



## The UUCG beacon

MARCH 2007

The *beacon* is published monthly by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville 252-355-6658 [www.uugreenvillenc.org](http://www.uugreenvillenc.org)  
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Sunday Services -- 10:30 am  
March 2

*Five Pillars of Islam*  
Dr Derek Maher

March 9  
*Justice for All: a Reflection on the 6<sup>th</sup> Principle*  
Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

March 16  
*Pilgrimage: Tourism or Transformation*  
Rev Gail R. Geisernainer

March 23  
*Eggs and Bunnies? UU's and Easter? What is wrong (or right) with this picture?*  
Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

March 30  
*Celebration of Spring Equinox*  
UUCG Pagans & Earth Based Folk

Children's activities are available each Sunday.

### President's Notes

#### Let it shine!

Being a Geographer, the term "Bible Belt" and the area the term actually describes has been a recent interest of mine. According to Wikipedia (an online collaborative encyclopedia), no exact boundaries exist, but it is commonly accepted to include most of what one would consider the "south", extending from northern Florida up to Virginia, but probably taking out the DC metro area, head west to Kansas, then down into Texas, but not including predominantly Roman Catholic areas of southern Texas, parts of Louisiana, or south Florida. At least one published study attempted to define the area by the audience for religious television programming, and included the area above, but also went further north in the central prairie region even into the Dakotas.

Wikipedia also states "several locations are occasionally referred to as the 'Buckle of the Bible Belt,'" and goes on to list 14 prominent cities for being the home of various denominations or seminaries and colleges. It lists Nashville TN as the most frequently labeled "Buckle" as well as being referred to as the "Protestant Vatican."

In my own experience, I think the term is overused. Any time someone wants to describe the conservative culture of the place where they live or once lived, they frequently use the Buckle analogy. I'm pretty sure I've even heard the term used to describe Greenville at least once.

Let me assure you that Greenville NC is not the "Buckle of the Bible Belt." (Although Greenville SC is on Wikipedia's list, being the home of Bob Jones University.) If any Bible Belt reference were appropriate, I think we'd be one of the little holes in the belt, far away from the buckle. I grew up here in Eastern North Carolina, and I can assure you that the people of the region look at Greenville, not

**Prez Notes** (continued page 8)

# Reflections

. . . of Rev Ann Marie Alderman

February was quite a month! Leading off with a Poetry Service made me anxious, wondering if anyone would come with a poem to share. I shouldn't have worried! There was absolutely soul-full sharing of poem after poem. That very same afternoon, I was nervous about the Installation Service, which also turned out to be just wonderful. Thanks to each and every one of you who came. After that great installation, I am now feeling "plugged in" as your minister!

Then came the second Sunday in February, and again I was nervous as I readied to talk with you about money, which can so often be one of those "taboo" subjects. I talked about the need for more stewards, who can help make Dreamers dreams come true, once they get past the anxiety they may initially feel, when dreams are really big!

So, as one of those folks with both a dreamer and a steward side within myself, I am happy to report that the UUCG financial statement for July '07 – January '08 clearly demonstrates that those two sometimes opposing sides can come together! The statement shows that so far UUCG's "income" exactly equals its

"expenses", coming in line with the congregational budget that was passed last year at UUCG's annual meeting. In other words, UUCG is responsibly stewarding its resources and making big dreams come true. That is something to be very proud of, and makes belonging to and giving to UUCG a very wise investment.

Four new members must have thought so! Michelle Covi, Tim Kelley, Jean Thacter and Charlene Young all signed the membership book last month. With new members joining in such great numbers, (ten since last September) and such great people, what's to worry about!

Over and over again, when I feel nervous about what might happen "if", and just plunge ahead anyway, I find there was nothing really to worry about! (Is that what it means to have faith?) UUCG members, friends, active visitors respond to whatever is---with talking, with listening and sharing, responsibly dreaming and doing...

Realizing I don't have to worry just thrills my soul. No matter what you call it, I have it for this congregation!

— Rev Ann Marie Alderman

## From the Office-

Please let the Office know if you would like to receive an email with an attached newsletter in pdf format or will be checking for the newsletter on the website rather than having a newsletter printed for you.

Send your email address to

office@uugreenvillenc.org.

