

# The JOURNEY

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fort Lauderdale

December 2014  
Volume 55, Number 11

## In This Issue

President's Message.....	2
Rev. Gail's Space.....	3
Religious Education News.....	4
Directory.....	9
Market Place. ....	10
Calendar.....	11
Sunday Services.....	Back Cover

**January 2015 Issue  
Deadline  
Sunday December 14, 2014**

New visitors receive *The Journey* upon request.  
To continue receiving our newsletter, please call the office.

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A Center for  
Liberal Religious Thought  
and Social Action in  
Fort Lauderdale

Unitarian   
Universalist  
Church of Ft. Lauderdale

3970 NW 21st Avenue  
Oakland Park, Florida 33309  
954-484-6734  
[www.uucfl.org](http://www.uucfl.org)

\*Established in 1958\*



LifeNet4Families  
Cooperative Feeding Program

**LifeNet4Families Workday**  
Saturday December 6 at 9:00am  
Work your way to Page 5

**Saturday December 6 at 7:00 PM**  
Annual holiday party!! Cookies and carols and glitter and ornaments and  
ho ho ho!!! Please join us for fun and fellowship.  
Merrily see page 2



**Third Friday Vespers Service**  
Friday December 19 at 7:00pm  
At Your Service on Page 7

**Labyrinth Cafe Concerts  
Presents  
Rod MacDonald and Jack Williams  
Saturday December 13**

**Christmas Eve Service**  
6:00 PM Dec. 24

See page 7



Unitarian Universalist Church of Ft Lauderdale  
Mission Statement:

To come together as a caring community and sanctuary  
for seekers of spiritual growth, truth, and meaning.



## President's Message

### The New Year—The New Plan

The coming of the holiday season and the new year brings hope and promise for things to come. I wish you and all of your loved ones, friends and family all of the best in this time of reflection and celebration. This year brings special reflection and celebration as well for all of us here at UUCFL. As the hopes and dreams of the members and friends of the church are brought together to formulate our long range plan, we will be launching into 2015 by looking into affirming the journey forward with the priorities we choose as a congregation.



Using our democratic process in developing this plan, everyone has been given an opportunity to be heard through various meetings and surveys. While each of us has our own ideas – all of which have been sought out and brought into the conversation and the process - our collective ideas are what will move us toward the future. Once we hear the results of the process thus far on Sunday December 7 when Rev Dr Randy Becker returns, there will be other opportunities to focus and solidify our plan. Our goal is then to have the congregation vote on the final courses of action at the end of January at our annual budget meeting to start on that path together.

Also on that note, PLEASE if you have not turned in your 2015 Stewardship Pledge Sheet, please do so as soon as possible and please be as generous as possible. Our pledges give us a foundation in constructing the budget for the year for our church. We can have all of the hopes and dreams we want, but it is up to us to make them a reality. This requires time, talent, and treasure from all of us.

*Gary Ladka*

### Intergenerational Holiday Gathering Saturday December 6, 7PM-10PM

Don't miss our annual holiday party here at UUCFL. Bring a favorite holiday finger food to share, put on your holiday best and come out for an evening of fun and joyful fellowship. We will make ornaments, decorate our tree, listen to holiday music, and enjoy each other's company. Invite friends, bring your family and enjoy a low-stress holiday event. There may also be a visit from a large bearded man, and there will be DRE Susan's famous hot mulled wine. You do not want to miss this!!!!



Info or questions, DRE Susan (954) 424-1910 [tiredmomofbob@aol.com](mailto:tiredmomofbob@aol.com)

## **Rev. Gail's Space**

### **Homeless for the Holidays**

By the time you are reading this, some of you who are not on FB will perhaps have been present for my Nov. 23 sermon on Eternal Thanksgiving in which I will have touched on the issue of my unplanned project for sabbatical of being almost a full time professional advocate for our Homeless citizens. But this column will focus on a different aspect of how this experience has changed me in a fundamental way. Perhaps the fact that I am facing a very different future than I had planned, with considerably decreased mobility, has made me even more aware of those who face unique challenges for whatever reason. I have always had concern for homeless people. When I was going to college in DC long ago there were only a few, mainly men who may have met the stereotype of mentally ill and addicted in some way.

