



The UUCG Beacon

PRESIDENT'S NOTES



Maintaining Orbit

Having lived in Greenville for nearly 22 years, I've come to the acceptance that while I've made it my home, most people are here only for a brief time before they move on somewhere else for more schooling, for work, or for family. Most of my friends I've made over this period, especially school friends, escaped to bigger cities, lots around Raleigh or Washington DC, but they're scattered across the country and even around the world. Rarely do I have a friend who moves away, yet strives to keep connected, except maybe through Facebook. Invitations remain open to visit whenever I'm in town, but visits when (or even if) they ever return to Greenville are few and far between.

When we talk about space flight, there are two terms which I often use in describing the phenomenon of departing friends. When launching satellites or other space-bound vehicles, there tends to be a "launch window" during which the vehicle can leave the earth, facing in the right direction for it to be able to achieve its destination. If some technical problem delays launch, once that problem is resolved, the launch window may have passed, and there could be considerable delay before the next window is opened. For some missions, the window may be narrow, requiring just the right conditions for the ultimate destination to be successfully reached.

Another concept is "escape velocity." The vehicle must be traveling fast enough to overcome the acceleration of gravity or be brought crashing back to Earth. Satellites have to escape the initial pull of gravity, but then use that gravity to continually fall forward toward the planet, yet constantly missing as the combination of forward momentum and downward pull result in orbit.

For many of us, there is a limited launch window once our initial reasons for coming to Greenville are through. Technical or mechanical issue may cause us to miss the window, or we fail to achieve escape velocity could result in being stuck in orbit, or worse crashing back to the ground as we watch others soar off into the void. I think to myself sometimes, is it too late for me to see the stars? What is keeping me here? When is the next launch window?

Yes, after so long I do get the itch for some new life in a new, different city, but things, like gravity, hold us here. Homes, jobs, relationships, they all act to keep us in place, but also keep us stable. I just can't imagine doing as I've known some to do, quitting jobs, moving to another place without knowing what awaits them there. No assurance of a job or income, maybe only a temporary place to stay? No, that's not for me. While I love adventure, I'm not a big risk-taker. I choose to remain in orbit over taking the chance between escape and crashing.

In the meanwhile, new friends come and new friends go, but a few do stay. As time goes by I'll continue to collect more who, like me expect to stay around for a while.

MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS



This last month we have seen killings in France and in Denmark, in Ferguson, New York and Chapel Hill with ethnic, religious and passionate disagreements motivating the violence.

What a contrast with our pluralistic religious community that promises “mutual trust and support,” even celebrating our differences! Being Unitarian Universalist I can trust that I won’t be marginalized or attacked for my religious sentiments or for my lack of religiosity! Such religious freedom is precious.

Unitarian Universalists have passionately different political and social justice sentiments too. But we do not practice the incivility of ridicule. We disagree and sometimes get exasperated that the other guy doesn’t get our point of view, but we’re really very good at not bullying one another over politics and social justice. It’s amazing, isn’t it?!

Unitarian Universalists have core values we share, among them, “freedom of conscience.” We enjoy freedom from being abused for the views our integrity requires of us. We trust this congregation to show us civility, not just when we keep our opinions to ourselves, but when we share them together.

Outside our community and among those who do not share values such as ours, the world offers a different kind of freedom: freedom to practice incivility. As long as you don’t cause physical harm, it’s pretty much legal to heap all manner of hurt on one another. We call it “freedom of speech,” and it’s often psychological abuse. Injury of heart. A slippery slope to killing.

What provides us opportunity for spiritual growth is that our religious community is not an exclusive club. We are not all the same age or education or national heritage or ethnicity or sexual identity or economic condition or political persuasion or a thousand other uniformities. Our congregations have the full range of physical and mental health in them. What an opportunity for growth, learning how to support one another without causing harm.

Leaders of every event are responsible that we live up to our trust that hurtful and disruptive behavior not be allowed. Quietly, without undue embarrassment, activity leaders require that hurtful or disruptive behavior cease, or the activity will end. We cannot allow our programs to continue when our Unitarian Universalist core values are being broken. We support our leaders in protecting this religious community and this sacred trustworthiness.

