

The UUCG Beacon

The beacon is published
monthly by the Unitarian
Universalist Congregation
of Greenville
252-355-6658
www.uugreenvillenc.org



President's Notes



We honor the religious stories and rituals of the (spring) season that transform fear into love, ignorance and arrogance into wisdom, greed into generosity, despair into hope. We look for and celebrate the return of green to the hillsides, of birdsong to the morning skies, and the lingering colors of delayed dusk.

– Rev. Stefanie Etzbach-Dale, UU minister

I am encouraged by the above quotation. Spring is a time of transformation, generally considered to be a time of positive and encouraging growth and change. We have weathered a particularly cold winter. We look forward to the spring. This year, I have felt a little misled by the old axiom describing March as “In like a lion and out like a lamb”. It seems this year’s March has been “In like a lion, out like a lion” with just enough temperate days in between to give me false hope of an early spring. I’m sure I’m not the only one looking forward to the “April Showers” that bring “May Flowers,” or at least a little more meteorological stability. But the key seems to be looking forward to the transformation, the positive change to come.

I am, however, simultaneously discouraged by the above quotation, as it seems to imply that in order to undergo a positive transformation, one must start from a negative place. While that seems fairly intuitive, I would argue that just because something could stand to be improved does not imply that it was poor, defective, or insufficient to begin with. The antique collecting dust on a shelf in the closet still retains great value. It is not less beautiful simply because it is dirty. It’s value is already established, and merely rediscovered by a thoughtful and detailed cleaning, perhaps followed by a showcasing. In other words, it’s INNATE but OBSCURED value is REVEALED and then SHARED.

So what does this have to do with our congregation? We aspire to be a loving, wise, generous, and hopeful congregation. Does that imply that we are currently fearing, ignorant/arrogant, greedy, and full of despair? It is admittedly arguable, but I personally don’t think we are. I think we already exhibit the characteristics we aspire to, we just aspire to be more so! Further, I think the key to increasing the value and effectiveness of our congregation lies not in trying to transform fear into love, ignorance/arrogance into wisdom, greed into generosity, or despair into

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Worship Services

Staff

April 6 **“Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of which we are a Part”**

Led by Rev. Rod Thompson, Interim Minister

This is a sermon focused on the 7th of our Unitarian Universalist Principles. As members of a congregation in the Unitarian Universalist Association we are called to “affirm and promote” these principles. What does that mean? How difficult can that be? I’ll share my thoughts and listen to yours in a **Community Response** time after the sermon. See you in church.

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

April 13 **“To Dwell Together in Peace”**

Led by Rev. Rod Thompson, Interim Minister

We say the Unison Affirmation every Sunday, where this is the fourth line; but I wonder if we know to what you are committing yourselves. I’m looking at each of the six lines of this affirmation, one at a time, one a month, continuing with this Sunday. I’ll want your responses, too. See you in church.

Board of Trustees

President: Tom Thielen
Vice President: Shannon Terry
Secretary: Tammy Atchison
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At-Large: Terry Shank
At-Large: Rich Elkins
At-Large: Patrice Alexander

April 20 **Easter/Passover/Spring Family Service and Flower Communion**

Led by Rev. Rod Thompson, Interim Minister

Please bring a flower or two to add to our congregational bouquet for our traditional Unitarian Universalist Flower Communion. In addition, our plan is to make this a memorable family service in which we acknowledge three religious traditions that are all associated with this date. There will be singing and storytelling. Please join us.

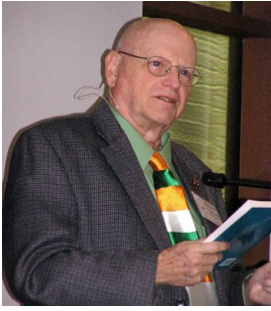
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Hospitality: open
Membership: Sue Foreman & Judi Hickson
Youth Religious Education: Jennifer Thielen
Stewardship: Patrice Alexander
Social Action: Pat Tesh & Pat Dix
Worship: Michael Betteken

April 27 **Humanism . . The Next Step**

Led by Ray Sobel

About a year and a half ago I realized that most of my life I have been a Humanist. It's quite possible that the same may apply to many in our congregation.



Rod's Ruminations

Happy almost April everyone! Outside my window the bushes and trees are showing signs of spring growth – way earlier than I'm used to in Ohio. The anticipation of the wonderful warm weather to come is just one of the reasons we came to Greenville, but it is one reason! You and this Congregation are all the rest of the reasons!

After my service focused on the third line of our Unison Affirmation “And Service Is Its Prayer” several people asked about the reading from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Guideline for a Constructive Church” from a sermon he preached in 1966 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA.; so here it is:

We who must keep the church going and keep it alive have certain basic guidelines to follow – to preach good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted . . . to set at liberty them that are captives. You see, the church is not a social club. The church is not an entertainment center. The church has a purpose. The church is dealing with ultimate concern. Sunday after Sunday, week after week, people come to church with broken hearts. They need a word of hope... The church heals the broken-hearted.

