



# The Beacon

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville NC  
May 2016

## President's Message



While in Australia last month, I took the opportunity to visit UU churches in Sydney and Melbourne. In many ways, they were similar to ours. While both were smaller than ours, they had a full service and a friendly social time with refreshments. They had excellent live music. Talking with people, I heard that they have many more members than were in attendance. I also noticed there were no children present at either church and few young adults. Our longer term members are probably familiar with this situation. The services were simple, but sincere. The address or sermons were very interesting and informative. Definitely a time well spent.

I didn't feel the vibrancy in either one I feel in ours. Perhaps it was because I only went to one service, so I didn't really see the fullness of the congregations. Perhaps, the lack of children contributed to this. I can't help but feel that these Congregations are maintaining themselves, not growing and flourishing. The sense of vitality and energy I feel in our Congregation seemed to be missing. There seemed to be more of an inward focus, too. I didn't hear the community involvement that our congregation has. I don't mean they weren't concerned about issues. They clearly were aware of problems and educated themselves and discussed them. But I didn't see the action I see here. Indeed, sometimes, I feel we are too busy working to improve our community and world to properly support our church. I think that is a good thing, although it can make life difficult for many of our leaders who have to keep the church functioning.

While I may be a little biased, I think our Congregation has an influence and effectiveness far beyond what our size would predict. It is impressive what we have accomplished. The Interfaith alliance would not be what it is today without our church's work. The Little Willie Center was founded with the efforts of our members. The Greenville PFLAG chapter rose from our church. The Cancer Support Community of Eastern NC was started by the UUCG. We have started or strongly supported many social causes and continue to be a powerful force for social justice today. After all "Service is our prayer".

We are growing in numbers, also. At last month's ceremony welcoming new members, the front of the church was filled by new members. While attendance is irregular, and RE could definitely use more people helping, we have a youth RE program that has children bringing their parents to church services. We have a wide variety of services that shows we mean it when we say we draw from the many great religious traditions, not just one or two. Our revitalized Caring group has helped us better meet the needs of our members.

While we have much we can improve about our church, we have much to be proud of. We have many strengths. Let us combine those strengths to make our congregation stronger and even more effective.

Feryl Masters

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## UUCG Board Notes from April

- The Board reviewed the pledge status
- A tentative budget was approved based on expected pledges
- The Board brainstormed ways to increase member involvement

## Minister's Reflections



What's up with House Bill 2? It's not really a "bathroom bill."

HB2 prohibits North Carolina municipalities from requiring businesses to increase the minimum wage even when those local governments determine that the increase would be beneficial to their local economies. Alone, this part of HB2 did not merit advancing out of committee because 80% of North Carolinians are in favor of an increase in minimum wage. This bill hurts the poor.

HB2 prohibits North Carolinian from filing employment discrimination cases in state courts. Discrimination against people of color, discrimination against women and the disabled, age discrimination against the old and the young, religious discrimination, all these cases may only be filed in federal courts. State courts provide four years to file a discrimination case whereas federal discrimination cases must be filed within 180 days at a much higher cost and expensive legal counsel. This prohibition against filing state discrimination cases had not advanced out of committee because it hurts a wide portion of the population.

Finally, HB2 prohibits municipalities from passing resolutions protecting transgender people from discrimination in businesses and public accommodations. Transgender women have for many years used the women's restrooms with not a single case of a crime anywhere across the country, nor have transgender men ever been charged with a crime committed in a bathroom. It is a solution without a problem, much like the voter suppression bills against voter fraud.

Yet, HB2 requires that transgender women with breasts, women's dress, hair, heels and make-up must use the men's restroom because 'male' is on their birth certificate. And transgender men with beard and deep voice, male muscle development and clothing are required by HB2 to use the women's restroom. This law creates great danger of violence and harassment against transgender women and men who simply wish to use the bathroom.

A survey by the National LGBT Task Force of 6,450 transgender and gender non-conforming people found that 53% have been verbally harassed or disrespected in public accommodations. 22% were denied equal treatment by a government agency or official. 26% reported they had lost a job due to being transgender or gender non-conforming. ([http://www.thetaskforce.org/static\\_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds\\_summary.pdf](http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_summary.pdf))

I learned a lot by participating in the Moral Monday events in Raleigh. Just as Jessie Helms sexualized his election campaign by creating fear of blacks raping white women and of "homosexual tendencies" of his opponents, Hate Bill 2 sexualizes living wage and legal recourse for job discrimination by creating ungrounded fear of transgender women abusing women and girls in bathrooms!

