



The Beacon

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville NC
January 2016



President's Message

Now that we've survived the holidays, it's time to get serious. The excitement builds all fall, starting with Labor Day, then Fall Equinox, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Winter solstice, Christmas, Kwanza, and finally New Years. Every religion seems to have a couple of holidays this time of year, and businesses seem to make some up to give us more chances to spend money. It's all great fun, but often stressful. I think it may be the most demanding time of year, and the pressure to have everything properly decorated, big meals ready on time, and the perfect gift for everyone can destroy much of the joy if we let it. Now it's back to work. Time to close out the books, start the new semester, start thinking about taxes.

While the parties and big get togethers may be over (or at least less hyped), our community continues. The big holiday celebrations are great, but it's the everyday connections that keep us together. The little things like Sunday services, and everyday sharing that really bind us. Shared rides, lunches, team trivia, games, and visits make us a community. We depend on family for support too, but for many of us, family is too far away for every day support. Services help us learn truths, but so do conversations over coffee or meals. Small favors can be real gifts when needs arise. Sometimes, just knowing someone cares can help one through a tough time.

Also important is having friends who accept and like you for who you are. Many situations require us to be careful what we say, or how we act. Customer service jobs, in particular can be stressful. It's stressful having to guard what you say, or act differently than is natural. It can even damage physical health. One needs places to be one's self and be comfortable with others. I like to think our church is one such place.

The chalice circles starting again soon are a good way to have interesting discussions and get to know other members. Group activities like choir, team trivia, lunches, and -yes- even committee work are great ways to get to know members in relaxed surroundings. Services are often thought of as the main part of church, but I think our other activities are at least as important in building our community. I know we are all busy, but maybe now that the holidays are over, we can find a space to find ways we can build our community and let it support us. It may be more blessed to give, but someone has to receive. Look for opportunities to do both.

Feryl Masters

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Minister's Reflections

January, 2016

Police killings. ISIS terrorism spreading. A million refugees. Bellicose politicians.

Even so, Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person: children, workers, seniors, solitaries and strangers. How will we become more than strange to one another? In *The Little Prince*, the Fox teaches how to create safety and trust with one another:

"Come and play with me," proposed the Little Prince to the Fox. "I am so unhappy."

"I cannot play with you," the fox said. "I am different. I am not like you. I am not tamed."

"What does that mean, tame?" responded the Little Prince.

"It means to establish ties," said the fox. "To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need for you; and you have no need of me. To you I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then to you I shall be unique in all the world, and to me, you shall be unique in all the world."

The fox continued: "If you tame me, I shall know the sound of your step that will be different from all the others. Other steps send me hurrying back underneath the ground. Yours will call me, like music, out of my burrow. Think how wonderful that will be."

"What must I do to tame you?" asked the Little Prince.

"You must be patient," replied the fox. "First you will sit down at a little distance from me. Like that. In the grass. I shall look at you out of the corner of my eye, and you will say nothing. Words are the source of misunderstanding. But you will sit a little closer to me every day." --Antoine de Saint Exupery

In this new year, the ties we establish with children, in Chalice Circles, book groups, choir, eating together, caring for one another, and for the congregation, are our training for taming a dangerous world. This, we can do.

Blessings!

Rod Debs

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UUCG Board Notes

December 2015

This month, the Board:

- Revised Policy Manual sections on Board and agreed to have each officer review their section for the next meeting
- Heard RE ideas for increasing youth participation in the service
- Set the next program council meeting for February 7th after the service





Program Council

Program Council will meet after service on **February 7th, 2016**. The UUCG Program Council (comprised of the Committee Chairs and other important leaders and volunteers of the Congregation) will meet after the service, starting at approximately 12:30 pm on Sunday, FEB 7th. Please make any possible effort to join us for this (roughly) quarterly event where we coordinate the programs of the Congregation. Meeting is expected to last until about 2pm. The Full Agenda is still a work in progress. If you need child care, let me know **AHEAD OF TIME**, and it will be arranged.

The purpose of the Program Council is communication among committees -how can committees cooperate to avoid duplication of effort and accomplish more?

Lunch will be provided. A suggested donation of \$5 to help defray the cost is appreciated. Traditionally, we usually do subs and/or wraps, chips, etc. We'll start with a quick lunch -- a variety of subs from Jersey Mike's (a donation to help pay for it is appreciated). There will be vegetarian and non-vegetarian. If you haven't already, please let me know whether you plan to bring your own or would like a sub.

Richard Baltaro

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Can Science and Religion Save the Planet: a dialogue on Care For Our Common Home

The Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental advocacy organization, will sponsor a study of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* at the Sheppard Memorial Library beginning Wednesday Jan 13th at 7:00 pm.

Written by Pope Francis and published in June 2015, the encyclical is an attempt by Francis "to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home." Among the areas to be covered are the best scientific research available today, the Judeo-Christian tradition of creation care, the roots of environmental degradation, a false understanding of human life and activity, the human and social dimensions of an integral ecology, types of corrective actions needed, and Francis' call for an "ecological spirituality ... grounded in the convictions of faith ... one that can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world."

To help enrich our discussion we will have present the Rev. Jim Cooke, Episcopal Priest, Robert Christian PhD, Distinguished Professor, ECU Department of Biology and Dr. David Ames, Psychiatrist. The discussions will be held at the **Sheppard Memorial Library on Wednesday evenings, 7:00 pm till 8:30pm, beginning January 13 and lasting till Feb 24**. A copy of the encyclical will be available.

For more information and to register for the study call Dr. David Ames, Chairman, Cypress Group of the Sierra Club at (252) 757-1276 or e-mail at davidames1@suddenlink.net

You can also check them out on the web <http://sierraclub.org/north-carolina/cypress> or on their [Facebook Page](#).

Moral Movies

Saturday January 9th starting at 6:30pm.

For January, we are partnering with the local Sierra Club to show

Refuge: Alligator River by STRS Productions

A highly regarded and recommended region, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge includes 150,000 acres of mostly pocosin and is home to an abundance of wildlife. Covering all four seasons, STRS Productions brings us dramatic, spectacular, unstaged shots of migrating waterfowl, Red Wolves, Alligators, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, American Black Bears, Wild Turkeys and more.



Classic GLBT Movie Night

Friday January 15th starting at 7pm.

The January film will be

To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar (1995)

Following the commercial success of the Australian film *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, and the rise of RuPaul, *Supermodel of the World*, this American film, starring Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes, and John Leguizamo follows 3 drag queens on a cross-country trip, only to have their car break down, stranding them in a small town in middle America.



Both events are free, open to the public, and refreshments are served.

January 2016 Worship Schedule

Jan. 3 Jake Melnyk and Michael Betteken "New Year's Resolutions"

Jan. 10 Holly Brown and Rev. Rod Debs "Aren't We All Part of the Congregation?"

You don't want to miss our special service to welcome the teens into our congregation. "Aren't we all part of the church?" We believe that the teens have an important role to play. As adult congregants we have the responsibility to share our experiences with the youth, but they also have so much that they can teach us.

Jan. 17 Joyce Mitchell, guest speaker, "From Yesterday to Today"

Jan. 24 Rev. Rod Debs "It's Good to Be Da King!"

Jan. 31 Rev. Rod Debs "Radical Grace"

Services are held each Sunday morning starting at 10:30am, lasting approximately an hour, followed by a social time with coffee and refreshments.