What we practice among Unitarian Universalists is what we will need in order to transform our world of deadly incivility. It’s hard for me to know how to restrain my passions for justice sometimes, so that I don’t ridicule or cause injury of heart to those with whom I disagree. It’s hard for me to know how to respectfully restrain the incivility of others.

How do we create a world of civil disagreement and peaceful negotiation? That’s a big part of what it means to be a covenant community. I’m grateful for this community of mutual trust. Blessings!

John Griffin has died. Many of you will remember John's quirky sense of humor and his volunteer service getting the order of service out for years.

He leaves behind his wife, Rosa Griffin. She has been bed ridden for a few years. She currently has a son with her. She just wanted John's UU friends to know. She gives permission for the notice of John's death to go into the newsletter and perhaps on the bulletin board. She is not up for phone calls, or visits. In lieu of flowers she would like donations to go to either Arthritis research or Cistinosis research. Cards can be sent to Rosa Griffin, 492 Old Snowhill Road, Ayden, NC 28513.



NEWS

Religious Education

The UU Youth RE have had a productive last month – the Tween/Teen group finished the first in a series of video presentations that was shown to the congregation with lots of positive feedback. The kids are planning on making more of these videos with increasing quality, to share with the congregation about every other month, as a new part of the intergenerational services. The kids have rolled with the different opportunities the videos have for them; some are showing their talent as the on screen “reporters” and others are shining behind the scenes as directors, film crew, and video editors. Christy Hoppenthaler has done a great job leading them in these UU News Show ventures.

The younger group, while not yet up to the rigors of news casting, have been busy exploring the seven UU principles in more concrete terms. This month we will be talking, doing, and creating on the themes of the importance of including everyone in the making of important decisions, the role of the web of nature in our lives, and the importance of people as unique individuals. Meanwhile, the tween/teen group will be discussing fairness, and the importance of truth; spiritual or otherwise.

In addition we will be having a combined yoga class on the third Sunday of March, led by our very own yogi, Bob Hudson. We encourage the children to wear comfortable clothing on this day, but we will also have some spare clothes available if they forget. If you are interested in being a second adult on any days to see what we are up to, there is always a schedule and sign-up sheet by the classrooms. We look forward to seeing your kids!

Lilani Masters, Director of Youth Religious Education

Annual Pledge Drive

The Stewardship Committee is starting our annual Pledge Drive this month. The Board has added hiring a part time Office Administrator and returning to paying our fair share to the UUA as two new goals for this year. In order to fund these goals and continue our excellent Youth Religious Education and music programs, we need to raise \$98,600 in pledges. Any contribution is welcome, but pledges make up over 80% of our budget, and are what we base our budget on. Our goal is to raise enough pledges to Feed Our Plate. We need to nourish our church so it can nourish us. If we get pledges to meet our goals, we can continue to fund our church's missions. The RE Youth will be preparing another video to help with presenting our message to the Congregation. We will need help with planning the kick-off luncheon, pledge cards and materials, and preparing the video. If you would like to help with our Pledge Drive, contact Patrice Alexander (pealexa123@yahoo.com) or Feryl Masters (oferyl@gmail.com).

Important Notice About the Beacon

The mailed version of the Beacon is going to be phased out (except for special requests). Print versions will be available at the church. (If we are out, please let someone know.) **This is the last mailed newsletter.** If there are problems with this, please let me know at beacon@UUGreenvilleNC.org.

EVENTS



Art Reception for Ken Johnson.

Please join us for an art reception for Ken Johnson on Friday, March 13th from 5:30-7:00PM, and bring a friend.

We will need volunteers to bring food about 5:15PM for the reception that night. Please contact Lorraine Obremski (lcobremski@gmail.com) if you can bring an appetizer or cookies.

Also, Alice will be hanging the art work the prior Friday, March 6th from 4-5:00PM. Please contact Alice Arnold (arnoldm@ecu.edu) if you can help hang the art. Art work will have the wiring attached to the back and should be easy to hang. Thanks to all for your help!