Unless you let us know, we will be printing a newsletter that can be picked up on the last Sunday of the month or will be mailed to your home. Help us save printing and postage costs if you can.

—Michelle Covi

Deadline for next month's *beacon* is Tuesday, March 18 at 8:00 pm

# Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person

## Future Art Exhibit

The next exhibit for the church will be offerings from the Artrageous Quilters. The exhibit will start on April 1, 2008 and will last for two months.

This is a fiber art group originated by Dr. Katherine McNeese, MD and includes artists from around Eastern NC. They now have 51 members, and meet once a month at "Lori's" in Little Washington..

Thanks.

—Joanie de Groot

## March to Peace

During the month of March we invite Unitarian Universalist congregations to join together in an unprecedented March to Peace. As we mark the 5th anniversary of the Iraq war, we hope to register the commitment of 250 of our congregations, nearly 25%, to bring peace into their worship and their worship into the world. Thus does UUA President Bill Sinkford urge. For details and March dates, visit

<http://www.uua.org/news/newssubmissions/90134.shtml>

—Carroll Webber

## ECU Medical Students to Present Readers' Theatre Performance and Discussion

On Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 pm, medical students from the Brody School of Medicine will present a public reading and discussion of Jay Baruch's short story "Accident Room" at UUCG. Jay Baruch is an Emergency Medicine physician from Rhode Island. "Accident Room" appears in Baruch's 2007 book of short stories, *Fourteen Stories: Doctors, Patients and Other Strangers*. "Accident Room" tells the story of two physicians, one just out of residency and one who has remained in practice perhaps for too many years, with differing styles of patient care, and of a family trying to deal with a life-threatening emergency while caught between the approaches of the two physicians. The story raises issues of consent, patient decision-making, prolongation of life, and differing styles of providing information to the seriously ill.

The 30-minute reading will be followed by a discussion of the story moderated by a member of the medical school's Department of Medical Humanities.

In Reader's Theatre, the performers read from scripts and do only a small amount of moving about the stage. Like radio dramas, much is left to the listener's imagination. The program, part of an on-going Readers' Theatre sponsored by the Department of Medical Humanities at ECU's Brody School of Medicine, allows medical students and the general public (future physicians and their potential future patients) to discuss together social and ethical medical issues of common concern.

## Interfaith Alliance Prayers for Peace

March 24th will be at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation. One or more Baha'i members will talk and answer questions about the Baha'i faith.

—Debi Habiba

## Notes from the Board 2/18/2008

The Treasurer reported that the financial report is newly formatted in a more user-friendly report. Both the Board minutes and Treasurer's report will be posted on the bulletin board. Our YTD income is keeping pace with our YTD expenses. The annual Pledge Dinner will take place on April 12. It will be a potluck dinner with entertainment. The Finance Committee plans to develop a proposed budget based on the results of the pledge campaign.

The Program Council met on March 13th. The Committee Chairs have been asked to submit their budget requests for 2008-2009 and to review the policy manual to identify any changes that need to be made to ensure that the policies and practices match. The Nominating Committee has been asked to identify a candidate for the vacant Board position. The HVAC unit must be replaced; it cannot be repaired any longer. The contract for the new unit has been signed and the unit ordered. Our Chalice Lighters grant application is being reviewed by the District leadership and we hope to hear the results soon.

The date for the Special Congregational Meeting, to vote on the proposed Bylaws change regarding how standing committee chairs are selected, will be April 6th. The Thomas Jefferson District Cluster meeting will take place at Shelter Neck on April 5th. The UUCG Annual Meeting will be on May 18th.

The Board voted to appoint Victoria Brown as the UUCG trustee for UCONN. Lora Hylton was appointed as Chair of the Worship Committee. The Board approved a special collection on March 30th to help Caroline Spencer, the director of First Born, who has been in the hospital.