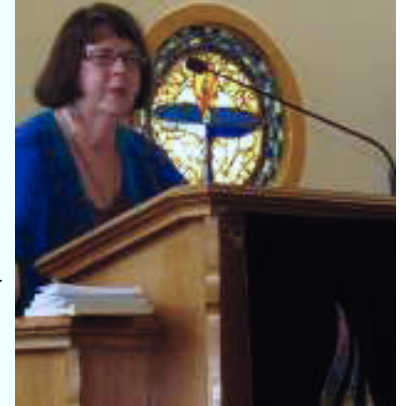
The first time I saw poverty and people living on the street the way it is common now was in Mexico when I was about 30. Right across from our hotel, a woman was living on the street with three small children who literally slept under her long skirt. I was beyond appalled. My friend who has spent a fair amount of time there and other developing countries was neither surprised or that upset.

In the early 1980's when Reagan started closing down the mental hospitals and clearing out many of the chronically ill, it became very common to see homeless people on American streets. Early on there was a fair amount of liberal outrage and quite a bit of help offered by churches and non profits. Then as the economy started ebbing and flowing for everyone, a lot of that outrage and help went away and only the super committed continued.

Just as I recall happening to us when the streets of DC were patrolled by soldiers after the riots following the MLK assassination, people did not like it but got used to it. It is also similar to new post 9/11 airport rules; first things seem strange, then irritating, and then they become what has been called "the new normal". The same thing happened with the homeless. Distress and help was still there for what came to be called the "deserving homeless," ie those who had had a temporary set back and especially for families with children. Then it became more difficult to have sympathy or help even in these situations as they became ever more common.

Now with the draconian laws passed recently in Ft. Lauderdale, which are, at this writing, regarded as the worst in the nation, the next step in denial is to make the problem go away. What these type of new laws, which are either in effect or being considered in at least 31 cites, do is criminalize or demonize the homeless. In a sense it ends up treating them like toxic waste and garbage. The problems are huge. They are national and really international in nature and they are systemic and not random. We can't as a community fix this but we can as a community make a commitment to stay informed, and not listen to the misleading information and outright lies put out by elected officials not just in downtown but other surrounding cities. If there was ever a time to get more involved in local politics, especially after the very distressing recent elections, that time is now. As we celebrate all the religious holidays and think about going home, welcoming absent family members home or perhaps getting together with friends made into family, let us all hold close to our hearts those who are homeless for the holidays. May we be blessed with the fire of commitment to make things just a little better. And in keeping with our work on a Long Range plan to improve our church community, I will add that most of our most healthy, thriving and growing Unitarian Universalist churches are those that become widely known in their communities for their social justice work on a range of issues. Hoping the holiday season is uplifting and not depressing for you. If it is a challenging time for you don't forget to reach out for help. Back in the saddle now,

Love,  
*Rev. Gail*



### **Spirituality And Health Class Coming In 2015**



A new adult curriculum on Spirituality and Health produced by my friend and colleague Rev. Sara Zimmerman will be offered on 6 Tuesdays beginning Jan. 20 and running through Feb. 24. If there is adequate interest, this can be offered again in two time slots at 4:00 pm. and 7:00 pm. It involves some use of technology so I will need some help and education on the use of our DVD stuff for this to work well. I hope that perhaps then in the spring I will offer a class that will focus on activism. I wanted to do them in this order because it is felt that social justice efforts are more effective when the people engaging in it are physically healthy and spiritually grounded. Please try to let me know as early as possible if these Adult RE plans sound like they would meet the needs for some or, hopefully, many of you.



