



The Beacon

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville NC
April 2016

President's Message



Every year, our church holds a pledge campaign to raise money to fund our mission. I suspect many of you are as tired of hearing the repeated calls to pledge as the pledge committee is of trying to develop an original and fun program. I'm reminded of public radio campaigns, where I often wonder how much more they could raise if they could promise that you would go back to the normal programming once you pledged. It would be the shortest, most successful campaign ever.

Yet, we have to ask for your pledge each year. Pledges are the main source of funding for our programs. UUs are noted for low levels of pledging compared to other churches. I think that is a function of our faith. Most of us are far less concerned about earning our place in heaven than we are about providing food and shelter for the hungry and homeless. We are more focused on fighting injustice in this world than in escaping hell. This means that we contribute our treasure, time, and energy on many causes outside the church. This is a good thing. Service is our prayer. We believe that we must act in this world, not focus primarily on the next.

While I am gratified by what you do outside our church, and I personally support causes other than UUCG, as one who has been on the Board and several committees, I recognize how important it is to support our faith. UUs and UUCG in particular has been and continues to be a powerful force for justice and help for those on the margins. We have been a beacon for those who identify themselves differently on the gender or sexuality continuum from accepted societal norms. We have long been noted for our work on racial justice issues, both morally and in material support. We have started and support many organizations which make our community more fair and just. I could list many things we do as a congregation that make Greenville, Pitt County, and the world a better place.

Yet while our principles and our actions in the world are our foundation and strength, our church cannot function without cash (or checks). While each person must decide what they can contribute, a pledge of 3 to 6% of your Adjusted Gross Income is suggested. We also cannot function without the hours of time we contribute. Again, we cannot tell you how many hours is appropriate for you, but we have many projects we want to work on. We also need ideas and problem solvers. We are stronger and more effective as a group. Some things can be accomplished by one person. Generally, though, it takes a group working together to accomplish great things. We want to accomplish great things. So I ask you to think carefully about what our church means to you, and pledge what you can to support our church.

Feryl Masters

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UUCG Board Notes

- The Board reviewed the Minister's self-evaluation.
 - A Policy Manual was revised to include previously approved changes to the building use policy
 - The Board selected recipients for the Flaming Chalice and Unsung UU Awards
 - The Board heard a report on Stewardship Committee Plans
 - The Board approved Share the Plate recipients recommended by Social Action
- April--ReLEAF May--PiCASO June--A Time For Science July--Community Crossroads Shelter

Minister's Reflections



Spring is bringing so much joy to me this year! Tomato seedlings are four inches high! Tell me if you'd like a tomato plant for your patio!

I have never felt comfortable speaking of "joy" before, but it feels right to call it joy. I feel that my energies are being rewarded despite my gardening mis-steps. Even the cukes I planted a month early are thriving!

Not everyone feels this way. For all the satisfaction of those who have found lucrative work they love, there is a huge group of people who feel left behind for all their grit and hard work.

Despite the economic success of the 1%, all the flashy marketplace rewards for young techies, and all the hard-won success of gifted minorities, there is a huge swath of our nation's professional and working people whose jobs and homes have gone away, and who find themselves competing with their children for food service jobs at humiliating wages.

While immigrants and refugees hard-scrabble their way in the worst of job conditions, a mass of demoralized white workers, no longer middle class, have been getting angrier and angrier. Emasculated white male voters are gleefully finding a voice in candidates who blatantly express sexism, nativism, white supremism and religious bigotry. Don't blame the demagogues for tapping into this boiling anger.

Laws written by corporate lobbyists for the benefit of the 1% have hurt real people. Lots of them. And those devastated masses don't strike out against the powerful and wealthy few they long to become. They scapegoat against marginal populations who have even less power and resources: immigrants, refugees, people of color, the poor, LGBTQ people, foreign religions, and women.

So while we work against "the new Jim Crow" of mass incarceration devastating the black community, for Black Lives Matter, and advocate a living wage for service workers, and expansion of Medicaid for the poor, and investment in public schools, and community college alternatives to huge college debt, and women's health resources for their control of their own bodies, and alternative energy to address climate change, and work for Syrian refugee settlement, migrant worker protection and immigration reform---while we advocate for these marginalized populations, let's not demonize the emasculated white men who rage being left behind and fear for their children's future.

There is a lot of misdirected anger in a lot of hurting people. May we see beyond our neighbor's rage to their pain and to the loss of their dreams that they would rise as a privileged class.

May we celebrate a grander American dream of "the general welfare" of a widely diverse nation where "everybody does better when everybody does better." Our Unitarian Universalist Principles shine with this wholistic aspiration, to "affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person... (and their) right of conscience... promising to one another our mutual trust and support."

Blessings!

Rod Debs

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April 2016 Worship Schedule

April 3 "Oh, Freedom" Rev. Rod Debs, pastor

April 10 "Constellations of Meaning" Rev. David Morris, pastor UU Cong. Outer Banks, guest minister

April 17 "Trust" Rev. Rod Debs, pastor

April 24 "The End of the Age: Apocalypse" Rev. Rod Debs, pastor

Religious Education



March has been an exciting month in Youth Religious Education. We started out the month with Mona Mandour visiting and telling her story to the youth. She shared what it was like to grow up in Egypt and as a Muslim. She brought her prayer rug and several other items to show the kids. We really appreciate her taking the time to share her journey. We have had other opportunities for the youth to interact with the congregation. On March 20th the youth were invited to stay in service for the Spring Equinox celebration. The month ended with an Easter egg hunt for the youth during class time.