Secondly, the role of the church is to free people, people who are slaves to prejudices, slaves to fear. The church is called to set free those that are captive, to set free those that are victims of the slavery of segregation and discrimination and those caught up in the slavery of fear and prejudice.

The church must preach the acceptable year of the Lord, not some period beyond history; the acceptable year can be this year. The acceptable year can be any year when we decide to do right, when we stop throwing away the precious lives that we have been given, when we keep our theology abreast with our technology, when we keep the ends for which we live abreast with the means by which we live, when we keep our morality abreast with our mentality....

These are our guidelines and if we will only follow the guidelines, we will be doing what the church is called to do. We won't be a little social club. We won't be a little entertainment center. But we'll be about the serious business of bringing God's kingdom to this earth.

Religious Education

The Youth Religious Education Program has a Interim Director! I'm pleased to announce that Lilani Butler Masters has taken on this position. Lilani has been volunteering as one of our lead teachers and is already familiar with our program and our children. She is a life-long UU and grew up in our congregation's religious education program, giving her additional insight into "what we do". I'm very excited to have her onboard and am sure she will do a wonderful job!

Having a Director of Religious Education means that we have someone dedicated to making sure that we are using appropriate curricula and that we have all the necessary supplies each week. However, religious education isn't something that can be done by one person; rather, it is a congregation wide commitment. We need volunteers to serve as teachers and second adults. We need the smiling faces of our congregation's children, and a commitment from parents to bring their children on as consistent a basis as possible.

If you would like to sign up to help with YRE, please go to our volunteer web page at VolunteerSpot: <http://vol.pt/EFm1F4>. You will be asked to enter an email address to receive reminders of your volunteer commitments. VolunteerSpot does not share your email addresses with other companies.

Upcoming Events:

April 20th--Easter Sunday --We will be hosting an **Easter Egg Hunt** after the intergenerational service. We need adults to help fill and hide the eggs!

Jennifer Thielen, Chair, Youth Religious Education



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

On **April 20th** we celebrate our traditional **Unitarian Universalist Flower Communion**; so, don't forget to bring a flower for each member of your family for the Flower Communion that day.

Whether Mother Nature cooperates or not, I hope you'll still some early blooms left in your yard or garden, or that some new ones will be coming on. Short clippings from your flowering trees also work. If you can bring some extras for others, please do.

If you don't have access to flowers where you live, I understand that some of our grocery stores have an ample supply. We'll make such a beautiful bouquet together.

Prez notes continued.....

(Continued from page 1)

hope, any more than we can transform dust into a beautiful antique. Instead, perhaps we need to remove the barriers to our own growth and abundance. By “cleaning out” the obscurations, we can allow our love, wisdom, generosity, and hope grow without bound. I think we will be surprised the by value we find, if we first look for and recognize the value that is there, then work to reveal it in its entirety.

This is where the second part of the quotation comes in. Finding, and focusing on, the things of value. What makes this congregation special? What will you look for and celebrate in this congregation? What do you find valuable, and how will you reveal it and share it with others?

Happy Spring Cleaning!

Tom Thielen, President, UUCG Board of Trustees

Announcement: The UUA Brand Story

February 14, 2014

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is making changes—changes to where we do our work, how we do our work, and how we tell the story of our Unitarian Universalist movement to the wider world.

The dramatic shifts in today’s religious landscape demanded that UUA leadership take an in-depth look at our strategic communications and how effectively our voice is breaking through the competing noise of our high-tech society. We examined our core values, our unique personality as a faith, and the impact Unitarian Universalists hope to make in the world. We asked UUs from across the country, of all ages with various levels of involvement in our faith, to answer three questions: Who are we? What do we do? And why it matters? From these conversations, and more, we began to form our brand identity for the future of our religious movement.

We engaged a top-notch branding agency to help us synthesize this information and explore ways to tell our story with more clarity and effectiveness. This is important for each of us, and it’s crucial in our efforts to reach out to others who share our values. Today, I am excited to share with you one of the tools in an ongoing process of improved communication strategies, the Unitarian Universalist Association’s new logo.

Read the rest of the article at

<http://www.uua.org/news/pressroom/pressreleases/293249.shtml>



Dinners For Eight

There is still time to sign up for the upcoming Dinners for Eight. All who participate will certainly have a great time, with wonderful food and fabulous UU company!



This is how it works: Your host will decide on the menu and will ask guests to bring a contribution to the "feast" (monetary, food, drink, etc.) The point is to enjoy dinner in the company of your fellow UU's--a golden opportunity to get to know folks better.

