

The Beacon

Newsletter
of the
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Lakeland



Volume 32, No. 2

Published Monthly

August 2009

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Adult Discussion Group
10:00 AM

Religious Exploration
(School Year Only)
Children/Youth
10:00 AM

Coffee
10:00 AM

SUNDAY SERVICE
11:00 AM

Fellowship
Noon

EarthFamilies Evensong
2:00 PM



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The Beacon

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SUNDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

- 2** “Science of Spirituality” — Are we “hard-wired” for spiritual experiences? We will explore the science behind the experience with an NPR series based on Barbara Bradley Hagerty’s book *“Fingerprints of God.”*
- 9** “The Challenge of the Chalice” - The symbol of our UU faith, the flaming chalice represents more than just fire and light — it is a call to action, a powerful representation of the UU goal of transforming ourselves and our world. Rafi Ellis will trace the ancient symbolism of the chalice and discuss how its many meanings remain relevant to contemporary UUs. **Music** by Bryan Rivers
- 16** “Giving Life the Shape of Justice” — **Rev. Abhi Janamanchi** So it says in one of the most popular UU hymns, “Spirit of Life.” The second UU principle enjoins us to affirm and promote “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.” This service will investigate. Rev. Abhi Janamanchi has been serving the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater since 1999. He is a native of India and a third-generation member of the Brahma Samaj, a Unitarian-Hindu religion with close ties to Unitarian Universalism. **Music:** Kenn Jennings at the piano and Jordan Wheaton, viola.
- 23** “Eating Our Way Through the Interdependent Web” — This service will feature the 2004 Schweitzer Sermon of Rev Charlotte Shivers. Given each year by UU’s for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (UFETA), the Schweitzer recognizes the sermon given before a UU congregation that best exemplifies Albert Schweitzer’s principle of “reverence for life.” **Music:** Piano and guitar by Dave and Stephen Miller
- 30** Join us this Sunday as we welcome our Florida District Lifespan Program Consultant, Connie Goodbread. Connie has over 20 years of experience working in religious education, she is the author of *The Smart Church*, which can be found in our monthly district newsletter, and she conducts leadership and RE workshops all over our district and at the Mountain. Her message is sure to be inspiring and uplifting! **Music:** David Allen at the piano.



Next Month...

September 6: “Standing on the Side of Love.” In June, UUCL sent two delegates to General Assembly, an annual conference of UU churches from across the nation. Our delegates were enlightened, educated and uplifted by this experience and today they will bring a portion of it on video to share with the congregation.

Words on Worship

We've had another exciting month of services! July started off with a well-received service on UU patriotism, followed the next week by Rev. Devlin's inspiring message on the Serenity Prayer. Then we had two dynamic guest speakers, community activist Jeff Nall and Rev. Manish Mishra. We also enjoyed some amazing live music.

You may have noticed a drop in summer attendance. We miss our snowbird friends and vacationing families and look forward to their return in the coming months!

Our members have never hesitated to give us feedback on the quality and content of our services here at UUCL, and they've shown real appreciation for the efforts of our lay leaders, part-time minister, and guest speakers. A handful of people work very hard to bring you those services, and a "Thank you" goes a long way!

However, we understand that sometimes services aren't perfect, and we welcome your constructive feedback as well as your gratitude. Help us reach for continuous improvement. One improvement you'll be seeing very soon is the revitalization of the Sunday choir. EarthFamilies has pitched in with a song here and there, and now Ron Nickolas has volunteered to lead musically-inclined volunteers in a new harmony. Be sure to let him know if you'd like to be one of his singers, or to help generally.

The worship committee meets monthly on the second Mondays at 6:00 P.M., and everyone is welcome to participate. It is especially important that service leaders (moderators) attend.

Don't miss our very special guest on Aug. 16, Rev. Abhi Janamanchi.

In faith,

Tracie Welser & Joyce Bode, co-chairs

SCHEDULING MEETINGS

REMINDER: All meetings and events are to be scheduled through the UUCL Office. Contact the Office at 863-646-3715 or Contact@UUCLakeland.org.