## Religious Education

**Director of Religious Education (DRE) - Susan Dirgins-Friend**  
**Phone (954) 424-1910**  
**Email tiredmomofbob@aol.com**



Children love the winter holidays. Whether you celebrate Winter Solstice, Christmas, Hanukkah or some combination, kids are ready to ring it all in. As some of you know, my mother would not have ever been a winner of the "June Cleaver Award" for fabulous mothering. Let's just say that she had some issues. The one time of the year that she was awesome was at Christmas. We would write our Santa letters, and she would say "that's ridiculous, that is the ugliest doll I have ever seen, and there is no way Santa will bring that, besides, you think Santa has gold bricks up there to pay for all that stuff?" We would be utterly convinced that it was hopeless. The coveted gift, whatever it was, was not going to come our way. "Who did we think we were, the Rockefellers?" We always got our tree on Christmas Eve, and put it up. By then, the best trees were gone, so it was always kind of a Charlie Brown tree; one year it would have fallen over spectacularly if not for the Olympic level jump of my stepfather from his chair to stick his arm in the tree and catch it (all the ornaments continued moving and most broke on the floor). We would go to bed with a few suspicious-looking gifts under the sad tree (sweaters from our grandmothers, we just knew) and very low spirits. Santa was not going to bring the cool toy, our tree was a disaster, and we were going to have to wear an ugly sweater all day long Christmas day. But wait, on Christmas morning, we would fly out of bed at about 6 to feast our eyes on the Christmas miracle. The ugly tree was transformed with more lights, more ornaments and garland, and, and, you name it. Under, around, and everywhere were amazing gifts!!!! Nothing was wrapped, so we could see all the wonderful things. Right up front, of course, was that most desired of presents; that "ugly doll" was there in all its glory. We just could not believe it. We believed in Santa for many years after our friends did, because we knew that we could not afford such booty, our Mom would NEVER buy us the "ugly doll", and who else but Santa could create such an amazing tree. When she got out of bed, she would say "well, I just don't get it, Santa has much lower standards for naughty and nice than I do". Christmas was the greatest day of our year. It was not just the gifts, though they were great. It was the magic of it all. So, for the children in your life, whether your own, your grandchildren, nieces, nephews, children of friends, or the kids here at UUCFL, remember the magic. Make the effort to make Solstice special, what about a late night hike by the river, have a fire outside, make the world magical. Tell the Hanukkah story in the dark, with just that one little light, spin the dreidel, and make your own tasty latkes. My mother's efforts are just one crazy woman's idea of how to make Christmas special; come up with your own. As you may be able to tell, on Christmas morning, my sibs and I felt nothing but love, and joy, and we thought it was all Santa's doing. No matter how much else has transpired in my life, I know that my mother loves me, and when I am not sure, I just think of the "ugly doll".

Much holiday love and many holiday blessings,

DRE Susan



## December Children's

**Sunday December 7, 11AM**

Regular RE

**Sunday December 21, 11AM**

Winter Solstice Celebration

**Sunday December 14, 11AM**

Holiday Fun for All Ages

Kids Participate in the Service

**Sunday December 28, 11AM**

Movie Sunday



### Lifenet 4 Families/CFP Update



LifeNet4Families  
Cooperative Feeding Program

Thanks to Larry Wilkner and Julia Allison for coming out in November to join me in the pantry for our workday. Our next scheduled day is December 6 so please put this on your calendar and come out to help. This time of year many more food boxes are requested, more donations come in, and in general, there is more work to do. Meet at CFP at 9am.

Additionally, we will be hosting the holiday food box distribution at UUCFL from 12/15-19 and 12/22+23. Our church is an excellent place for this because we have the long driveway and the Brazilians next door are working with us to allow overflow lines to go onto their property. Volunteers are needed for this, especially at the beginning from 12/15-19. If you would like to help, please let me know. Keep bringing food for the lobby baskets. Remember, you can also make a cash gift to the CFP. They can get twice as much food for a dollar as we can in our local stores. At this time of year, as we eat, drink, make merry and spend more money than we should, remember the folks in our community who may not have our blessings.

Info or questions, DRE Susan

tiredmomofbob@aol.com (954) 424-1910

### ChildNet Adopt-a-Wish Program Returns to UUCFL

At a time of year when so many children are dreaming of what Santa Claus will bring them for Christmas, children in foster care are simply hoping someone will remember them this holiday. You can help make wishes come true.

We will be receiving wish lists from children here in Broward County along with their age and gender, and we are asking you to pick one item on their list or to use your imagination and choose your own special gift to be presented to your child for this magical season. Please bring in all gifts in by Sunday, December 14. We had such a wonderful time with this program last year providing a whole vanload of toys, not to mention the priceless smiles on children's faces. Sign up in the Sanctuary, or contact me at [954-670-3664](tel:954-670-3664) or [starofinanna@gmail.com](mailto:starofinanna@gmail.com) to find out more. Let's fill lots of little hearts with joy this holiday.