There are still places available at the following dinners:

Date	Host	Type
Thurs., April 3	Claudia Sundman	Non-veggie
Fri, April 4	Cam Scales	Vegetarian
Sat., April 26	Marcia & Ray Sobel	Ethnic/TBD

(All homes are handicap accessible)

There will be sign-up sheets at church on Sunday, or you can contact Cam Scales to sign up before then (camrme@aol.com or 565-5611).

The **UUCG Choir is looking for new members**. Great musical ability or ability to read music is not required. We rehearse every Wednesday at 7:00 PM. Childcare is provided if needed. Studies have shown that people in choirs or singing groups live longer. This is a great way to get some free voice lessons while having fun. Come and join a great group of people having lots of fun.

Earth Day April 22

The [Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth](#) envisions a world in which reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth are central to the lives of all people. Their purpose is to inspire, facilitate, and support personal, congregational, and denominational practices that honor and sustain the Earth and all beings. They affirm and promote the seven principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, including: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

Voter Registration Forms (both English and Spanish) are on the counter next to the Library. If you're not registered, please complete/mail a form. If you are registered but have friends or neighbors who are not, please take them a form. Deadline for registering for primary is **APRIL 11**.

~ April 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year.</p> <p>Mark Twain</p>		<p>1 April Fool's Day 8:00 am Breakfast Group 6:30 pm Wi\$dom Path 7:30 pm KTC Buddhists</p>	<p>2 10:00 am Music Together 7:00 pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>3 6:00 pm Music Together</p>	<p>4 Nat'l Walk to Work Day</p>	<p>5 Int'l Pillow Fight Day 10:00 am Music Together</p>
<p>6 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30 am Worship 12:00 noon Lunch groups</p>	<p>7 World Health Day 6:00 pm Science of the Mind Meeting</p>	<p>8 8:00 am Breakfast Group 5:30 pm Worship Comm 6:30 pm Wi\$dom Path 7:30 pm KTC Buddhists</p>	<p>9 10:00 am Music Together 7:00 pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>10 6:00 pm Music Together</p>	<p>11 Barber-shop Quartet Day 1:00 pm Women's Luncheon</p>	<p>12 Drop Everything and Read Day 10:00 am Music Together</p>
<p>13 Palm Sunday 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30 am Worship 12:00 noon Lunch groups</p>	<p>14 6:00 pm Science of the Mind Meeting 7:30 pm Sierra Club Mtg</p>	<p>15 Passover (until 22nd) 8:00 am Breakfast Group 6:30 pm Wi\$dom Path 7:30 pm KTC Buddhists</p>	<p>16 10:00 am Music Together 7:00 pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>17 Nat'l Haiku Poetry Day 6:00 pm Music Together</p>	<p>18 Good Friday 7:00 pm GLBT Movie Night</p>	<p>19 National Garlic Day 10:00 am Music Together</p>
<p>20 Easter 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30 am Worship 12:00 Easter Egg Hunt 12:00 noon Lunch groups 5:00 pm Vegetarians of Pitt Co.</p>	<p>21 6:00 pm Science of the Mind Meeting</p>	<p>22 Earth Day 8:00 am Breakfast Group 6:00 pm Democracy NC 6:30 pm Wi\$dom Path 7:30 pm KTC Buddhists</p>	<p>23 10:00 am Music Together 7:00 pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>24 6:00 pm Music Together 7:00 pm Board Meeting</p>	<p>25 Arbor Day 1:00 pm Women's Luncheon</p>	<p>26 Nat'l Go Birding Day 8:30 am First Born Food Dist. 10:00 am Music Together</p>
<p>27 Holocaust Remembrance Day 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30 am Worship 12:00 noon Lunch groups</p>	<p>28 6:00 pm Science of the Mind Meeting 7:00 Book Club</p>	<p>29 8:00 am Breakfast Group 6:30 pm Wi\$dom Path 7:30 pm KTC Buddhists</p>	<p>30 Adopt a Shelter Pet Day 10:00 am Music Together 7:00 pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>Long stormy spring-time, wet contentious April, winter chilling the lap of very May; but at length the season of summer does come.</p> <p>Thomas Carlyle</p>		

The UUCG **Spring Yard Sale and Car Wash** is happening **MAY 3**. Pack up all those still usable items you don't need and bring them on down the first of May. We rejoice in a diversity of items. Later, Bring in that filthy (or just slightly dusty) car or truck to get it thoroughly washed. We believe all vehicles have inherent worth and deserve to look dignified.

From the Social Action Committee

In April we will be sharing half of our Plate Offering with PiCASO (Pitt County AIDS Service Organization). PiCASO is a local AIDS support organization established in 1991 whose focus is on HIV Testing, Education/Advocacy and Emergency funding for those living with AIDS in Pitt county. More information on this group and their good work in Pitt County can be found at <http://www.picaso.org>.

Deadline for next month's ***Beacon*** is Tuesday, **April 22 at 8:00 pm**

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