Robin Brown, nursery caregiver, will be away for the summer fulfilling her dream of being a camp counselor. We are excited for her! Robin's last Sunday will be May 8th so we will need someone (or several people) to help fill the job (paid) through the summer. If you are

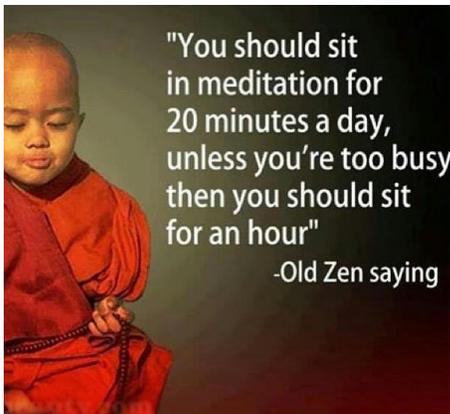
interested in helping fill this role please let a board member and/or Holly Brown (Director of Youth Religious Education) know.

In April the elementary class will finish up the "Moral Tales" curricula. We will have a small party at the end of the month to review what they have learned and to celebrate. Our next member story will be Mike Bracken sharing his passion for history and his fossil collection. Do you have a story you would like to share? Member Stories are a one time commitment.

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.

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.

Mindful Meditation



This is the first article about Mindful Meditation. Therefore, I will tell you who, what, when, where and why our 50 minutes is about. Who, means anyone. What and when, means the silent meditation starts at 9:30, for 20 minutes and where means the library in the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville. Why. Everyone there has their own reason for being present. After our melodic 20 minute meditation, we discuss whatever comes to the mind of anyone. Also at present, we are reading prior to the Sunday meeting *The LITTLE BOOK of AWAKENING* by Mark Nepo. This book has 52 very short chapters and is followed by suggestions for meditating. So that pretty much outlines Who, What, When, Where and Why. But you must know this. You are never too early or too late to enter for meditation. Your energy is welcome at all times.

Ruth Abramson

Share The Plate

ReLeaf Inc. will be our April "Share the Plate" recipient. ReLeaf was established in 1990 to plant, promote, and protect canopy trees. Since they planted the first tree in front of the Jenkins Art Building, the organization has been involved with restoring and nurturing the urban forest that is Greenville. ReLeaf helps to reverse the effects of deforestation and global warming, combat climate change, and increase the positive appearance of public and common areas in Greenville. ReLeaf is a community-based, volunteer and nonprofit organization. Since 1990 ReLeaf has planted and replaced over 1,500 trees and contributed over \$229,000 to the beautification and re-greening of Greenville.



Service Auction

The UUCG Service Auction & Silent Auction has been re-scheduled for **Saturday, April 23rd at 6:00 pm**, and will include a potluck dinner. We have lots of great services, dinners, and opportunities for some amazing deals while having a great time of fun and fellowship. Some of items where we may see a bidding war include two one hour massages, an Italian dinner for six, handyman and master garden services, chili and cornbread to go, an Egyptian dinner for four, a vegetarian feast, and a home organizer at your service. Be sure to invite all your friends and family for a fun-filled evening.



We can always use additional donations of services and items of value that might be better suited for auction rather than the yard sale. Please use this [Service Auction Donation Form](#).

The Yard Sale will be held the following Saturday, April 30th, so it is a good time to start putting things aside for which you no longer have a need and are looking for an opportunity to donate.

Moral Movies

Moral Movies' regular second Saturday schedule falls on the same day as PirateFest. In order to avoid competing with the closing concert of the festival, as well as to give your Social Action Committee Chairs some needed time to recover after volunteering with PFLAG at the festival, Moral Movies will instead be held the following Saturday, on **April 16th at the normal 6:30pm time**.

The film for April has not yet been chosen, but in recognition of April having Earth Day on the 22nd, and also Arbor Day on the 29th, we are working toward partnering with Greenville's ReLeaf organization, who are also our April "Share the Plate" recipients, for the event. Regardless of whether they are able to co-host the event or not, the film will have a focus on trees and their importance to our environment. Because ReLeaf's mission is more specifically targeted at urban reforestation and restoration of tree canopy, we're hoping to find an appropriate film to at least address this as a component of the environmental advantages of trees. If you are aware of an appropriate documentary or other film covering this topic, please suggest it to one of the chairs of the committee.

The film title will be published in the NUUS when it is finalized.

Classic GLBT Movie Night

Classic GLBT Movie Night will be screening on its normally scheduled 3rd Friday, **April 15th at 7pm**, but the switch involves the film. During the March screening, we had issues with the subtitles being missing, which was extremely problematic with the movie being partially in English and partially in Chinese. Because of this, and the availability of the movie chosen by the audience for April, "Gayby", the April movie was screened in March and the previously scheduled movie for March, "**Saving Face**" will now be shown in April.