The Board voted to authorize the Fundraising Committee to conduct a raffle. The proposed prizes will be a 50" Plasma TV, a Wii, and an electronic digital picture frame. The goal is to meet the budget goal by raising \$6,500. All members and friends will be needed to sell tickets and support this fundraising effort.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be March 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

—Patrice Alexander, Secretary

## Buildings & Grounds

Spring is not far away, and for the next buildings and grounds work day we plan to clean up the plantings around the church. Many of the bulbs need to be thinned out and the mulch reduced in height and redone. Many hands make short work and we encourage all of our members to offer to participate in this project. Getting your hands dirty truly enriches the soul.....that is if you are of the belief that you have one. If you don't believe you have one.....then just come get your hands dirty. We have plenty of soap. The help of those over the past weeks has helped greatly in spreading the tasks out. We are planning to have a new air conditioning system in place before summer. The old unit is aging and very inefficient. We are still working on the planning and cost of a handicap ramp for the front entrance. A new Chalice symbol for the building above the entrance is getting closer. Hopefully 30 to 60 days and it will be in place. What we put into UU space, in pledges and time...are in direct relationship...to what you receive inside of you.....from that space.

—Ruel Tyer



# March 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 9:30 Forum 10:30 Five Pillars of Islam 7:00 BSOM Reader's Theater	3	4 8:30 Breakfast K&W Cafeteria	5 6:00 Soup & Sharing 7:00 Adult RE	6	7	8 9:00 Bldgs & Grounds Work Day 7:00 Teen Night
9 9:30 Forum 10:30 Justice for All UU Principle #6 7:00 UU Meditation 7:00 Spirit in Practice	10	11 8:30 Breakfast K&W Cafeteria	12 6:00 Soup & Sharing 7:00 Adult RE	13	14	15
16 9:30 Forum 10:30 Pilgrimage: Tourism or Transformation 7:00 Spirit in Practice	17 7:00 Board Mtg	18 8:30 Breakfast K&W Cafeteria	19 6:00 Soup & Sharing 7:00 Adult RE	20	21	22 9:00 First Born
23 9:30 Forum 10:30 Eggs & Bunnies 7:00 Spirit in Practice	24 7:00 Interfaith Prayers for Peace @ UUCG	25 8:30 Breakfast K&W Cafeteria	26 6:00 Soup & Sharing 7:00 Adult RE	27	28	29
30 9:30 Forum 10:30 Celebrate Spring Equinox  Share the Plate 7:00 Spirit in Practice	31	1 8:30 Breakfast K&W Cafeteria  Artrageous Quilters Exhibit begins	2 6:00 Soup & Sharing 7:00 Adult RE	3	4	5 Cluster Meeting @ Shelter Neck

# Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregation

## FIRST BORN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Please join us at First Born Holy Church on Saturday, March 22nd, to assist with the food distribution. Our congregation has promised to have at least 9 workers for this distribution. Please arrive by 9:00am. The distribution begins at 9:00am until 12:00pm. We distribute food packages, help with administrative work, pack food boxes and carry food boxes to cars. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

If you can provide a ride for other UUCG members please let me know. If you need directions, please contact me at 252-916-5069 or email [toniebritt@clis.com](mailto:toniebritt@clis.com).

Thank you for your help.

—Toni Tyer

## FIRST BORN COLLECTIONS

UUCG collects plastic grocery bags for First Born. There is a large plastic, blue container in the library for the bags. I deliver the bags to First Born each month. The bags must be clean, dry and odor free. Please do not bring plastic bags with RED letters. If you have food items, **non-perishable**, you can leave them in the library as well. I will deliver the food to First Born when I deliver the bags. If you have any questions concerning this Social Action project, please contact me at 252-916-5069 or email [toniebritt@clis.com](mailto:toniebritt@clis.com).

Thank you for your contributions.

—Toni Tyer

## Board approves Share the Plate practice

Beginning on March 30<sup>th</sup>, every time there is a fifth Sunday in a month, any loose cash put in the offertory baskets during the Sunday Service will be given to a community organization. The organization that will receive these gifts will be decided before hand by the Board. This is a practice of generosity that many other UU congregations have adopted. First Born, a community organization that UUCG has supported for many years will receive the gifts from March 30<sup>th</sup>. If you make a cash donation meant as a contribution towards your pledge to UUCG, you can do that on these Fifth Sundays by putting your cash in an envelope with your name on it and marked "pledge payment". Otherwise all undesignated cash will be sent as a gift of support to a local organization. You may also write a check to UUCG or directly to the organization on a Fifth Sunday. Just mark the memo line with a note saying Share the Plate.

—Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

## Ambiance Committee

The Ambiance Committee is happy to announce that there will be two new hangings at the front of the church on March 23, 2008 (Easter Sunday) The long term plan is to have 4 sets of quilted hangings that will be rotated every 3 months. The new quilts will have been made by Joanie de Groot.