Classic GLBT Movie Night returns to its regularly scheduled 3rd Friday slot this month on March 20th at 7pm. The film for March is "Loggerheads" (2005 - Rated PG-13). The movie was filmed in North Carolina and the 3 interwoven stories take place in 3 different regions in the state. The film won top honors at the Nashville, Florida, and Los Angeles GLBT Film Festivals, and was a nominee for the Sundance Grand Jury Prize.

March 8: The UUC-K will have a musical service by Steve and Michelle Reines entitled "Let the Spirit Play" The Reines are members of the UUFR and have done several wonderful musical programs there along with their young daughter.

March 22: UUC-K will have a tribute to Pete Leary similar to the one that was held at the UUFR. I'm sure if Curtis is there for church, he'll be delighted to express the wonderful, unique service/tribute to Pete.

We hope to share the many things that Pete did, including the amount that he raised with his folk singing--in the neighborhood of \$60,000 to help with the restoration of the damages done by the flood at Shelter Neck a decade or so ago.

Billy Liles is planning a similar program for those of us who were unable to make the trip for Pete's memorial service (and those who did attend) to share this service.

We hope there'll be representatives from the various congregations who would like to hear this unique and very interesting tribute to Pete Leary and all the wonderful things he did for UCONCI and Shelter Neck in addition to his many other contributions to UU and SUUSI and SWIM and the UUFR.

*Missing a UU Community at College?
Want to get to know other UUs at NC colleges and universities?
Wondering how to nurture your UU identity at college?
Want to Relax and Renew Your Spirit?*



**Annual College UU Gathering
at Historic Shelter Neck Camp**

(Burgaw NC)

April 3-5 2015

(Easter Weekend)

Join Us for Worship, Fellowship, Fun and Food

\$10 per person

Room and Board for the weekend are free.

Sponsored by

North Carolina Student Unitarian Universalist Network (NC SUUN)

and

The Universalist Convention of North Carolina

Get more information and register online at <https://ncsuun.wordpress.com/college-uu-gathering/>.

Registration Deadline March 20, 2015.

MARCH 2014

Sunday 1 st	"A Little Bit Racist" Rev. Rod
Sunday 8 th	"A Posture of Awe and Humility" Rev. Rod Chalice Circles
Monday 9 th	Chalice Circles
Tuesday 10 th	Chalice Circles
Friday 13 th	Art Reception for Ken Johnson
Sunday 15 th	"Sacred Journeys" Jake Melnyk
Friday 20 th	GLBT Movie Night
Sunday 22 nd	CUUPS Vernal Equinox Celebration
Sunday 29 th	"A Posture of Wonder and Openness" Rev. Rod

STAFF

Minister: Rev. Rod Debs
 Music Director: Mort Stine
 Choir Director: Sue Jefferson
 RE Director: Lilani Butler Masters

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President: Rich Elkins
 Vice President: Brenda Stewart
 Secretary: Shannon Terry
 Treasurer: Feryl Masters
 At Large: Cam Scales
 At Large: Laura Schroeder
 Past President: Tom Thielen

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS

9:30AM Mindful Meditation
 10:30AM Worship
 12:00PM Lunch Groups

TUESDAYS

8:00AM Breakfast Group
 7:30PM KTC Buddhist Meditation

WEDNESDAYS

7:00PM Choir Practice

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Building and Grounds:

Chris Federico & Bob Hudson
Ambiance: Marcia Sobel

Caring:

Ruel Tyer & Ruth Abramson

Communications:

Rich Elkins

Fellowship:

Cam Scales

Finance:

Richard Baltaro

Fundraising:

Patrice Alexander & Jennifer Schultz

Hospitality:

Holly Brown

Membership:

Susan Foreman

Social Action:

Ray Sobel & Ann Eleanor

Stewardship:

Patrice Alexander & Feryl Masters

Worship:

Judi Hickson

Youth Religious Education:

Shannon Terry & Christy Hoppenthaler

Deadline for next month's *Beacon* is **Monday, March 23 at 8:00 pm**