



The Beacon

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville NC
March 2016



President's Message

Our seventh principle states we respect in the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. I usually think of this on a grand scale, as encompassing the entire earth and all the life on and in it. But we are part of many smaller webs, as well. If you think for a while, you can probably think of dozens of webs of which you are a part. Perhaps the smallest is our immediate family. Our church is one of those webs.

The strength of a web comes from the many strands it contains. Combined, they are much stronger than they are alone. Different strands have differing importance in the web. Some are major supports that give strength. Some may anchor the web to the world outside the web. Some fill in the spaces between the main strands. Each has its own role, and each makes the web stronger and more complete.

Our congregation has recently lost several major strands. Members have died or moved away. Each loss weakens the web. At the same time, other members have taken up roles those members filled and picked up the load they carried. New members have added to the to the web. While each member is important and adds value to our congregation, the congregation is able to continue and be strong even as members inevitably leave us.

A web depends on every part helping and participating. Some strands can contribute more than others. But each strand depends on the others to help support it. Our church depends on each member contributing what they are able and willing to contribute. Our contributions may change in type and size as our lives progress. The other webs we are part of will demand more or less of us from time to time. Our congregation adapts to the changes differing levels of contributions creates. At times some of us will need more support from our web. That is part of our value and strength. We support each other.

Just as importantly, our church is part of other webs. We obviously are part of the Unitarian Universalist Association. We are part of other religious groups, including the Interfaith Forum which our church helped found. We support, and are therefore part of the webs supporting disadvantaged people and people facing discrimination. We are part of the web of environmental activists. I could list dozens of ways we support the webs in Greenville and greater areas. We are part of the web of all existence, but also the smaller webs of our much smaller extend. Whatever webs you are part of, be sure you add your strength to make it better and stronger. Be ready to use the strengths of the webs to help you grow and care for yourself, too.

Feryl Masters
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UUCG Board Notes

- The Board approved hiring a new cleaning service.
- A revised Policy Manual was approved and placed on the website
- The Annual Meeting was tentatively scheduled for May 15th
- The annual Congregational Certification to the UUA was completed

Minister's Reflections



We who have known exclusion and whose hearts hurt when we see the exclusion of refugees, the unemployed, the working poor, the homeless, people of color, and immigrants, we gather as Unitarian Universalist congregations with high aspirations: to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person and their right of conscience, covenanting with one another our mutual trust and support.

Affirming "inherent worth and dignity" is a high bar, far more challenging than The Ten Commandments not to kill each other, steal and lie, violate one another's vows, or dishonor one's parents and the awesome reality that gives us life.

Because we have suffered exclusion, we invest ourselves in this covenanting congregation with high aspirations, grateful for the real human beings who gather here in all our rainbow diversity. And we strive to embrace the even larger rainbow of diversity of those who are not within our congregation. Ours is a message of welcome!

Mission Statement

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville, NC

United in our diversity, we covenant with one another to search, to serve, to grow and to love.

We seek out those who have been turned away,
we embrace those whose spiritual path has been isolated,
we strengthen ourselves to comfort the suffering,
we share with our children our commitment to
a more just and compassionate society.

I am grateful for Ruth and the Mindful Meditation group who gather Sundays before the service. I am grateful for the Board of Trustees one of whom welcomes us to every Sunday Service. They are charged with carrying out the Mission of the congregation.

I am grateful for the Service Leaders and Worship Committee who collaborate with the Minister to provide comforting and challenging services. I am grateful for jazz musician Mort and Brenda who provide piano music, grateful for Sue and Stephen and the choir who help us all sing. I'm grateful for story-tellers and for Robert, our teen tech.

I am grateful for the Greeters, for Laura and Bonnie who welcome Guests to become actively connected and participants helping shape this Unitarian Universalist congregation. I'm grateful for the Nominating Committee that welcomes everyone to take leadership in all the services, activities, community outreach and committees through which we implement our Mission and Covenant. And to Toni and Rich who communicate our activities through Newsletter, NUUS and Facebook.

