



The UUCG Beacon

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Standing on the Side of Marriage Equality



While legally it had virtually no effect, as same-sex marriage was already illegal in the State of North Carolina, when Amendment 1 passed in the state on May 8, 2012, with a majority of the voters of the voters who turned out agreeing to write discrimination into our State Constitution, it was a very difficult day for myself and other supporters of marriage equality.

We all knew it would eventually be overturned. Even House Speaker and Amendment supporter Tom Tillis was quoted in the News & Observer admitting in a speech given at NCSU only months before passage that it would likely be repealed within 20 years. Tides turned a bit faster than he or even I would have predicted, and was overturned in just over 2 years, on October 10th of this year.

One thing that was unique about North Carolina, compared to the succession of other states where restrictive marriage laws and amendments have been overturned, was the fact that the judge who made the ruling in a Federal Court in Asheville, was ruling not on a complaint from couples denied the right to marry (there was such a case pending in Greensboro as well), but a complaint filed by clergy of the United Church of Christ, joined by Baptist, Lutheran, and UU Clergy, that the ban not only was a denial of the rights of same-sex couples seeking to marry, but also an infringement of the clergy's religious freedoms and duty to minister to their congregants.

As the ruling came down after 5pm on that Friday, only those counties whose Registers of Deeds had chosen to stay open late or reopened due to the expected ruling. Couples lined up in Wake, Guilford, and Buncombe Counties to get marriage licenses, joined by other counties the Monday following. Here in Pitt County, the first same-sex couple to get a marriage license, Kristie Harrison and Angie Tamberelli, (Facebook friends of mine) was waiting that Monday morning (along with television news crews) for the Register of Deeds to open at 8am. That evening, in a private, home ceremony, their wedding was officiated by our own Rev. Rod Debs, the first wedding he has performed in North Carolina. He had also been featured on the evening news the day prior on Channel 9, expressing the importance of equality and the long support of Unitarian Universalists.

Standing on the Side of Love, we can make a difference, improving people's lives, and helping make dreams reality.

Rich Elkins
President, UUCG Board of Trustees

MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS



The mutual love and commitment binding the hearts and lives of two people into one is holy, whether solemnized by religion and whether legalized by the state or not.

Many weddings have been officiated by Unitarian Universalist clergy in past years, but states have discriminated against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer (GLBTQ) persons and against our faith, refusing to recognize as legal the GLBTQ marriages we have performed.

We Unitarian Universalists are playing an important role in helping this nation extend the privileges of the people to many who have been excluded and abused. As minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville, I am now officiating legal weddings of GLBTQ couples, both members and community couples alike.

Now in Greenville, since their marriage on October 13, Kristie and Angie have legal rights in parenting their child together; rights denied them for the twelve years of their relationship. After 38 years of mutual love and commitment, Bob and Ken finally enjoy the same legal protections that heterosexual married couples have taken for granted for... forever.

We have known and lived beside Bob and Ken, Kristie and Angie for many years, and we have enjoyed legal privileges denied to them. Of the countless special privileges of race, class, gender, national origin, color, age, physical and mental able-bodiedness, we have lived to see the privilege of marriage extended without discrimination. I fully expect that we Unitarian Universalists will continue to join as allies on many justice issues with many diverse partners locally and around the world, emboldened by each step toward greater wholeness.

Today I want to affirm the diversity of our passions for social justice. We need one another's diverse feelings of compassion and initiative on many social justice issues. Florynce Kennedy articulates why:

"Unity in a movement situation can be overrated.
If you were the Establishment,
which would you rather see coming in the door:
one lion or five hundred mice?"

We begin to forge bonds of compassion when we listen to what breaks one another's heart. From such different feelings of compassion, this congregation created Little Willie's after-school program in the '90's. You joined voices to oppose war. You support First Born and CROP food programs for the hungry. You volunteer with the Homeless Shelter. You are organizing the community in Cancer Support. You continue to raise your voices for civil rights, universal health care, and economic justice. Unitarian Universalists may not roar like a lion for social justice, but we are thousands of mice allied with many other critters, including a few lions, striving for wholeness.

