



*The UUCG*  
**beacon**

March 2009

The *beacon* is published monthly  
by the  
Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Greenville  
252-355-6658  
www.uugreenvillenc.org  
*beacon* Editor: Don English  
beacon@uugreenvillenc.org

Sunday Services -- 10:30 am

Mar 1

*This I Believe*  
Judi Hickson

Mar 7

*What's Happening at GA*  
Rev. Ann Marie

Mar 15

*The Fire of Commitment*  
Anna Olsen

Mar 22

*Flower Service*  
Rev. Ann Marie

Mar 29

*Give Away the Plate*  
Sara Munzer

Children's activities are  
available each Sunday.

President's Notes

**Growing naturally**

In just about every workshop or online discussion I've attended about church growth, there has been one common theme presented, that being small-group ministry. The key to being able to maintain a sense of community as a church grows in number is to provide opportunities for people to make close relationships with a smaller group of people within the larger congregation. One prominently proposed way of doing small-group ministry is the idea of covenant groups. Covenant groups tends to be very structured, with trained leaders and limits to how large a group can be. If a covenant group becomes larger than some predetermined threshold membership, then the group should split. These groups also often are of a limited term for their existence. When the term is up, groups dissolve and new ones are formed. Some people advocate for covenant groups to assemble based on a common interest or theme, whereas others insist that consistent attendance is more important, so members are grouped based on when they are available to consistently participate, with the topics of activity or discussion coming later. Lastly, covenant groups are often expected to provide some service to the congregation or the community in their activities.

To me, this model of structured covenant groups feels far too restrictive and limiting. I'm especially suspicious of groups what come together without some common interest or purpose, save for the excuse of just having a group. UUCG made an effort to establish these formal covenant groups several years ago to mixed results. Some groups followed the provided model, others worked better under less formal organization, and still others failed to start up at all. For some groups, maintaining committed leadership was an issue, and membership often fluctuated as people drifted in or out of a group as their needs changed.

# Reflections

. . . of Rev Ann Marie Alderman

Reflections:

In order to create the pie chart graphic that is included in this year's pledge campaign materials, I looked back at how I had spent my time as your minister over the last several months. Every time the UUCG board meets I share a detailed report of what I have been doing. But to build the pie chart, I wanted to group what I do in terms of themes and percentages. Here's what I found:

I spend an average of 48 hours a week "working" as your minister. (Of course, I'm your minister, every day, and every hour!) Over several months time 18 of those hours (38%) were spent on worship preparation, composition and delivery. Ministers generally agree that it takes an hour a minute to prepare a sermon, so I am right in line with that! I spent an average of 12 hours (25%) on administrative or organizational tasks such as meeting with committees and phone, e-mail or face to face communications with committee chairs or board members, assisting the with the congregational bookkeeping and database management, updating the calendar and creating or revising congregational publications, and communications with new members and active visitors. I spent an average of 6 hours (12%) of my time involved with community outreach in the work I do with the Interfaith Alliance, the ECU Campus Multi-faith Alliance, the City's Human Relations Council, the PCMH Pastoral Care Department's Clinical Pastoral Education Program, the Greenville Ministers Group and various other one time involvements in the

Greenville community. My hours devoted to UUCG's Religious Education for Adults and for Youth, including meeting with the RE Committee and with UUCG's Director of Religious Education and in preparing for and teaching Adult Religious Education courses were on the average about 5 per week (10%). I also spent about 5 hours per week (10%) involved in pastoral care and counseling, those times when I am engaged in active listening, resourcing or referral, during visitations or confidential conversations with those in particular need for comfort or assistance during a spiritual, emotional or transitional crisis. On average I spent a little more than 2 hours a week (5%) engaged in denominational and/or professional concerns including the work I do as a UUA Beyond Categorical Thinking trainer, the coordinator for Lambda (the UU GLBT minister's guild), a CUUPS, Inc board member, attending Thomas Jefferson District meetings, time with the East Carolina UU minister's gathering or with the Southeastern UU Ministers Association.

Whew! What I love is that every week is different. When my week includes sermon preparation, I can be very protective of the long two days it takes to get my slow brain to be creative! Other weeks, I spend my energy trying to get you to invite me to spend time with you! Call me! 414-4076. Or e-mail me [amalderman@uuma.org](mailto:amalderman@uuma.org)! Or drop by, I am sitting at UUCG waiting for you on Tues and Weds from 4-6 pm!