To publish information about the content of meetings/events, contact the Beacon Editor, Portia Westerfield, at 863-425-3968 or e-mail at portiap@tampabay.rr.com

Minister's MUUsings

It was wonderful to be with you this July, and I am very excited about the coming fall, since the Board has invited me back as part-time minister for two weekends a month, and more consistency in-between. We will have more chances to be together in our Sunday pot-lucks, and new 4th Saturday community dinners, along with more programs we hope to have next 'church year'. It was an absolute honor and joy to work with now-former-President Linda, and I look forward to working with our new President Rafi and all the dedication she is bringing to the Board and the congregation.

This past year with you has been quite something—one filled with many joys and concerns; a year of new beginnings, change and growth. For the one short year that I have been your consulting minister, I find that the more time we spend together helps reveal to me the true meaning of what it means to be a family of faith. The philosopher George Santayana once said that "**The family is one of nature's masterpieces.**" Living in Florida, we are all aware of how beautiful and awesome nature is, and to consider our family on that magnitude is quite something. Like nature, the family is full of lessons to teach us: that storms pass and rainbows follow; that stability is necessary; that change is inevitable; and that all the earth's creatures sustain by working *together*. The word "together" is the operative term here, because despite all our similarities and differences, we have covenanted to be and work together toward the visions of our free faith, and toward the purpose of creating and living within an authentic community of faith. I have felt this often, but I want to share with you that I am both humbled and honored to minister with you as we walk together in this journey into the challenges and rewards of the year ahead.

As many of you take a very well-deserved respite (or at least a 'slow-down') from the dedicated participation you have offered throughout this year, I wish us all much fun and serene moments, for we are indeed an enduring family of faith—and our family is *quite* a masterpiece!

Love and Blessings,
Bonnie



BUDDHISM AT UUCL



The recently formed Buddhist group at UUCL has been meeting every other Tuesday in the sanctuary. We are learning meditation techniques and exploring different aspects of Buddhism. Anyone with an interest in Buddhism is welcome to join us. Future plans include visiting the Thai Buddhist temple in Brandon, compiling a reading list and reading through it together, and refining our meditation techniques. Please check the calendar for future meeting days and times, as they will be changing. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Namaste,
Heather Curry

"Splinters From The Board"

July 15, 2009 Meeting

Several new appointments were made: Faye Moore is now our librarian! She will help maintain the library and acquire books for the congregation. Joyce Bode is now our Archivist and will be updating the archives held at the public library. Melissa Marshall was appointed as the Recording Secretary for the board.

The Council of Committees reported a successful daylong workshop and lots of upcoming activities including

- Fourth Saturday social dinners with Reverend Bonnie
- Fourth Sunday discussions with Reverend Bonnie on the topic of that week's service
- Reinstating Circle Dinners
- New Adult Religious Exploration activities
- A choir (!) Ron Nickolas will be leading.

Watch your mailboxes for information on the Green Sanctuary Program. It is a program developed by UUA and the board has gotten quite a bit of positive feedback on it. They would like to get your input on committing our congregation to this goal. Mailers will go out shortly, or contact Heather Curry if you don't want to wait.

The RE porch is slated for repairs, pending an inspection of the foundation. The RE committee will be proposing modifications to the porch or playground to expand our outdoor learning space.

The Beacon Newsletter will retain its name for the time being. Discussion of changing the name has been tabled.

The board approved several uses of the facilities for workshops over the coming months.

The board also approved another Remote Control Airplane show fundraiser where all we have to do is man the front gate. This one will be in Lake Wales.

The board discussed adopting a procedure for allocating unbudgeted fundraiser monies, but did not reach a decision. The matter will be taken up again at the August meeting.

A campus workday was scheduled for August 1st from 8 AM to Noon. This is meant to be a monthly opportunity to gather and contribute to the care of our facilities. Our Grounds Committee leaders are not available that morning, so Linda Walters will coordinate our efforts. Please come help out!



To All Committee Chairs

Will groups which meet regularly on a particular day **please let the UUCL Office Secretary know** if/when your plans change and you decide NOT to meet on that day. It will be announced on the Office Calendar, the website Calendar of Events and in the Sunday Bulletin (for instance, "Sunday, Dec. 25...no CUUPs.")