Lore Bernier



### Music Notes

November was a month rich with variety with the moving Samhain service and ritual followed by Faerie Elaine's

musical reminder that Peace, Love, and Joy are available to all if we seek them in our daily lives. Dr. Telesco next guided us in finding our way "Om" through The Wizard of Oz story.

The choir sang "Together in One Song" to remind us of the relationship between home and being thankful for our blessings. Whatever your feeling may be about the Ordinance against public feeding of the homeless which Fort Lauderdale continues to enforce, the choir sang "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor" on November 30 to remind us of the Emma Lazarus poem that appears on the Statue of Liberty. Enforces the Unitarian Universalist tenet of Standing on the Side of Love, does it not?

As the Christmas Season greets, us old favorites and new melodies are planned. The Choir had a Retreat on November 15 to work on both the November offerings and the December delights coming up later this month. You will hear "Jingle Bells" by Pierpont, "Bidi Bom" by Eddleman, "Still, Still, Still," an Austrian Carol arranged by Luboff, and "A Round for Christmas" by Emig. These pieces are both lovely and lively, a joy to sing and to hear.

Of course, the familiar carols will also be included in the services. We all enjoy repeating them at this one time of the year when they are traditional.

We hope to see all of you at church every Sunday.

*Dot Muise, Director of Music*



**Labyrinth Café Concerts Presents  
Rod MacDonald and Jack Williams  
Saturday December 13 at 7:30pm**



"A pivotal force in the 80's Greenwich Village folk revival, New York's Village Voice wrote of **Rod MacDonald**, "politics, passion and a sense of humor", which accurately describes Rod's passion for music, and his personal commitment to communicating events that have affected and shaped our world's societies. Rod seamlessly weaves romantic ballads in between his trademark tongue-in-cheek socio-political commentaries. With lyrics and music that are infectious and inspiring, often humorous, sometimes reckless, frequently evocative, usually thought provoking and always compelling, Rod's songs will stay in your heart and mind long after the music has ended. "An extraordinarily gifted songwriter who does the topical, humorous and touching folk songs equally well – think Phil Ochs, Loudon Wainwright and Bob Dylan all wrapped in one." (Dans Distractions)

The music of **Jack Williams**, rooted in his native South Carolina, was shaped by a 54-year career of playing folk, rock, jazz, R&B, classical and the popular music of the 30s, 40s and 50s. He is counted among the most dynamic performers on today's "folk" circuit... "one of the most enlightened and entertaining performers I've ever encountered", said Dave Humphreys of Two-Way Street Coffeehouse in Downer's Grove, IL. Jack is considered a "musician's musician", an uncommonly unique guitarist, a writer of vivid songs with a strong sense of place, and a storyteller in an old Southern tradition who further illustrates each tale with his guitar. Rich Warren of WFMT Chicago's The Midnight Special said, "His artistry is nothing short of amazing". Vic Heyman, in SING OUT!, wrote, "He is one of the strongest guitar players in contemporary folk." Jack's songs, stories and commanding presence have established him as an uncommonly inspiring and influential performer.



Reservations requested but not required:

Contact Susan at OzWoman321@aol.com or 954-478-8637

\$20 at the door; \$17 advance reservations (checks made out to the performer received in the UU church office no later than Wednesday before Saturday show)...

...plus non-perishable item for our local Cooperative Feeding Program (canned meats, beans, fruits, vegetables, peanut butter, dried milk, pasta, rice, cereal, baby food and baby formula).

Upcoming dates

(2015: January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9)

Watch your e-mail, check our Facebook page and listen to Michael Stock's show for notice of the harmonic treats in store. We will once again be offering a Season Pass for \$150 per person, which entitles you entrance to all concerts, a beautifully-designed Labyrinth Cafe

T-shirt and premium, reserved seating!