I am grateful for Robin, Gail, Shannon, Lilani, Rich and Holly, for Christy and parents who gently guide our children to understand and practice our Unitarian Universalist values of inclusive welcome and kindness. I'm grateful for Holly, Jacki and lots of others who provide Hospitality refreshments and clean-up. I'm grateful for Brenda and Marcia for ambience and art displays, and for all those who move chairs before and after every potluck, movie, yard sale, and special event: Pat, Rich, Feryl and all. I'm grateful for Robert and Tony who carry on the work of Hank, Helen and Bob Franke caring for the building and grounds.

I am grateful for Michael and Cam who brainstorm and organize social activities and for Jennifer and Patrice who come up with fun fundraising activities. I am grateful for Canvas leaders Patrice and Feryl who yearly invite the membership to share the costs of this Unitarian Universalist facility, program and staff. I'm grateful for accountant Brenda providing her professional skill as bookkeeper and Treasurer. I am grateful for each of us who pledge our financial contributions to this congregation.

I am grateful for Rich, Sandy, and Richard of the Social Action Committee for all your wonderful service to those who are excluded and hurting: PFLAG (family and friends of LGBT persons), Classic LGBT Movie Night, Moral Movies, "share the plate" with local charities, plus many individual involvements in community service organizations. This has got to be the most rewarding of our Unitarian Universalist experiences.

I am grateful for the breakfast and lunch groups, the book group, women's group and informal relationships that help us know we are loved. I am grateful for Ruel, Ruth and Alice of Caring who keep us all in contact with aging members who can rarely attend. I am grateful to all who assist one another as we face health challenges, injuries and personal changes that send us for a loop. We need one another. It is wonderful to experience "I am not alone."

May we feel the joy and privilege of investing our energies, leadership and resources that this small congregation shall continue to be a saving power in the lives of all here who have known cruel exclusions in our lives. May we be an even greater healing influence in the lives of those suffering humiliating exclusion in the world around us.

Blessings!

Rod Debs

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March 2016 Worship Schedule

- March 6: "The Economy of Compassion"
- March 13: "Barn-Raising with the Little Red Hen"
- March 20: Spring Equinox with Michael and Jake
- March 27: "may i be wrong: Easter with e.e. cummings"

Religious Education



In January teens began attending and taking more active roles in the service. However, we continue to have religious education for younger members. The elementary class is studying Moral Tales which provides children with spiritual and ethical tools to make choices and take actions that reflect their Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values. The tweens are learning about Neighboring Faiths to enable the youth to respect and understand the beliefs of other religious communities.

I would like to THANK everyone for their support during the last couple of months as Religious Education has undergone exciting changes. We have had several members express interest in sharing their stories with the youth. The goal is for the adults to have the chance to interact with and get to know the youth of our congregation. We are delighted that Mona Mandour is scheduled to share her story about growing up Muslim on March 6th. We would like to schedule one Member Story opportunity a month throughout the year.

There are also members that have volunteered to act as second adults during regularly scheduled classes. Having second adults is crucial in maintaining a safe environment for the youth of our congregation. These volunteers also have the opportunity to foster deeper connections between the youth and adults at UUCG. We encourage second adult volunteers that might be interested to develop a role as teachers.

Member Stories are a one time commitment. Volunteering as a second adult doesn't require a commitment on a regular basis. If you are interested in learning more, sharing your story, or volunteering as a second adult please contact me at holly.brown8319@gmail.com or 252-571-8319.

Fundraising

--Patrice Alexander and Jennifer Schultz are Co-Chairs

Looking for volunteers who have ideas about how to raise money from folks outside of our congregation--most ideas are not too crazy to consider so try us!

A Service Auction is scheduled for Saturday, March 12, at 6:00 p.m. It will be a Potluck Dinner. We really need assistance from everyone in identifying services and items to be donated/auctioned off, then promoting the auction to friends and family, and finally attending and having a wonderful time bidding on some great items. Service items that have proved very popular in the past have been massages, dinners-to-go (like chili and cornbread), frozen soups, group specialty dinners, gift wrapping, sewing services, shopping services, maintenance and handyman services, etc, etc. In addition - if you have items that you think will bring more at the auction rather than the yard sale in May please donate them. We would also like to have a silent auction.



Stewardship

--Patrice Alexander and Feryl Masters are Co-Chairs

Looking for volunteers, especially members who have experience with stewardship/pledge campaigns in other congregations.

Two Goals this year: \$99,999 if we want to expand our programs and outreach; \$92,000 if we want to maintain what we have. This will be a challenge since several of our larger pledging units have moved in the last couple of years.