If you forget to notify us of such cancellation, your regularly scheduled meeting will automatically appear on its usual day in our Calendars. And folks might show up expecting your excellent program, and be disappointed.

AUGUST



BIRTHDAYS

4	Ken Schmidt
5	Phillip Gompf
7	Theresa Lutz
10	Autumn Ray
11	Juliana Gompf
13	Tim Gompf
14	Eric Bergere
14	Elizabeth Troidahl
14	Daniel Whitt
20	Robbie Eskenazi
24	Christopher Kline
29	Marion Mattie

August Anniversaries

None

Save UU World Magazines

Once you have finished reading your UU World, please remove your personal label, bring it to UUCL and leave it on the table in the foyer. We will be putting a UUCL label on them and distributing them around the county. If you know of good places to leave them, please let us know.

Eileen Scheffel and Melissa Marshall
Visibility Committee co-chairs

CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTORY

Deletions, new entries, and changes to existing telephone numbers, e-mail or residence addresses should be e-mailed to Contact@uuclakeland.org. Members and friends unable to e-mail are asked to submit information to (863) 646-3715. Thank you.

Circle Dinners to Start Again

What is a circle dinner? It is a group of people gathering at one member's house for an evening of dinner and socializing. It is a great way to get to know other members of the congregation. The groups usually consist of 8 to 10 people assigned randomly to the host or hostess' home. The host or hostess gets to pick the time and plans/prepares the main course. The host or hostess asks those who will attend the dinner to bring salad, side dishes, appetizers, desserts, etc.

The first Circle Dinner will be on Saturday, August 29, 2009. All you have to do is sign the list posted outside the sanctuary. Or, you can sign up by email to suharris@tampabay.rr.com. You can attend as a couple or as a single person. (If you would like to host a future circle dinner, please also note that on the sign-up list.) During the week before the dinner, you will be contacted about what to bring, when to arrive, how to get there, etc. If you have any questions, please email me at the above email. We hope you'll take this opportunity to get to know one another in a relaxed social setting.

Sue Harris



UUCL Book Club

Book Club meets third Thursdays at 6:30 in the Social Hall. This month, on August 20th, join us as we discuss The March by E.L. Doctorow. (Fiction.) A dramatic retelling of the events surrounding Sherman's Civil War march of 60,000 Union troops through Georgia and the Carolinas, this historical novel depicts characters of high and low class, white and black, whose lives are forever changed by war. Moderated by Maria Markusfeld. **Note:** Tracie will no longer be ordering books, so please make arrangements early to obtain your copy.

Tracie Welser



A Message From The President

The Top 10 Reasons to Love UUCL

Each summer, UUCL's president-elect attends Leadership School at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, North Carolina. The place is just as its name advertises: a woodsy retreat, perched high atop a mountain, where Unitarians can meditate and study, enjoying the wonders of nature and the fellowship of hundreds of other UUs.

As I write this, our own Theresa Lutz is in the midst of her Mountain week. But as her predecessors know, Theresa's experience won't be all beautiful vistas and friendly fellowship. Leadership School can be physically and emotionally grueling, as long days turn into late nights spent exploring the many challenges UU congregations face in this age of economic anxiety and dwindling membership.

Fortunately, the Mountain's teaching staff offers UU lay leaders many strategies for avoiding burn-out. One of the best techniques comes straight from a World War II-era Johnny Mercer song: "You've got to accentuate the positive!" Instead of obsessing about the things our Congregation lacks, we occasionally need to pat ourselves on the back for the things we do well.

In that spirit, I hereby present my own Top 10 Reasons to Love UUCL. I encourage you to come up with a list of your own.

10. Monthly Pot Lucks. Yes, there *IS* such a thing as a free lunch - at least on second Sundays after service at UU Lakeland. Homemade goodies, lovingly prepared, are a perfect match for the sense of community created by preparing, sharing and cleaning up together after a meal.

9. Adult Discussion Group. One of UUCL's oldest offerings, Sunday morning ADG continues to be among its most popular. Members and friends share ideas on a host of social, ethical and religious issues to foster insight and community.