*Susan Moss, Coordinator, Labyrinth Cafe Concert Series*

## **It's Kwanzaa time!**

Come celebrate at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday December 28, 2014. This is the third day of Kwanzaa, Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) but no worries we will observe all seven principles. In addition, this year we will pay tribute to the Freedom Riders. Our guest speaker is Ms. Rhonda Felder. Her late father was a was one of the courageous students who rode the buses to hostile communities and faced angry, hate-filled mobs so that these United States may become more democratic and a more perfect union. Join us as we practice Sankofa – looking back to learn how to move forward. Invite your friends and family for a truly enlightening and motivating experience. Bring your favorite dish. Habari gani! Ujima!

If you would like to assist or require more information contact Rev. Opal Murray.

### Christmas Eve Service 6:00 PM

Please join us for our Christmas Eve service, UU-style. This year will feature "Minor Characters at the Nativity", a short skit written by Rev. Gail and performed by some of our fine in-house talent. And, of course, our wonderful choir, under the direction of Susan Dirgins-Friend, will sing some selected seasonal pieces as well as leading the congregation in favorite traditional carols.

### Building and Grounds Update

Some Not Cool News, Continued - Oh the weather inside is frightful, 'cuz a broken AC is not delightful.... Yes, it's a little warm in Sunday services but never fear — your Board is hard at work on getting the air conditioner repaired, and by the time you read this, that plan will probably be underway. This is a major unforeseen expense for the church and while we do have some reserves in the Building Fund, any amount which you are able to help contribute financially will help offset this cost, currently estimated at around \$5000. We will be taking a second, informal collection on Sundays throughout December to go toward this repair. Please see our Treasurer, Donna Gutierrez, or any Board member and we will be glad to collect alms for the AC.

**Valerie Heller**  
**Vice President**



### December Third Friday Vespers 12/19 7PM

Come out for our December Vespers. If you have never been, it is a service that includes readings, meditation, music, and is followed by a time for fellowship and wine!! This service is perfect for those who can't get up on Sunday morning. It is also a great way to start your weekend and wind down from your week. Come sit in the dark, meditate and clear your mind.

Vespers is our third Friday service that combines readings, music and meditation in a small group setting. It is a short service at 7 PM, usually 45 minutes long. These services may include poetry, prose, music, singing, occasional live music, occasional dance, and meditation. The service is followed by wine and cheese and an opportunity to enjoy fellowship.

See [www.uucfl.org/vespers/](http://www.uucfl.org/vespers/) For more Info or questions, DRE Susan Dirgins-Friend (954) 424-1910 [tiredmomofbob@aol.com](mailto:tiredmomofbob@aol.com)

### Coming CUUPS Events

Saturday December 27 we celebrate Yule, the Winter Solstice, and the Changing of the Year. Dragnfli will lead the ceremony and we shall invoke the goddess Yemaya. She is a Goddess of the Sea, so we may be doing something with water. We gather at 7:30 PM.

During December, Thursday evening Study Groups will continue.

December 4: The Best Witchy Book Ever  
December 11: Loki: Trickster, Master Craftsman and Gifted Artist  
December 18: Yule Ritual Planning and Seasonal Stories  
December 25: No Meeting  
January 1: Perhaps we will meet.



Do come out and play next Thursday.

**Kip, Resident Pagan**



Expand your UU and Facebook horizons by joining the new UU Southeast Cluster page to stay informed about activities of the Cluster which encompasses participating UU congregations from the Treasure Coast to the Virgin Islands

Visit this page and click "Like" to join  
[www.facebook.com/UUFloridaSoutheastCluster](http://www.facebook.com/UUFloridaSoutheastCluster)



### Sunday Enrichment Times Returning

Starting in the new year we will again offer Sunday Afternoon on a range of issues of interest to religious liberals and/or people on their spiritual path. We may have a few guest speakers and or facilitators.

Plan to make 2015 the year you become truly qualified to help spread the good news of our open and exciting movement.

*Rev. Gail*



### Winter is here! Time to SWIM!



Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> - Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
 in Miami, FL  
[info@SWIMuu.org](mailto:info@SWIMuu.org)  
[www.SWIMuu.org](http://www.SWIMuu.org)

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- **Music Director**  
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The Market Place



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**Remember the Hungry People Around Us**

Please continue to fill the Food Baskets at the church with non-perishables for the LifeNet4Families Cooperative Feeding Program. Learn more about the CFP and other ways you can help. Visit [www.lifenet4families.org](http://www.lifenet4families.org)



Please Patronize and refer the above Friends and Members of the Church as they support the us with their advertising. Make sure you tell them you saw their ad in The Journey.