Starting in February Rev Rod will be working with the Worship Committee to include information about stewardship and pledging in our services at least monthly as a way of educating all our members and friends.

We want our theme this year to focus on the fact that UUCG is where you and your contributions can make a real difference and make you feel good - who has a gift of words who can help us come up with a snappy saying?

Pledge Campaign this year will run from Kick-off Luncheon on March 20th through April 17th.

We hope to have entertainment including skits, songs, and magic tricks so please prepare share your talents

Share The Plate

The March 2016 Share the Plate recipient is First Born Food Pantry in Grimesland NC. UUCG has a history of involvement with this group going back to around 1999 and Hurricane Floyd. For many years, our congregation provided volunteers to check in clients, fill boxes of food, and carry boxes out to cars during our designated Saturday each month. A few individuals from UUCG continue to volunteer with the food pantry in Grimesland, but other larger churches provide more of their volunteers now.

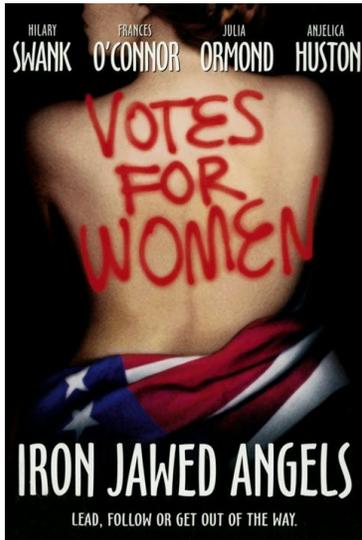
Interfaith Pirates

ECU Interfaith Pirates Better Together will be hosting their first **Interfaith Leadership Lab Conference, on Saturday, April 16th at East Carolina University**, co-sponsored by the Student Government Association and Intercultural Affairs. The entire event will be taking place at the Mendenhall Student Center. Registration begins at 9 am with breakfast, and then the conference officially begins at 10 am. The keynote speaker will be Reverend Irene Monroe, an African American lesbian ordained minister, motivational speaker, and feminist theologian who speaks for a sect of society that is frequently invisible. Among her many awards and honors, Irene Monroe has also received the Unitarian Universalist Feminist Theology Award for her project on an African American queer community. You can read more about Dr. Monroe at <http://speakoutnow.org/speaker/monroe-rev-irene>



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Moral Movies



March is Women's History Month, and in keeping with the theme, Moral Movies will be Saturday, March 12th starting at 6:30pm and will feature the 2004 historic drama "Iron Jawed Angels" which tells the remarkable and little-known story of a group of passionate and dynamic young women, led by Alice Paul (Hilary Swank) and her friend Lucy Burns (Frances O'Connor), who put their lives on the line to fight for American women's right to vote.

Swank and O'Connor head an outstanding female ensemble, with Julia Ormond, Molly Parker, Laura Fraser, Brooke Smith and Vera Farmiga as a rebel band of young women seeking their seat at the table; and such cinematic icons as Lois Smith, Margo Martindale, and Anjelica Huston as the steely older generation of suffragettes.

This true story has startling parallels to today, as the young activists struggle with issues such as the challenges of protesting a popular President during wartime and the perennial balancing act between love and career. Utilizing a pulsing soundtrack, vivid colors, and a freewheeling camera, Katja von Garnier's driving filmmaking style shakes up the preconceptions of the period film and gives history a vibrant contemporary energy and relevance.

Refreshments will be served and a discussion will follow the screening.

Classic GLBT Movie Night

Classic GLBT Movie Night follows the focus on women for March with the (also) 2004 film "Saving Face". This will be shown Friday, March 18th, beginning at 7pm. Refreshments will be served.

In "Saving Face", Wilhelmina or "Wil" (Michelle Krusiec) is a lesbian, but she would not dare tell her widowed mother, Hwei-Lan (Joan Chen), or her very traditional grandparents. She's shocked, however, to find out she's not the only one in her family with romantic secrets when she learns that her 48-year old mother is pregnant. Unwilling to reveal the identity of the father, Hwei-Lan is kicked out of her parents' home and must move in with Wil, putting a strain on her budding relationship with openly gay Vivian (Lynn Chen).