8. Sunday Children's Message. Kids say the darnedest things! During each Sunday service, when our children receive a special message on the steps of the Chancel, their precocious insights set our Sanctuary aglow.

7. Common GroUUnds Coffee House. Music, dancing, delicious concessions - the Common GroUUnds Coffee House offers an all-ages, often multi-media experience as it converts our Sanctuary into a chic bistro.

6. Library and Quiet Room. A recent makeover has turned the Library off the main hallway into a great spot for quiet play, small meetings, and information about UU, world religions and a host of other topics.

5. EarthFamilies Evensong Gatherings. As a haven for earth-centered seekers in Polk County, our 2 p.m. Sunday offerings perform a valuable and truly UU service: providing a safe place for people to express spiritual leanings that the larger society often stifles.

4. Our Sanctuary. A few years ago, members worked to beautify the Sanctuary, and their efforts are still bearing fruit. Visitors and guests often compliment us on the serene and tasteful setting inside our sacred space.

3. Religious Exploration Program. Under the guidance of Director Heather Curry, our RE program encourages our children to look inward while reaching outward, to be both *of* and *in* the world we all share. What an invaluable gift to our community!

2. Committee on Congregational Relations. Whether mediating disputes between members or working toward broader congregational cooperation, the CoCR helps us hew to our principles and covenants - the true aim of our faith.

1. Members and Friends. We've been through a lot at UUCL these past few years, but we're still standing - and we owe it all to one another. When the future seems bleak, look deep into the faces of those who join you on this journey and gain strength from them.

In faith, Rafi Ellis, President, Board of Trustees

ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Sundays at 10:00 am in the Social Hall

Topics for August '09

2nd	Our Ancestors
9th	Polyamor
16th	Animals Remembered
23rd	Liberal Support for the Bible and Jesus?
30th	Heroes and Heroines

Keyno Hicks, facilitator



EarthFamilies Evensong Gatherings

Sundays at 2:00 P.M.

August 2 —**Group Study**: Through December, we will devote first Sundays to study and discussion of Christopher Penczak's *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft*. This month, we will discuss chapters 5 and 7.

August 9 —**Drum Circle**: Join this family-friendly activity and explore the meditative value of rhythm! We have plenty of instruments to share; chanters and dancers always welcome! Come early (noon) and join UUCL's monthly potluck.

August 16 —**Craftwork**: Third Sundays are now for crafts, ritual and fellowship! This month: divination and munchies. Bring your favorite divination tools for fellowship and fun, and bring a snack to share.

August 23 —**Anime in the Afternoon, sponsored by EarthFamilies**. This month's film: *Spirited Away*. Fresh popcorn and beverages will be available for a donation.

Note: Whenever there are five Sundays in a month, EarthFamilies assists with one Sunday service for our host congregation. Fifth Sundays come along only a few times a year, and this month it had to be re-scheduled for fourth Sunday. This month's earth-friendly topic is called "**Eating Our Way Through the Interdependent Web**." Feel free to join us at 11:00 for this interesting service.

August 30 —**Pagan Cookout**, by request. Want to help fire up the grill? Bring snacks, sides or beverages? Please contact Tracie for more information.

September 6, 2:00 pm - Earthfamilies continues study of Christopher Penczak's *The Inner Temple*.

Tracie Welser
EarthFamilies Coordinator



RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

- The Seventh Principle

As Unitarian Universalists, "we affirm to promote and respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." This is our seventh principle. This is the "Why" principle, the one the other six principles rest upon. This is the principle that connects us to the rest of the world and gives meaning to the good work that UUs do.

This school year, we will explore this seventh principle with our children and youth. We will teach them how everything they do has an impact on the rest of the world. We will engage them in activities which encourage them to think about the people, the animals, the bugs and creepy crawlies, the plants and even the micro-organisms we share this planet with.

We will provide them with opportunities to join the rest of UUCL in taking care of our web. We will kick off our year on Sunday, August 16 at 9:30 a.m. with our annual RE welcome breakfast. All are welcome to join us. RE classes will start the following Sunday, the 23rd, at 10 a.m. If you wish to be involved with RE in any way this year, please see me or a member of the RE committee.