**December Birthdays**

- Caterina Turner 12/2**
- Amy Ladka 12/3**
- Shah Mohammed 12/3**
- Pierre Clars 12/4**
- Tabo Glenn 12/7**
- Taylor Mattis 12/12**
- Bill Cox 12/13**
- Jerry Waltz 12/15**
- Stephen Lange 12/16**
- Connie Van Sickle 12/18**
- Jim Giblyn 12/24**
- Savannah Friend 12/29**
- Kimani Salim Dearce 12/30**



If you would like to see your birthday announced here and in the cUUrIOUS cUUrIer email newsletter, please contact the office to make sure we have your updated information in the computer



# December Calendar



Every Sunday :  
11:00 AM-  
Church Service  
and Children's  
Religious Education

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> •6:45pm - Choir Rehearsal	<b>4</b> •7:30 pm CUUPS (See page 7)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> •9:00am - Lifenet4Families Cooperative Feeding Program Workday (See page 5) •7:00—10:00 pm Holiday gathering
<b>7</b> •9:30 am - UU Sisterhood •11:00 am—Long-Range Planning Service with Rev. Randy Becker	<b>8</b> •7:00pm - Board Meeting	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> •6:45pm - Choir Rehearsal	<b>11</b> •7:30 pm CUUPS (See page 7)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> •7:30 pm Labyrinth Café Concert (See page 6)
<b>14</b> •12:30pm - Fellowship Lunch Day  •Journey Article Submission Deadline	<b>15</b> •7:00pm - Sunday Services Committee	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> •6:45pm - Choir Rehearsal	<b>18</b> •7:30 pm CUUPS (See page 7)	<b>19</b> •7:00 - Vespers Service (See page 7)	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> Winter solstice •9:30 am—UU Sisterhood	<b>22</b> •7:00pm Welcoming/ Membership Committee	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> •6:00 pm Christmas Eve Service	<b>25</b> •No CUUPS meeting this week •Christmas	<b>26</b> SWIM begins (see page 8)	<b>27</b> 7:30 pm—CUUPS Yule ritual (see page 7)
<b>28</b> •11:00 Kwanzaa service •12:30pm - Fellowship Lunch Day	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Happy New Year!	Visit our on line calendar for late-breaking events <a href="http://www.uucfl.org">www.uucfl.org</a> and click "Coming Activities"		Religious Education Events See special calendar on the RE page 4

Unitarian  
Universalist  
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Sundays Service & Children's  
at 11 am: Religious Education

The JOURNEY



Sunday Morning Services at 11 am

December 2014

**December 7- Church of the Future- UUCFL Long Range Planning Phase II** - Rev. Dr. Randy Becker will be joining us again to examine some of the results of the meetings and questionnaires on the future of the church and to offer some insights on what the implications might be for us as a community moving into the unknown future. Don't miss this service that is key for our hopes and dreams. Rev. Gail will coordinate and offer a few holiday tidbits.

**December 14- Holiday Religious Education Service** - DRE Susan Friend and our wonderful young people will offer a special lens on this season of special holidays.

**December 21- Holiday Smashup** - Rev. Gail will offer us an overview of the many joys, stresses and unique opportunities offered up by the embarrassment of holiday richness that this month offers. She will also provide some cautions on the downsides of the holiday hoopla.

**Christmas Eve service 6:00 pm — see page 7**

**December 28- Kwanzaa Celebration** - Rev. Opal Murray will offer our third annual celebration of the special holiday that focuses on community values like faith and unity.

**January 4- Coming From the Red Eye** - Rev. Gail will be just back from her first trip as a newly Differently-abled person. She will also be preaching with too little sleep, prompting her to take as a text a book and lifestyle she has been dying to preach about for years. She will explore the culture of the night person and ask the question: Is Staying Up Late a Character Flaw or a Sign of a Creative Spirit?

