



# The Beacon

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville NC  
September 2016

## President's Message

### **The September Sermon That Changed History**



I wonder how those who missed the sermon on Sunday, September 16, felt—especially when they realized that many who attended had been deeply moved by it. I wonder if they were partying Saturday night September 15 and couldn't be bothered to attend? Have you ever felt that churchgoers have been moved in mysterious ways? The sermon to which I refer was, "The Cry of Pains" (Grito de Dolores in Spanish) and we will get back to it later.

This month at UUCG we will be recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month in our offering and with our Social Justice Movie. Hispanic Heritage Week was established by legislation sponsored by Rep. Roybal (D-Los Angeles) and first proclaimed President Lyndon Johnson in 1968. It was expanded to a full month by legislation sponsored by Rep. Torres (D-Pico Rivera) and implemented by President Ronald Reagan in 1988. Apparently, both parties want Hispanic votes, and 85% of Hispanics in the US are citizens—despite all the attention given to undocumented aliens and the poorer and most exploited members of the Hispanic community such as migrant workers.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is a time to recognize the contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the United States, and to celebrate heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans. According to the US census in 2015 there were over 55 million of us, Hispanic / Latinos or about 17% of the US population. Therefore we are the largest minority in the USA (after women, --which I find curious since women are numerically over half the population).

September 15 was chosen as the starting point for the month-long celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. All declared independence in 1821. In addition, Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence days on September 16, September 18, and September 21, respectively.

Many people look at me and hear me talk and decide that I am not Hispanic or Latino. Their observation is based on several misperceptions. First, about 2/3 of Hispanics speak English just as the rest of Americans and only 1/3 have a "foreign" accent. Secondly, 53% are white (which is to say that we are European-Hispanic-Americans). Thirdly, about 15% of the Hispanics have some African ancestry, which means that they are African-Hispanic-Americans. Surprisingly, many of us Hispanics see American history from a very different historical perspective than many Anglos and many African-Americans. (What we are taught in US schools is different from what we learn from our families.)

Rafael Edward "Ted" Cruz (born 1970) and Marco Antonio Rubio (born 1971) are two American politicians and attorneys, who are junior United States Senators, one from Texas and the other from Florida—noted this year as candidates for the Republican nomination for President of the United States. Yet another misperception is that we must be Democratic/liberal/leftist. William Blaine "Bill" Richardson III is an American politician who was the 30th Governor of New Mexico, and a candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States in the 2008 election. I was told that he was not Hispanic because Richardson is definitely not a Hispanic surname (LOL).

Another misperception is that we are all new arrivals. Hispanic/Latinos have been settled continuously in the territory of the United States since the 1500's, earlier than any other colonial group of European origin. Spanish explorers were

pioneers in what is now the United States. The first confirmed European landing in the continental U.S. was by Juan Ponce de León, who landed in 1513 at a lush shore he christened, "La Florida." Though in popular culture, he was supposedly searching for the Fountain of Youth, there is no contemporary evidence to support the story, which is likely a myth. Sadly, he did not find it !

In 1565, the Spanish created the first permanent European settlement in the continental United States (St. Augustine, Florida). St. Augustine (Spanish: San Agustín) is the oldest continuously occupied European-established settlement within the borders of the contiguous US. The Lost Colony of North Carolina was established on Roanoke Island in what is today's Dare County, NC. The colony was founded by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1585--after St. Augustine, Florida and it did not disappear! Santa Fe, New Mexico was founded in 1598 before Jamestown, Virginia (1607) and before the New England Plymouth Colony of Mayflower and Pilgrims fame (1620,). Sometimes I think turkeys get more respect than Latinos! Spanish missionaries and colonists founded settlements in El Paso, San Antonio, Tucson, San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco, just to name a few.

About 2/3 of Hispanics in the US are of Mexican ethnic origin and surveys find that Hispanics/Latinos are not only highly religious, but also a highly Christian constituency. About 70% of all Hispanic and Latino Americans are Roman Catholic, 20% are Protestant, 3% are "alternative Christians" (such as Mormon or Jehovah's Witnesses), 1% identify with a non-Christian religion, and 6% have no religious preference at all (with only 0.37% claiming to be atheist or agnostic). This last statistic may be a reason why many are skeptical of Unitarian Universalists. (In other words, we scare them away!)

Let's return to our sermon given by a Roman Catholic priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (1753 – 1811). There is no scholarly consensus as to what exactly Hidalgo said at the time. The exact words of this most famous of all Mexican speeches are unknown but have been reproduced in almost as many variations as there are historians to reproduce them. This event has since assumed an almost mythic status. The name of the city where the sermon was given has been changed to Dolores Hidalgo, named after the sermon itself.

After the sermon, the parishioners took the priest seriously and marched with guns under the flag of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. They overtook the military installation in the city, which was then the provincial capital. Therefore, the "George Washington" of Mexico is a priest who started this revolution from his very modest rural church. So be careful: words are more powerful than swords! Do not doubt the power of religion! To add to the myth, Father Hidalgo was executed by a firing squad a few months later in 1811, giving the peasants the martyr they needed!



Since the late 20th century, Hidalgo's "cry of independence" has become emblematic of Mexican independence. Each year on the night of September 15, at around eleven in the evening, the President of Mexico rings the bell of the National Palace in Mexico City. After the ringing of the bell, he repeats a shout of patriotism based upon the "Grito de Dolores," including in his shout all the names of the important heroes of the Mexican War of Independence and ending with the three "¡Viva México!" all from the balcony of the palace shouted to the assembled crowd in the Plaza de la Constitución, (or "Zócalo," one of the largest public plazas in the world). After the shouting, he rings the bell again, waves flags, and leads the singing of the national anthem. This event draws up to half a million spectators from all over Mexico and tourists from the far corners of the globe.