Remember, in our web, even the smallest thing you can do will make a difference. And why not make a difference in the lives of our children? Remember, they are the future. By showing them our vision, we can surely strengthen the web of all existence with justice, peace and love.

In Faith,
Heather Curry
UUCL Director of Religious Exploration



GAMES FOR GROWN-UPS

This month our Games Night will take place on August 1, the first Saturday as usual (it was moved to the second Saturday last month because of 4th of July.) We start at 6:30 pm, in the Social Hall. Bring simple snacks and drinks to share if you can, but there's no obligation. Do bring a game or cards you'd like to learn or play. Questions? Call Jane Eskenazi at 682-8869 (ajeskenazi@earthlink.net)

Jane Eskenazi



COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONS

The COCR meets regularly on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm in the Social Hall; any other/additional meetings, such as the extra one in January, are always posted on the Committee bulletin board. All UUCL members are welcome to attend all meetings.

Everyone is reminded of the Issues and Ideas Box where you can submit comments/ideas and questions. This box is opened at committee meetings and all entries are answered.

NEW MUSIC AT UUCL

Attention All Singers,

Good news! We are forming a UUCL **Choir** open to all singers. Rehearsal times are set for Saturday mornings from 9:00 until 11:00 a.m. beginning August 8. We will **also** hold one rehearsal on the last Thursday evening every month, in an effort to accommodate as many of our diverse schedules as possible.

My dream is to get a bunch of members and friends together for a couple hours to sing and play through some hymns. I hope we can brainstorm about ideas for songs to perform and whom we might ask for guidance as we begin this journey. I'm working on about 30 hymns and some of them are actually coming along.

Please join us on Saturday August 8 at 9:00 a.m. I'll offer a selection of hymns to consider for the service on the 9th. Then we can rehearse them and see how it goes.

Interested singers please contact rlnuu@tampabay.rr.com

Ron Nickolas

Greetings Friends of Joe

Late breaking news... The kick-off concert for the 5th FOJ season is near... Buckle your seat belts.

Friday August 21, 2009 ... 8:00 pm the **Sarah Mac Band** (www.sarahmacband.com), Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lakeland; aka UUCL; aka the Unitarian Church - 3140 Troy Ave., Lakeland.

Tickets: Adult \$10 advance - \$12 door, Student \$5 advance - \$7 door... under 12 free...

www.joeprine.org - 863 646 1972. Visit us at Facebook - Friends of Joe.



Congregational Services Committee

Help us care for one another: if you know a member or friend who could benefit from receiving a call, card, visit or assistance, please notify the Office at 646-3715 and/or the Caring Committee at Sunshine@uuclakeland.org.

Need wheels? If you desire a ride to/from church on Sundays, phone or e-mail the Office and they'll try to procure one for you.

Treasurer's Report

At the end of the fiscal year 2008-2009, as of June 30, 2009, we have \$12,756 in the SunTrust checking account. Of this amount \$7,937.40 is in restricted funds and not available to pay monthly operational expenses. Pledges that were not paid amounted to \$12,000 and will be written off. Some members increased their pledges so we only fell short by \$7,664 of the budgeted pledge amount.

We spent \$1,055 more than we took in last fiscal year, but both income and expenses were below the budgeted amounts, and this is due to the shortfall in pledges.

The new 2009-2010 budget year began on July 1, 2009. We start off the year with \$1,800 in a reserve fund for the RE porch and \$3,338 in the Capital Fund from fund raisers. We have not designated any of the 2009-2010 income for fund raisers as a budget item, but we have a shortfall of \$3,500 in the 2009-2010 budget. Hopefully this will be met with one or more of our fund raisers this year.

We have made a few changes in wording in the 2009-2010 budget, so if you want a copy of this revised budget, please see the Treasurer.

	<u>June</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Budget 08-09</u>
Income	\$ 3,277	\$ 66,850	\$ 71,800
Expenses	\$ 2,703	\$ 67,905	
Total	\$ 574	\$ (1,055)	

Financial reports are posted on the bulletin board in the kitchen. If you ever want any information on any financial matters, please feel free to contact me.

