



# *The Beacon*

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville NC  
July 2016

## *President's Message*



Well, we made it through another year. That's no small achievement. Over 4,000 churches close every year in the US. But I believe just existing isn't enough for our church. According to our Mission Statement we covenant with one another to search, to serve, to grow, and to love. I like to think we achieved some success in each of these missions.

We search in many ways. We have presented services from several very different faiths and topics. These are presented not just by Reverend Rod Debs, but from many of our members and people from outside our congregation. We have celebrated and learned about holidays from different faith traditions. Faiths that in many places are in conflict with each other. We have started Moral Movie Nights to learn about issues affecting people in our world. Our Youth RE program encourages our youth to think about religious and moral issues so they can develop their own spiritual path. Mindful meditation Sunday mornings is another path to finding peace and awareness. We are active participants in the Interfaith Alliance to learn about other faiths. Our Youth RE program guides our youths as they develop their own moral and spiritual path.

We have certainly served. Our building is home to Buddhists, Vegetarians of Pitt County, the Inclusive Catholic Community, Sierra Club, Democracy now, and many other groups. We have provided financial support to many local groups serving our community through our Share The Plate offerings. We provide leadership for the Cancer Support Community of Eastern NC, the Interfaith Group, PFLAG, and many other organizations. Our members also serve our church community. When we had an issue with our bathroom, the Building and Grounds group not only repaired it, but made the bathroom better and more attractive. Our grass has been mowed regularly. Many people have given their time and energy to allow us to have regular services, a safe and functional building, and fun thing to do together.

All of these have been accomplished because of the love we have for our church, our community, and each other. While we sometimes fall short of our goals and desires, we manage a tremendous amount of positive things for each other and the communities around us. We need to be aware of where we fall short so we can continue to improve. Just as important, if not more so, is to be aware of when we succeed. Many great things we do are not obvious. Too often we see what is happening only when it doesn't go perfectly. It's good to look back and remind ourselves of all the things that have gone well so we can have the energy and confidence to continue our work. We have much to be proud of.

In the coming year, I hope our new leadership can continue the many wonderful things we are doing and find ways to make our Congregation even better. I promise to do what I can to help them succeed. I hope you will too.

Feryl Masters

[feryl@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:feryl@uugreenvillenc.org)

# Minister's Reflections



We humans suffer so many traumas. During the Unitarian Universalist Ministry Days in June this year, Jason Shelton observed: "There are no healthy congregations. Only healing congregations" (Jason Shelton). Perhaps this is true.

LGBTQ persons are battered by exclusion, cruel jokes and slurs, bullying and bashing. Many have been thrown out from their homes, disowned by their families, shunned by religious communities. House Bill 2 is hateful public policy placing transgender persons at even greater risk for bashing by denying them use of the bathroom consistent with their gender identity! And now mass murder in Orlando.

Women suffer widespread domestic violence and bear the lasting scars of verbal abuse. Women and girls are raped, and whether by micro-offenses, legislation or grooming, men use power to control women's bodies. It takes courage for women to claim personal worth and beauty in a media-driven world that profits by unreal body-image standards echoed in our heads and enforced by public cruelty.

Classism traumatizes people of privilege as well as the underclass (defined by lack of wealth, education, healthy socialization, mental/physical ability, marketable skills, employment, and social support). We are like the turtle on a fence-post who did not get there by himself, but what's more, he is afraid lest he fall and have no way of getting himself back on top again. If we succeed in our careers we find that our bodies are colonized, and we become "human doings" defined by work demands and consumerism, condemned to relational isolation and spiritual emptiness. The poor who fall behind in the "rat race" are abandoned as losers, to blame for their destitution.

Religion: I know terrifying religious guilt and fear from my childhood and young adulthood. Religious abuse still haunts me with hyper-vigilant sensitivity that I might do something wrong, and by rebelliousness against endless social expectations.

Race: None of us in the white community can know what it feels like to walk down the street black, to drive black, to shop black, to speak to police black, to travel and vacation black among white folk. Our white privilege is like walking on the beach with the wind at your back. Most of the time, you don't feel it. But turn around and walk into the wind, suddenly it's there. Only with white folk, we've got the wind at our backs no matter what direction we walk. Systemic racism that is both no one's and everyone's fault pervades the criminal justice system with "the new Jim Crow" of mass incarceration and life-long sentences of negative employability. We are a nation in trauma.

Wake, now, my conscience, with justice thy guide;  
 join with all people whose rights are denied;  
 take not for granted a privileged place;  
 God's love embraces the whole human race. (Singing the Living Tradition, #298)

The irony is that we are hurting people who gather as a religious community with a promise to respect and encourage and acknowledge one another's inherent worth and dignity, even as we bleed the rage and sorrow of hidden oppressions. Together, we hold one another as a community, not of judgment, but of healing and wholeness!