—Ann Marie

Deadline for next month's **beacon** is Tuesday, **March 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm**

# Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person

## PREZ NOTES (continued from page 1)

It is my own personal observation that the strict structure mandated by the covenant groups model may work for some churches, but see it is being too restrictive. I'd rather see groups form naturally out of the interest of groups of individual members, and allow them to survive as long as there is an interest to sustain them. It just makes more sense to me for there to be groups formed because of a common interest and desire to congregate, as opposed to forming groups for the sake of having a small-group ministry. And the less restricted, the better. I think a better term for the groups with this potential for success is "affinity groups" rather than covenant groups. These groups form around a common interest or purpose, and will last as long as it remains relevant to its members.

I look at recent developments in UUCG's small groups as being very positive in this light. The Earth-Based Spirituality Covenant Group, which was probably the largest of UUCG's groups at one time, has reorganized as a CUUPS chapter, a new women's group has formed (one of the original covenant groups was a women's group), and the Young Adults group, which never fully limited itself to the upper age limit of 35, is re purposing itself as a sci-fi and UUism discussion group, going naturally in the direction of interest that dominated meetings of the group, but now opening it up to sci-fi fans of all ages.

So I think that UUCG is growing in the right direction when it comes to small groups ministry. If you have an interest in starting a group, promote it and see how much common interest there is. Let's keep the momentum going!

— Rich Elkins

## RE Update

We have received a lot of positive feedback on the new class arrangement in children's RE. The children are happy and the teachers are happy. Last month, we lost a vital teacher and we thought we would have to cancel the Nursery class, but Mary Brown has been recruited to lead the class and fulfill a Girls Scout merit requirement in the process. We want to continue to meet the needs of all our children by offering age appropriate classes, but that means continually recruiting and keeping volunteers. Keep in mind, on every Sunday, RE needs six volunteers plus a paid childcare worker just to fulfill the needs of all the classes. This is a huge commitment for a church our size. For that reason, we are always looking for new energy and volunteers. It is my belief that if everyone does their part, we will be able to spread out the work and no one will feel left out of the adult activities.

The RE committee is also in need of more participation. Our work is continuous and the committee participation has been dwindling. The next RE meeting is March 22<sup>nd</sup> and new faces are very welcome.

For the next few months, all the classes will be continuing with their present curriculum. There will be an Easter egg hunt after the service on April 12<sup>th</sup>, and the teens will be needed during the service that day to help hide eggs.

Teen night is March 14<sup>th</sup>—the teens get together at the church for pizza and a movie.

The only March birthday belongs to Charlie Theilen—he will be 4 years old on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Happy Birthday Charlie!

—Patty Gade

# Affirming justice, equity and compassion towards all

## FIRST BORN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Please join us at First Born Holy Church on Saturday, March 28th, to assist with the food distribution. The distribution begins at 8:30am until 12:00pm. This is the "Diabetic" distribution. 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, The Bag Lady

## Upcoming Worship Services:

**March 1:** New UUCG Member and long time UU Judi Hickson will share her story and her values in the first of a "This I Believe" series.

**March 8:** What's happening at General Assembly this June? Elections, Peace Making, Ethical Eating....Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

**March 15:** Anna Olsen, Trustee from the Thomas Jefferson District to the UUA board, will give the sermon "The Fire of Commitment"

**March 22:** Flower Celebration Service and Spring Celebration, bring a flower to share!

**March 29:** Fifth Sunday "Give Away the Plate" Service, featuring Sara Munzer from the Family Violence Center

## Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee is looking for new members. As a Hospitality Committee member, you would make coffee ONCE a month. All supplies are provided; you would come in early on your day, set up for coffee, help put out snacks brought by members of the congregation, and then stay to clean up afterwards. Other committee members will help you with clean up as needed. Try it out!