Joyce Bode
Treasurer



Hospitality

Starting Sunday August 2nd, we will no longer have a dedicated coffee-making person. The Hospitality Committee (currently a committee of one) encourages anyone who has a spare 10 minutes to make a pot of coffee or two. Instructions for making coffee will be posted on the coffee table and in the kitchen next to the yellow container with the measuring cup and coffee filters. If you see that the coffee has not been made or that it is running low it, please feel free to make some.

There have been several Sundays with very few refreshments, or none at all. Please set aside some snacks during the week, or pick up an extra something at the store, and bring it to Church on Sunday morning. I know it's not always easy to remember that, but try to make it a habit and we will have plenty to go around.

Thanks

Jean Lord , Hospitality Co-Chair

Just a year ago, a man, filled with fear and hatred, entered the sanctuary of our congregation in Knoxville, Tennessee, to commit murder and mayhem. This trauma has affected all of our ministry in profound ways. Our friends at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church observe this anniversary by recommitting themselves [and us!] to our gospel of love and justice.

Former UUA President Bill Sinkford spoke heartfully at our General Assembly in Salt Lake City last month about his reaction to this tragedy. The week after the shootings, the Reverend Chris Buice declared that an act of hatred would not elicit a response in kind. Rather, he went on to say, we Unitarian Universalists will always stand on the side of love. Inspired by this witness, President Sinkford drew our attention to the banners throughout the assembly area. Simple and inspiring, nearly everywhere you looked was our affirmation of hope: ***“Standing on the Side of Love”***

I reflect on a year’s passing, a year where there have been many additional episodes of hate and fear, I think of our congregations who often recite, ***“Love is the teaching of this church....”*** That is what we’re about, to teach and live the ancient gospel calling us to love one another.

In our frailty as humans, brokenness of the spirit can seem to define our condition. At times, it feels like the orthodox have the human story more right than we: humans are all sinners, some truly are depraved. Some will burn forever in hell; the rest need a messiah to redeem them.

But that’s not the whole story. Yes, though we may be imperfect, at times terribly so, we are capable of going the other way, to wholeness and love. Thus, our teaching is that all are worthy of love and respect! As St. Francis admonished, “where there is hate, let me bring love.” As a people of faith in what yet might be, we do teach love, not retribution, as the real alternative to hate.

As I imagine the heartache of those gathered in Knoxville this month, I am humbled by their witness on the side of love. I feel called to stand with them and to reaffirm my own commitment to live our teaching.

May you be inspired as well. Help ensure our people know and live our teaching. **Let us stand together ... on the side of love.**

Blessings all, in all ways, always. **Rev. Kenn**

P.S.: Standing on the Side of Love (SSLove) is a public advocacy campaign, sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association, promoting respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person. It affirms that no one should be dehumanized through acts of exclusion, oppression, or violence because of their identities. SSLove is about lifting strong religious voices proclaiming love in the face of fear and hate. See Rev. Chris Buice’s letter at <http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/stand-with-knoxville/>, and <http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/> for more details about how you and your congregation may witness to love.

District Workshop to be Held at UUCL - Aug. 29th

Saturday, August 29, our Florida District Lifespan Program Consultant, Connie Goodbread, will conduct a Teacher Training Day at UUCL for RE teachers from all over the District. Anyone interested in Religious Education (children, youth and adult) is encouraged to attend this important program. Connie is inspiring and knowledgeable, and her workshops provide valuable tools which we can use to help grow our congregation. Questions? See Heather Curry, our Director of Religious Exploration

Registration is limited to 30 participants **(and we are filling those spots quickly)**. The early bird registration is \$25. The ending date for early registration is August 7th. After August 7th the cost is \$35. There will be no refunds after August 7th. For registration go to this link - <http://www.floridadistrict.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/teacher-training-flyer.pdf>



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- UUSC is financially independent from the UUA and the federal government.
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Unitarian Universalist
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For more information go to:

UUA - www.uua.org - FLD - www.floridadistrict.org - WCC - www.westcentralcluster.org

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