus' wife and writes about events of the time as seen through Ana's eyes. We will meet on Saturday, September 25 at 11:00 a.m. Depending on the weather and the state of Covid, we will either meet on Zoom or outside.

Our book selection for October is We are Water by Wally Lamb. Feel free to join us for any or all of our discussions. We would love to have you. To learn more about our UCF book group, contact Susan Roberts (landfall2@mindspring.com or 843-217-1885).

Thoughtful Gatherings

Thoughtful Gatherings is part of our small group ministry at UCF. It allows us to connect in small groups outside of church walls to discuss topics that encourage us to probe deeply and establish more meaningful relationships. We want to offer three sessions once again this Fall, but need interested folks to formulate the plans we will use. Last year six members chose topics to consider and then teams of two wrote one plan each. This process itself is a great way to connect with others and work to support each other, as well as the larger church community. If you are interested in participating or have questions before you raise your hand, please contact nanreed5@gmail.com by September 3rd.

Mental Health Family Support Group

The Mental Health Family Support Group is an opportunity to share experiences and challenges of having family members or friends who live with mental illness. Meetings are being held on Zoom on Wednesday afternoons from 2:30 to 4:00. If you would like to join these meetings or would like more information, please contact Susan Roberts at 843-217-1885 or at landfall2@mindspring.com

Gentle Yoga

Wednesdays via Zoom at 9AM

Meditation

Mondays via Zoom at 6:15PM

SOCIAL ACTION— AID FOR HAITI

As we all know, on Saturday, August 14th a devastating earthquake erupted in Haiti – the poorest country in the Americas and a country that has had a series of devastating disasters in recent years. As of August 19th, there were over 2,000 killed, 12,000 injured and 332 still missing. 600,000 people are in need of emergency relief. Aid has been slow to arrive and many schools have been destroyed just before they were scheduled to re-open.



Photos from Reuters

There are many worthy organizations that are taking donations to help the people of Haiti – the Red Cross, Save the Children, and UNICEF, for example. The Anti-Racism daily, a publication that many of us in this congregation receive (<https://antiracismdaily.com/>) recommends instead donating to local Haitian grassroots organizations which can move more quickly and are more aware of what the priorities are and where help is needed the most.



Here are Antiracism Daily's recommendations with links to their websites:

- ◇ **The Centre Hospitalier de Fontaine**, a hospital for underserved communities, is accepting direct donations ([CHF](#)).
- ◇ **Locally Haiti** is working to “funnel aid to in the most direct and efficient way to the local people and institutions” ([Locally Haiti](#)).
- ◇ **The Ayiti Community Trust**, run by Haitians and diaspora members, is providing resources to groups on the ground ([ACT](#)).

SEPTEMBER NEWS FROM YOUR NEW BUILDING TEAM

First off – congratulations to the NBT for a well-received August 8 church service!

Now, back to the news...

It's hard to recognize the 2900 site. Walls and sheathing are giving shape to the new sanctuary. A large forklift and construction crane should be onsite or enroute to aid the workers raising the trusses for the approximately 30 foot high roof!

Meetings were held by the Furnishing and Finishing Committee (FFC) with the interior decorator/consultant. With the consultants' guidance the FFC will choose the color palette for the exterior and interior of the building. The exterior must be decided first, since the exterior is well underway to being closed in and under roof.

We plan to be weather tight by very early September.

September should be seeing a nearly finished sanctuary exterior shell. The interior work will begin with HVAC, electrical, plumbing and all the things that will lead us to completing the campus before end of this year.

There are a few (there are always a few on going) items with regard to the Annex and keeping operation going for the entire campus. After the sanctuary exterior is completed we will carry the exterior colors and 'look' over to the annex as much as possible for continuity on our campus.