—Gail Butler  
[gailbutler1@suddenlink.net](mailto:gailbutler1@suddenlink.net)

## March Birthdays:

**March 3:** Michelle Covi

**March 7:** Michelle Jenkins

**March 10:** Peter Sachtjen

**March 19:** Richard Weir

**March 27:** Scott Gade



# March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>01</p> <p>10:30am» <a href="#">Worship Service</a></p>	<p>02</p> <p>6pm» <a href="#">Girl Scouts</a></p>	<p>03</p> <p>8:30am» <a href="#">Breakfast at Cracker Barrel</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">KTC Buddhist Group</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center rehearsal</a></p>	<p>04</p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center Rehearsal</a></p>	<p>05</p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Course in Miracles</a></p> <p>7:30pm» <a href="#">Women's Group meets at B&amp;N</a></p>	<p>06</p> <p>10am» <a href="#">Building cleaning</a></p>	<p>07</p>
<p>08</p> <p>10:30am» <a href="#">Worship Service</a></p> <p>11:45am» <a href="#">Membership Committee Meeting</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">UU Meditation Group</a></p>	<p>09</p> <p>7:30pm» <a href="#">Sierra Club Meeting</a></p>	<p>10</p> <p>8:30am» <a href="#">Breakfast at Cracker Barrel</a></p> <p>6:30pm» <a href="#">Social Action Committee Mtg</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">KTC Buddhist Group</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center rehearsal</a></p>	<p>11</p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center Rehearsal</a></p>	<p>12</p> <p>6pm» <a href="#">Girl Scout Leader Meeting</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Course in Miracles</a></p>	<p>13</p> <p>10am» <a href="#">Building cleaning</a></p>	<p>14</p> <p>9am» <a href="#">Building &amp; Grounds Workday</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Teen Night (Kitchen and RE rooms)</a></p>
<p>15</p> <p>10:30am» <a href="#">Worship Service</a></p> <p>5pm» <a href="#">Vegetarian Pot Luck</a></p> <p>6pm» <a href="#">Greenweavers CUUPS monthly meeting</a></p>	<p>16</p> <p>6pm» <a href="#">Girl Scouts</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Board Meeting</a></p>	<p>17</p> <p>8:30am» <a href="#">Breakfast at Cracker Barrel</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">KTC Buddhist Group</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center rehearsal</a></p>	<p>18</p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center Rehearsal</a></p>	<p>19</p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Program Council</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Course in Miracles</a></p>	<p>20</p> <p>10am» <a href="#">Building cleaning</a></p>	<p>21</p> <p>1pm» <a href="#">EDS Support Group in Library</a></p>
<p>22</p> <p>10:30am» <a href="#">Worship Service</a></p> <p>5:30pm» <a href="#">UU Roddenberry Circle</a></p>	<p>23</p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Interfaith Alliance/UUCG</a></p>	<p>24</p> <p>8:30am» <a href="#">Breakfast at Cracker Barrel</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Turtle Creek Homeowners Meeting</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">KTC Buddhist Group</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center rehearsal</a></p>	<p>25</p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center Rehearsal</a></p>	<p>26</p> <p>6pm» <a href="#">Girl Scout Leader Meeting</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Course in Miracles</a></p>	<p>27</p> <p>10am» <a href="#">Building cleaning</a></p>	<p>28</p> <p>9am» <a href="#">First Born Food Distribution</a></p> <p>12pm» <a href="#">Karen Hall Rental</a></p>
<p>29</p> <p>10:30am» <a href="#">Worship Service</a></p> <p>6pm» <a href="#">Green Weaver CUUPS Ostara</a></p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>8:30am» <a href="#">Breakfast at Cracker Barrel</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">KTC Buddhist Group</a></p> <p>7pm» <a href="#">Magnolia Art Center rehearsal</a></p>				

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

## Program Council Meeting

Next Program Council Meeting is March 19th at the church. Strategic Long Range Plan (SLRP) Committee has been formed and will start meeting soon. Chair: Patrice Alexander Members: Pat Anderson, Feryl Masters, Laura Schroeder, and Brenda Stewart

—Patrice Alexander

**Minister**, Rev Ann Marie Alderman  
**Religious Education Dir**, Victoria Brown  
**President**, Rich Elkins  
**Vice President**, Patrice Alexander  
**Secretary**, Susan Foreman  
**Treasurer**, Claudia Sundman  
**Office Administrator**, Michele Covi

## Committee Chairs

Building and Grounds: Terry Shank  
Endowment: Bill Paulson  
Finance: Paul Alston  
Hospitality: Gail Butler  
Membership: Bette Nelson & Kay Alston  
Religious Education: Patty Gade  
Social Action: Pat Tesh  
Worship: Bev Harju

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