The Rev. Dr. William Barber preached that "white evangelicals" who have been mobilized in support of Hate Bill 2 are not evangelicals. The Christian evangel is "good news" to the poor, release to the captive, sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed and "to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18). Hate Bill 2 is not good news to the poor living on minimum wage. It is not good news to blacks, women, the young, the old, the disabled, and religious people oppressed by job discrimination who now have no affordable legal recourse. Nor is Hate Bill 2 good news of the acceptance of the stranger to those blind to the oppression of transgender people. It has mobilized a right-wing voting block just before an election with a sexualized HB2 and fear of the transgender "other."

What a blessing to be a Unitarian Universalist "Standing on the Side of Love" with a truly diverse, interfaith community against Hate Bill 2! For more information, contact New Greenville, TurnOUT! NC, or PFLAG hosted here, 7:00 PM on Second Thursdays.

Blessings!

Rod Debs

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## Religious Education



Spring is in full swing and Youth Religious Education is experiencing growth as we welcome new and returning families. This growth has brought change with several younger children in the nursery and elementary class. We have also had some new volunteers. Member story volunteer Mike Bracken shared tales of fossil hunting and brought in some examples of his finds. The fossilized poop was a hit! Volunteer Alessandra Lazarek challenged the kids to come up with poses that they might be found in as fossils in thousands of years.

Nursery caregiver, Robin Brown's last day will be May 8th so she can prepare for her summer as a camp counselor. We are working to the finalize details to fill the position during her absence. The quality care provided in the nursery will continue uninterrupted.

The elementary class has completed the "Moral Tales" curricula. In early May they will begin new curricula called "Wonderful Welcome." In this program, children identify intangible gifts central to Unitarian Universalism such as friendship, hospitality and fairness, and share these gifts with others. If you are interested in learning more about that the youth are studying visit: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children>.

During class time on May 1st "Member Story" volunteer Alice Arnold will be sharing her story about "Climbing Grandfather Mountain." Older children and teens are welcome to join us during "Member Story" sessions. On May 22nd the kids will have another opportunity to remain in and visit with the congregation during the flower communion service. All members are encouraged to bring flowers that will be exchanged during service. Nursery care will be available for any children that do not wish to stay in service.

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](mailto:holly.brown8319@gmail.com) or 252-571-8319.

## Membership

These new members were welcomed into our congregation on 4/24/2016:

Sandy Shephard  
Norbert Howe  
Anthony LaSpina

Gina Cruz  
Chasity Whittington  
Stephanie Kruchesky

Robert Cruz  
Ruby Nancy  
Alessandra Lazarek.



We have just started a UUCG Directory update. Alice Arnold and Laura Neece-Baltaro will be taking photos of people for the directory. If you want a more up-to-date directory photo you can speak with Alice or provide an electronic version of a photo you like. Any phone or address changes can be emailed to Laura with "UUCG Directory" in the subject line.

## Share The Plate



PiCASO is the Pitt County AIDS Service Organization <http://picaso.org> The mission of the Pitt County AIDS Service Organization is to prevent the transmission of HIV through educational outreach and testing to Pitt County and the surrounding counties of Eastern North Carolina and to provide assistance to those living with, and affected by HIV/AIDS in our community. In providing this outreach and these services we strive to treat all people with dignity, respect, and compassion.

The work of PiCASO has changed over the years since its incorporation in 1991. Starting as a grassroots organization focused on supporting those living with HIV/AIDS, providing buddy programs, nutritional support, and healthcare advocacy, the agency changed over the years to a case management focused agency working with long term client support. As the care and treatment of HIV/AIDS has continued to improve -- allowing clients to live longer with a better quality of life -- the agency has again changed to meet the current needs of our community. Now, with clients having support from a variety of sources and as a result of the changes in how North Carolina funds HIV/AIDS client services, PiCASO has shifted the work of the agency to three main areas:

- HIV Testing- We provide HIV and Syphilis testing in locations through-out Pitt County. We work to decrease the barriers to getting tested and offer testing at community events, health fairs, soup kitchens, and the county detention facility.
- Education and Advocacy- Alongside our testing program we offer HIV/AIDS education to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS in Pitt County, and to empower people to help prevent the spread of HIV in our community. We also work to make sure community members are aware of the local, statewide, and national issues surrounding the issues of the prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The agency works to raise awareness that HIV/AIDS is a continuing threat to the health of the community, and how community members can assist in raising awareness and impacting decision makers in our state and nation on the issues of HIV/AIDS.
- Emergency Funding for those living with HIV/AIDS- Through grants and fundraising, PiCASO funds the emergency needs of those living with HIV/AIDS in our community. These funds support emergency needs, including medical costs and assistance with rent and utilities. Staff and volunteers coordinate with other agencies in the community to match needs with funding, as well as other community resources.