Come, come, whoever you are: wanderer, worshiper, lovers of leaving,  
 ours is no caravan of despair, come, yet again come. (Singing the Living Tradition, #298)

Blessings!  
 Rod Debs  
[minister@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:minister@uugreenvillenc.org)

## *UUCG Board Notes from June 2016*

The Board:

- Reviewed the pledge status
- Approved a policy manual revision on alcohol in the church
- Reviewed the Annual Meeting agenda and developed a proposed revision to the Nominating Committee to be presented
- Decided to have the Congregation select GA Delegates at the Annual Meeting
- Voted to reimburse delegate expenses from the fund designated for Conferences up to the amount available in the designated fund
- Voted to set up a Paypal Account with the goal of accepting electronic payments through the UUCG website

## *July 2016 Worship Schedule*

- July 3    Uriah Ward            Building a New Greenville
- July 10   Deborah Thompson    PFLAG
- July 17   Holly Brown            Unexpected Call
- July 24   David Ames                Sierra Club
- July 31   Jermaine McNair        Black Men in the Workforce

## *Share The Plate July 2016*



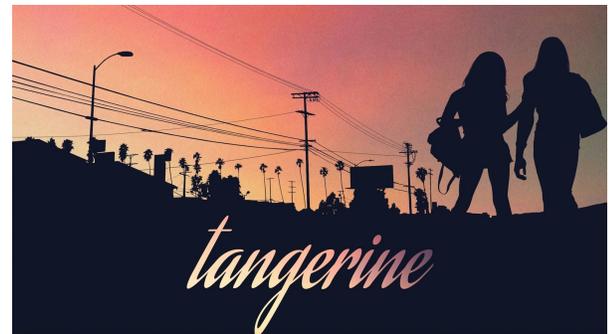
Our July Share the Plate recipient is Community Crossroads Center, the Greenville Emergency Homeless Shelter located on Manhattan Avenue in West Greenville. Since 1988, CCC has been a haven for those experiencing homelessness. It is a place where people

can regroup, receive guidance, and work on obtaining a more secure future. For several years, there has been a group of UUCG members who have volunteered at the shelter assisting with check-ins. If you are interested in getting involved as a volunteer, contact Ruel Tyer for more information.

## *Classic GLBT Movie Night*

On Friday, July 15th, Classic GLBT Movie Night will feature the critically acclaimed breakout film from the 2015 GLBT Film Festival circuit, *Tangerine*. *Tangerine* follows a transgender sex worker who discovers that her boyfriend, who is also her pimp, has been cheating on her. The entire film was shot using three iPhones.

This free event starts at 7pm and refreshments are provided. Please invite your friends! The film is rated R, containing some nudity, sexual situations, and violence, so it is not a film for all ages. Parents should take this into account when considering if it is appropriate for their children to view.



Classic GLBT Movie Night is typically held on the 3rd Saturday of each month, starting at 7pm. There will not be a GLBT Movie Night in August, as we always take that month off and encourage people to consider going to the NC Gay & Lesbian Film Festival going on that week in Durham.

## Moral Movies



In July, we will screen "Mickey Mouse Monopoly" (2001), a critical look at how the ever popular Disney animated films portray issues such as race, gender and class, and how those values are then passed along to young children. This film was done in 2001, in what ways have more recent films attempted to push the boundaries of who can be a Disney Princess? This one is sure to spawn a great discussion afterwards!

Join us on Saturday, July 9th, starting at 6:30pm for the film and discussion following. Refreshments will be served. Moral Movies is held at 6:30pm on the 2nd Saturday of the month, with occasional exceptions.

## Roving Lunch Group

Tentative Roving Lunch Group Schedule for July (subject to change)

- July 3rd Cafe Duo (both lunch groups will go together)
- July 10th Famiglia Italian (West Fire Tower Rd)
- July 17th EC Pho Vietnamese Noodle House
- July 24th El Azador Mexican (N. Greene St.)
- July 31st Osaka Asian Bistro (Greenville Blvd)

## About Ben Adhem

BY LEIGH HUNT

About Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)  
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
 And saw, within the moonlight in his room,  
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
 An angel writing in a book of gold:  
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
 And to the presence in the room he said,  
 "What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,  
 And with a look made of all sweet accord,  
 Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."  
 "And is mine one?" said About. "Nay, not so,"  
 Replied the angel. About spoke more low,  
 But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,  
 write me as one that loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night  
 it came again with a great wakening light,  
 And showed the names whom love of God had blest,  
 And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