—Terry Shank

# Promoting a free and responsible search for truth & meaning

## Religious Education

The RE department is continuing its Soup and Sharing Nights on Wednesday. Following a delicious meal is an adult RE Class complete with childcare if needed. This month be sure to join us for the continuation of the Welcoming Congregation Curriculum.

Another class for adults will be offered starting on Sunday, March 9 at 7:00 pm. We are a pilot congregation for the UUA to do the **Spirit in Practice**. It is described as follows:

*Spirit in Practice* was created to help Unitarian Universalists develop regular disciplines, or practices, of the spirit—practices that help them connect with the sacred ground of their being, however they understand it. *Spirit in Practice* affirms religious diversity while seeking unity in our communal quest for meaning and wholeness. Whether participants follow a path they identify as Humanist, Jewish, Christian, Pagan, Theist, Atheist, Agnostic, Mystic, and/or any of the other paths we follow in our diverse congregations, the *Spirit in Practice* workshops offer a forum for learning, shar-

ing, and growth that can enrich their faith journeys.

*Spirit in Practice* helps Unitarian Universalists tend that garden. It helps our congregations offer support and challenge to members along their spiritual paths. It is one way to provide the practical support and guidance Unitarian Universalists need for spiritual growth to blossom. Please contact Victoria Brown for more information if you are interested in attending. We will meet on Sunday nights. Childcare will be provided.

The Tween group is continuing the curriculum that deals with affirmation. This class has a lot of hands on activities. The children are having a great time with it. Feel free to see some of the artwork displayed in the large RE Room.

Teen night will continue to meet on the second Saturday of each month. In March they are planning to go “Weed Whacking in the Woods.” This is a trip down to Shelter Neck to help with a service project of clearing a Meditation Trail. Everyone that is interested in helping is welcome to come. Please contact Victoria or Nicholas Brown for more information.

—Pattie Gade

## First Art Show a Success

Paintings by three prominent local artists were presented to the public at a reception on Friday, February 15, from 5:30 to 7 PM. Lou Everett, Bob Pittman and Doris Ward displayed a variety of media including watercolor, acrylic and oils. Over 70 interested people enjoyed the exhibit, conversation and the refreshments. The event was coordinated by the Ambience Committee. Don English and Kay Alston were greeters, Bill Paulson tended the beverage table, and Brenda Stewart played background piano music. Joanie de Groot, Kay Alston and Terry Shank provided the refreshments.

—Terry Shank

# Affirming the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large

**Prez Notes:** (continued from page 1)  
as a conservative stronghold, but more like “sin city.” Maybe the term frequently used especially in the party crowd calling Greenville “Green Vegas” (or G-Vegas for short) is appropriate... we’re the “sin city of the east.”

The reason I bring this up is that I think that we far-too-often look at our congregation as a liberal refuge, a place where we can be ourselves without the fear of condemnation as “godless atheists,” “heathens,” “hippie tree-huggers,” or whatever other term in which we may privately pride ourselves. Fear of this condemnation can easily lead to a fortress mentality or an assumed need to “circle the wagons” for protection.

While I can understand the fear, my own experience has shown me that people will frequently ask you if and where you go to church. I tell them yes, and that I go to the Unitarian Church. For the vast majority, this satisfies their curiosity, and no further questions are asked. My suspicion is that the vast majority of that vast majority have no idea what a Uni-

tarian (I tend not to confuse them further with the whole Unitarian Universalist label) is, and don’t want to show their ignorance, so they smile and drop the discussion. The inquiry is generally premised on an attempt to reach the “unchurched” and invite you to come to their church, not a desire to debate theological issues of their church versus yours, so if they do know what a Unitarian is, or if they ask, a small taste of UUism is enough to bring the conversation to a close.

If you’ve been around long enough to attend several services led by Ed Day, I’m sure you know that his favorite hymn is “This Little Light of Mine.” I’d like to challenge each of us to take the words to heart. Take pride in your faith! Don’t be ashamed of it or who you are. Let your light shine!