## Hospitality

Have you noticed? The kitchen has been rearranged in an attempt to make it more spacious and user friendly. It may take some time to adjust to the changes, but we hope that it will make it easier for volunteers to assist with set up and clean up. Labels have been added to kitchen cabinets to help finding things easier. Food is on open shelves, but off the floor. The bins made it safer for the food to be on the floor, but it was too easy to forget about what was in them. We want to keep everyone safe so there are labels to date the food in the refrigerator. These changes came from suggestions from members like you. We value your input.

Are you a new member, long-time member, or somewhere in-between? We could use your help. We are always in need of volunteers to help with set up, bringing food, or clean up. Don't know what to do? Don't fear! We are here to help as you learn the ropes. I know that it can be overwhelming to help set up or clean up when you don't have experience in the kitchen at UUCG. We have posted instruction sheets on the bulletin board and on the cabinet over the sink to provide some guidance too.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with hospitality please contact Jacki Vaughn-Heath or Holly Brown by email at [hospitality@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:hospitality@uugreenvillenc.org) or sign up online.

For more information, see our website at: <http://www.uugreenvillenc.org/>  
To see the whole calendar, go to <http://www.uugreenvillenc.org/calendar.html>



## *Moral Movies*

### **Syrian Refugee Crisis**

Saturday, May 14th, 6:30pm

Partnering with the Islamic Center of Greenville, Samar Badwan will moderate post-film discussion including local efforts to support refugees.

Documentary chronicling the thousands of Syrians on the hardest part of their journey to Europe, *Step By Step*. Migrants have flooded into Europe because of wars in the Middle East, arriving at Greek islands through Turkey, on their way to Macedonia. Their aim is to travel through Serbia and Hungary, and on to other European countries, particularly Germany, through Austria.



## *Classic GLBT Movie Night*

### **Latter Days**

Friday, May 20th, 7:00pm



Aaron Davis (Steve Sandvoss), a young Mormon, arrives in Los Angeles with three fellow missionaries to evangelize. The group's promiscuous gay neighbor, Christian (Wes Ramsey), makes a bet he can seduce and sleep with one of them, and his flirtatious ways help Aaron realize he is actually gay. Returning home to small-town Idaho in shame, Aaron is sent to a faith-based center to be cured of his homosexuality -- while Christian, who's fallen in love with him, desperately tries to find him.

LATTER DAYS



## *May 2016 Worship Schedule*

|        |                          |                                          |
|--------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| May 1  | Rev. Debs                | "Floralia: May Day Celebration"          |
| May 8  | Dr. Will Tuttle          | "Motherhood, Peace, and Social Justice." |
| May 15 | Rev. Debs                | "Islam: Compassion vs. Caricature"       |
| May 22 | Judi Hickson             | "Flower Communion"                       |
| May 29 | Lance Barton (Food Bank) | "Caring: More than Food"                 |

## *Roving Lunch Group*

|          |                                                                                         |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 1st  | Famiglia (Italian) 740 W Firetower Rd #115, Winterville                                 |
| May 8th  | Japan Inn (Sushi/Hibachi) Arlington Village Greenville                                  |
| May 15th | Fajitas Mexican Restaurant 650 E Firetower Rd Winterville                               |
| May 22nd | Mellow Mushroom (Pizza/Subs) 2020 Charles Blvd, beside Greenville Mall                  |
| May 29th | Bateeni (Mediterranean) 1868 W Arlington Blvd, Greenville (in front of Physicians East) |



**Shelter Neck UU Camp**  
**3747 Croombsbridge Road, Burgaw, NC**

**Spring 2016 Elementary/Family Nature Retreat** Friday, May 13 at 7 PM through Sunday, May 15 at 11 am  
Interdependent Web Of Life: A Fun Exploration of Nature's Beautiful Beach Habitat

Campers will explore nature through outdoor and indoor activities at Saturday's trip to the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in nearby Surf City, NC. We will also enjoy a picnic lunch, explorations of beach sand habitats under microscopes, and host a sandcastle building contest!

Parents and older siblings are welcome to join us on this adventure!

Childcare for pre-K age will be available if notified by the pre-registration deadline of May 1.

Camp cost is \$30 for kids, \$40 for adults. Cost includes tickets to enjoy the Turtle Rescue. Arrive prior to 9:30 am on Saturday. We try our best to create meals that are accessible for all (V, GF, PF).

At 6:00 pm on Saturday, everyone will gather for a bonfire with a hot dog roast and s'mores with storytelling, music and stargazing!

At 9:30 am Sunday we will share in an intergenerational worship.  
Departure is at 11:00 am.

Registration is open for **Summer Youth Camp at Shelter Neck**, where youth experience community based on Unitarian Universalist values and Unitarian Universalist youth traditions. Leadership camp will be in late May, and Middle and High School Camps in July.

Register at [www.ShelterNeckUUCamp.org](http://www.ShelterNeckUUCamp.org)