On the morning of September 16, a national holiday and official Mexican Independence Day, there is a national military parade. In case you are wondering, there is food, beer and tequila afterwards, too!

A similar celebration occurs in cities and towns all over Mexico, and in Mexican embassies and consulates worldwide on the 15th or the 16th. Hispanic Americans have Americanized the celebration and mark the beginning of the Hispanic Month wherever they are. This year September 15, 2016 is on Thursday. So many celebrations start on Saturday, September 17th, or Sunday, the 18th, as most work for a living on weekdays.

## Beyond Our Walls



One of the opportunities (we were often reminded at work there were no problems, just opportunities) we have is finding people to lead projects or task groups. Usually there are plenty of people willing to help, but few wanting to be in charge. UUs have never been strong supporters of authority, but most important achievements do not happen by themselves. Someone has to take charge.

Every year, we scramble to find people to chair committees. Some are easy. People are passionate about something and ask to lead. There are always several committees that are difficult to find leaders for. I suspect part of the problem is that many people don't feel competent to lead. Others are hesitant to undertake a poorly defined, uncertain duration task. Some just don't have the time to perform a major task.

One issue is that we do not do a good job of preparing people to lead. We have on rare occasions offered leadership training. We would like to do more, but no one has volunteered to lead it. There are alternatives, however. The General Assembly usually has some sessions devoted to church leadership. Each year, there is a Presidents' Convocation for former, current, and incoming presidents. I've been to a couple and recommend it to anyone thinking of the presidency. Perhaps even more beneficial is SUULI (Southern UU Leadership Institute) held each year, generally in July. The cost is \$200 per person and it lasts 5 days. It requires a team (2 to 4 people) from the congregation to apply in the spring, so it isn't a spur of the moment thing. I'd love to see us send a team next year. Everyone I've spoken to who went said it was great.



Even if you don't want to go to training, I encourage you to consider investigating a leadership opportunity. Next Spring we will be looking for people to lead activities. If there's something you would like to see happen, volunteer.

Feryl Masters  
Past President  
[feryl@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:feryl@uugreenvillenc.org)

## Share The Plate September 2016



In recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, the September Share the Plate recipient will be **AMEXICAN**, whose mission is to encourage active participation of Mexicans and Latinas/os in our communities of destination and origin; to promote appreciation, understanding and prosperity of the community through actions; for transnational Cultural, Educational, Health, Advocacy and Leadership. They are also very active in advocacy for Migrant Worker concerns. They will also be co-hosting Moral Movies with us this month on September 10th.

## Moral Movies

Moral Movies will be on Saturday, September 10th at 6:30pm and occurs on the 2nd Saturday of each month (except for December). The series features films on Social Justice issues and is always followed by a group discussion. In partnership with **AMEXICAN**, Moral Movies for September will be a series of short videos featuring local Migrant Farm Worker Families, exploring their working and living conditions. There will also be a panel of organizers who will speak and participate in our group discussion.

## September 2016 Worship Schedule

Sept 04	Life Beyond Work, Rev. Rod Debs
Sept 11	My Heart is Moved by All I Cannot Save, Rev. Rod Debs
Sept 18	After the War, Rev. Rod Debs
Sept 25	TBA, Mike Brackin

## Youth Religious Education

Religious Education is looking for members willing to volunteer as "Available Second Adults". Second adults are needed when we have higher attendance in the classroom or nursery.

RE also has a Facebook Group to keep up with goings-on. If you would like to join the group or to volunteer some time, please contact DRE Alessandra Lazarek [alessandralazarek@gmail.com](mailto:alessandralazarek@gmail.com)



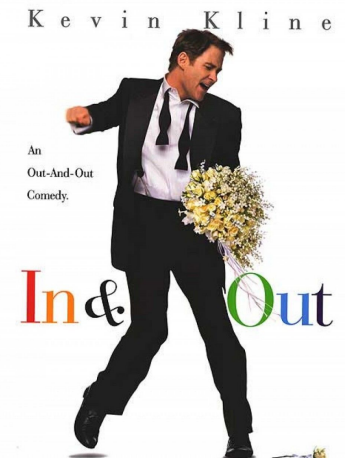
## New Art Exhibit

We have a new exhibit coming in September. Rebecca Ives will be bringing her work early Labor Day week, with the reception on Friday, Sept 9, 5:30 – 7:00. Anyone who would like to contribute snacks for the reception – please let Brenda Stewart know at [brenda@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:brenda@uugreenvillenc.org)

## Classic GLBT Movie Night

Back after our August break, Classic GLBT Movie Night returns to its regular 3rd Friday schedule (monthly except for August and December) at 7pm. Our September film will be the star-studded 1997 comedy "In & Out."

Upon winning an Academy Award, actor Cameron Drake (Matt Dillon) honors his high school teacher, Howard Brackett (Kevin Kline), who he announces, before millions of viewers, is gay. This comes as news to Brackett's parents (Wilford Brimley, Debbie Reynolds), his principal (Bob Newhart) and especially his fiancée (Joan Cusack). As a media blitz descends upon on his small Indiana town, Brackett attempts to convince everyone that he's your average straight American male.



## Upcoming Roving Lunch Group Locations

Sept 04	Ninja Hibachi Express
Sept 11	China 10 Firetower Rd
Sept 18	Cinnamon Indian Cuisine Evans St
Sept 25	EC Pho Vietnamese Noodle House