All of the members of the NBT send a 'Welcome to our home' to Rev. Michelle Ma. She had a short tour of the Annex in late August. The NBT is looking forward to an in-depth tour and meeting with Rev. Michelle to share our plans for the campus completion and listen to any ideas for fleshing out our project.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Phillips

IT'S A BREEZE

Have you set up your access to Breeze yet? Breeze is our church management system that lets us keep track of our members and friends and their contact information, schedule events and access a church calendar, track which groups people belong to including Care Circles, Committees, etc, and so much more.

If you are a Member or Friend of UCF we already have you in the Breeze system, but if you set up a log-in (*it's a breeze!*), you can do all of the following:

Go to your profile and check your contact information to be sure it is correct

Edit your contact information if it is incorrect or if it changes

Upload a picture of your face to your profile (optional)

See your contributions to UCF since January 1, 2021

Opt-in or Opt-out of the UCF Member/Friends Directory – if you opt-in, others in the congregation will be able to see your contact information

Access the contact information of others in the congregation who have “opted-in” to the Directory

See the Church Calendar of Events, including services, meetings and special events – by clicking on them you can view details like time, location, Zoom links and other information

The link to our Breeze website is on the bottom left of every page of the UCF website, but can only be used if you have set up your user name and password. If you would like to set up your login or want more information, contact Barb Thomas (bsthomas2@gmail.com), Karen Baggott (kbaggott47@gmail.com), Jo Ellen Essex (jolnsx@yahoo.com) or Liz Morningstar (lizmorningstar@gmail.com)

UCF Website Tip of the Month:

Have you ever been asked by a friend or family member, “Just what is Unitarian Universalism and what do you believe?” and then stumbled around trying to answer? There is a page on our website that has a fairly concise answer to that question – check it out: <https://ucfnc.org/about-us/what-unitarian-universalists-believe/>

And while you're there, browse the website a bit. You may find information about our church that you didn't know. Please email the Website Team at bsthomas2@gmail.com if you see any errors or have suggestions for the website.

Green Tip of the Month:



An excellent way to dispose of kitchen and yard waste is to build a compost bin. There are many styles, from plastic bins many towns provide to chicken wire cylinders you can easily build yourself; visit <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g6957> for ideas and instructions. An added bonus is the rich compost for your garden! Even if you don't have a garden, it's a sustainable way to dispose of organic, compostable materials. You'd be surprised to learn how much can go into your bin! See <https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/100-things-you-can-compost>.

A screenshot of the Unitarian Coastal Fellowship website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: Home, About Us, News, Worshipping, Lifelong Learning, Faith in Action, Connecting. The main content area features a large image of a modern building with a blue roof and white walls. Below the image is a news article titled "The Work of Interim Ministry" dated September 5, 2021 10:30 AM. The article text reads: "Rev. Michelle will acquaint us with her style and role as interim minister in this very first Sunday of her ministry with the Unitarian Coastal Fellowship. Bring your curiosity and playful nature as we begin to learn what this work is about!" There are three red buttons below the article: "FIRST TIME VISITOR?", "UPCOMING SERVICES", and "SERVICE ARCHIVE".

HELLO

September

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Yoga 9AM Mental Health Family Support Group 2:30PM	2 Leadership Council Meeting 10AM New Building Team 2PM	3	4
5 Stories for All Ages 10AM Worship Service 10:30AM	6 Guided Meditation 6:15PM 	7 Worship Committee	8 Yoga 9AM Mental Health Family Support Group 2:30PM	9 New Building Team 2PM	10	11 Book Club 11AM Women's Discussion Group 12:30PM
12 Stories for All Ages 10AM Worship Service 10:30AM	13 Guided Meditation 6:15PM	14 Board Meeting 2PM	15 Yoga 9AM Mental Health Family Support Group 2:30PM	16 New Building Team 2PM	17	18
19 Stories for All Ages 10AM Worship Service 10:30AM	20 Guided Meditation 6:15PM	21 Finance Committee 9AM	22 Yoga 9AM Mental Health Family Support Group 2:30PM Adult RE Committee 4PM	23 New Building Team 2PM	24	25
26 Stories for All Ages 10AM Worship Service 10:30AM	27 Guided Meditation 6:15PM	28	29	30		

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