*This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine...  
Hide it under a bush? Oh no! I’m gonna let it  
shine...*

*Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.*

—Rich Elkins

## Introducing Our Guest Speaker for March 2nd

Dr Derek Maher is co-director of the religious studies program at ECU. Dr Maher will provide a basic introduction to Islam. He will organize his presentation around the theme of the “Five Pillars of Islam.” The five pillars serve as a convenient way of introducing some of the practices and the values of this faith. There will be a question and answer period following the talk.

Dr. Derek Maher received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the University of Virginia, where he specialized in Buddhism and Islam. His research primarily concerns Tibetan religions, religious biography, and religion and politics. He is the co-director of the Religious Studies Program at East Carolina University, and he leads study abroad programs to India. He has lived in Greenville with his wife Jill for five years.

# Affirming the goat of world community & peace, liberty and justice for all

## 2008 Cluster Meeting

The 2008 Cluster Meeting will be held at Shelter Neck on April 5. This meeting of local UU churches is being hosted by the Universalist Convention of North Carolina, Inc. Our Congregation has been a member for many years. This will be a chance to meet with other eastern North Carolina UUs and see the meeting facility available for our use. Information and discussions will be offered on various topics of interest to UUs. Contact Feryl Masters for more information or to help organize this event.

## Guest Minister to Preach March 16<sup>th</sup>

I am pleased to let you know that my friend and colleague, The Rev. Gail R. Geisenhainer will be our guest preacher on Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. She serves as a parish minister with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach, Florida. She also serves as the Treasurer of the UU Minister's Association Executive Committee. She was the electrifying Sunday Service preacher at the 2006 St. Louis General Assembly of the UUA. Her sermon on March 16<sup>th</sup>, will reflect on the art and discipline of religious pilgrimage and how it feeds the human hunger for meaning, purpose, connection and intimacy.

—Rev Ann Marie Alderman

## Welcoming Congregation Study Continues

The Welcoming Congregation Study Group continues to meet on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm in the library. Here is a list of the topics for March;

March 5: Racism, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Are there GLBT persons of color? What are the connections between racism and homophobia?

March 12: AIDS: How is Aids linked to homophobia?

March 19: The Radical Right: Understanding, conversation, response and clarity.

March 26: Religion and Homosexuality: Exploring how Judeo-Christian thinking has shaped our beliefs about sexual orientation.

Any member, friend or active visitor is invited to participate in any, all, or as many of these sessions as you can attend! Every participant has said that they have learned something they didn't know before that deepens their understanding and perspective.

—Rev Ann Marie Alderman

## Whale Coast Alaska — 2008

Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural program this July in our 12<sup>th</sup> year! See *REAL* Alaska, with UU homestays in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Seward, Juneau, and Sitka. UU's host events and lead tours. We visit Tlingit and Inupiat Native Alaskans, see lots of wildlife like bears, moose, caribou, whales, sea otters and bald eagles and visit Denali and other National Parks. Dave Frey, a 27-year Alaska resident, leads the programs. Visit our website, [www.wuurld.org](http://www.wuurld.org), email [waltonfrey@gci.net](mailto:waltonfrey@gci.net), or phone 907-322-4966 for a brochure. Reservation deadline March 15.



# Respecting the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

## Editor's Note

We're testing some changes to the Beacon format and are eager for your feed back. If you're accessing this online, you've noticed the addition of color. The print copy will continue to be in black and white. We encourage as many as possible to switch to the online version of the Beacon — remember, it saves us printing and mailing costs.

Do you like the changes, could they be improved, or did you prefer the old style?

We'd really like to hear from you with your suggestions. You can contact us any time at [beacon@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:beacon@uugreenvillenc.org)

— Beacon Editor

Deadline for next month's *beacon* is Tuesday, **March 18 at 8:00 pm**

**The Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Greenville  
131 Oakmont Drive  
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**Minister**, Rev Ann Marie Alderman  
**Religious Education Dir**, Victoria Brown  
**President**, Rich Elkins  
**Vice President**, Feryl Masters  
**Secretary**, Patrice Alexander  
**Treasurer**, Claudia Sundman  
**Office Administrator**, Michele Covi

### Committee Chairs

Building and Grounds: Ruel Tyer  
Endowment: Bill Paulson  
Finance: Paul Alston  
Hospitality: Gail Butler & Marcia Fletcher  
Membership: Jackie Wyman  
Religious Education: Patty Gade  
Social Action: Marta Dominguez  
Worship: Lora Hylton