My heart is full as I invite wedding vows, as I offer blessings, and pronounce a couple to be wife and wife, or husband and husband.

It matters that you are active Unitarian Universalists. It matters that we share our values with visitors; it matters that we work out our values in covenant community; and it matters that we transmit our values to our children. We are making a real difference in lives around us.

Blessings!

Rev. Rod Debs, Minister

WORSHIP

The Worship Committee has been busy at work this past month as we have worked to transition our new minister Rev. Rod into a very busy worship schedule. We have implemented a few changes to the services and will most likely implement a few more in the next few months.

Rearranging the chairs. We have used this interesting set up because it allows for the incorporation of 90+ chairs (more than any other arrangement we've had) while still allowing for each section to face the service leader and the choir.

Wheel chair seating. At the end of two rows there will be a place for wheel chairs with a reserved chair next to it for caregivers, friends, or family. Please leave these seats vacant unless you need them. If we work together we can make our sanctuary more welcoming for everyone. If you notice a problem with mobility throughout our sanctuary please let Rev. Rod know so we can address this.

Experimenting to find the best way for Rev. Rod to deliver his sermons. Our sound system is at times difficult to work with so please bear with us as we experiment to find a setup that works for all of our service leaders.

Sermon available for the hard of hearing each Sunday. If you would like a written copy please see the table by the front door for a copy. Additionally we are working with the Communications Committee to create **a blog to post sermons** when possible so look for that in the future.

Communicate joys and concerns. At the front table next to the chalice is a card that can be filled out if you wish to communicate any joys or concerns to the minister or to the caring committee.

Lay led services. I feel our congregation has a great gift for lay led services and the committee is now in a place where we would like to help any member who wishes to develop a service. Please contact me (Michael Betteken) with your ideas and let's work together to craft the best service possible.

What we are developing. We have a new members' welcome ceremony coming soon, services addressing the role of educators and the UU principles, and many others.

Thank you all! Sundays are incredibly busy times and it requires the work of many individuals to work. Without the strong work ethic and deep commitment from the choir, worship committee, hospitality committee, membership committee, and the Religious Education committee we could not have the wonderful Sundays that we do have. I would like to take this time to thank these committees for all their hard work

Michael Betteken
Chair Worship Committee

COPING WITH THE COST OF CANCER CARE

This free educational workshop is designed for people living with cancer and their loved ones.

Join us to gain practical advice on how to navigate the numerous and complex challenges of managing the cost of cancer care. This workshop will be presented in two segments.

Date: Part A: Wednesday, October 22
Part B: Wednesday, October 29

Time: 1:45-4:00 p.m. (registration/refreshments begin at 1:15)

Location: Carolina Breast Imaging
990 Johns Hopkins Drive
Greenville, NC 27834

Featured speakers include:

Virginia Jackson, BSW, Leo Jenkins Cancer Center
Christal Curran, MSW, CIRS-A, Pitt County Council on Aging

For more details and registration, call (252) 493-6493 or visit www.cancersupportcommunity.org.

STAFF

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS

9:30AM Mindful Meditation
10:30AM Worship
12:00PM Lunch Groups

TUESDAYS

8:00AM Breakfast Group
7:30PM KTC Buddhist Meditation

WEDNESDAYS

7:00PM Choir Practice

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Building and Grounds:

Chris Federico & Bob Hudson

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Ruel Tyer & Ruth Abrahamson

Communications:

Rich Elkins

Fellowship:

Cam Scales

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Kim Fleming & Holly Brown

Membership:

Susan Foreman

Social Action:

Ray Sobel & Ann Eleanor

Stewardship:

Patrice Alexander & Feryl Masters

Worship:

Michael Betteken

Youth Religious Education:

Shannon Terry & Christy Hoppenthaler

Deadline for next month's *Beacon* is Tuesday, **November 25 at 8:00 pm**