



# The UUCG beacon

**December 2004**

The **beacon** is published monthly  
by the Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Greenville  
[www.uugreenvillenc.org](http://www.uugreenvillenc.org)  
**beacon** Editor: Don English  
Email: [beacon@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:beacon@uugreenvillenc.org)

**Sunday Services -- 10:30 am**

**December 5**

*Improvising-Transforming the Present*  
**Rev. Karen Day & Mort Stine**

**December 12**

*Through the Night*  
**Rev. Karen Day & Mort Stine**

**December 19**

*Solstice Celebration*  
**Roger Robins & Others**

**December 24**

*Christmas Eve Service*  
**Mort Stine**

**December 26**

*Ghosts*  
**Ed Day**

Children's activities are available  
each Sunday.

## **President's Notes:**

Turkey is the center of many non-vegetarian Thanksgiving dinners in much the same way as our Sunday services center our UUCG community. Some pick only from the dark meat: announcements, joys, concerns and milestones. Others prefer white meat: music and the sermon. I like it all.

Whatever your taste, Sunday at 10:30 is our time to gather and marvel at the rich bounty.

To extend the metaphor, a new religious education chair oversees our cranberry-cute toddler room, school age religious education and a new teen group. Early "bird" discussion groups meet Sundays at 9:30. Come anytime.

- First Sunday-Ed Day leads a discussion on the current UUWorld Magazine
- Second Sunday-Larry Spell leads a discussion on Political Issues
- Third Sunday-Paul Alston leads a Spiritual Book Group
- Fourth Sunday-TBA, (think about it!)

Adding spice, Sunday afternoon classes meet periodically from 4-5:30pm. Recent topics have been Building Your Own Theology, Grasshopper Dreaming and The Creative Soul. Everyone looks for the traditional family vegetables. Social action is our congregational green bean. As UUs we expect to be a part of something good for our community. We have many active

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# Reflections

Reflections . . . of Rev. Karen Day

## Early Darkness

Think of it as ink:  
an indigo dye descending  
between the leaves of the trees  
and down to the grasses.

There is no dying of the light --  
just the washing of a bowl,  
and overturning it for the night.

When the day arrives we must write with  
bottled darkness.  
In the night we can dream free messages of  
light.

D. Patrick Miller

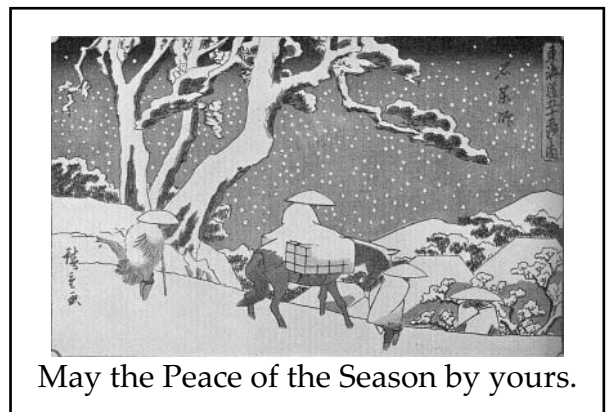
After Daylight Savings Time the shift is so  
swift. I walk at sunset now instead of eat-  
ing dinner as the indigo dye descends. I get  
sleepy earlier and burrow deeper beneath  
the covers. But the poem suggests that this  
lengthened darkness does not need to bring  
a heaviness. Instead it can be something I  
retain and use the next day, a thick and  
beautiful substance. The night dreams  
carry the sparks of daybreak.

Awareness of the paradoxes of life and the  
ways we try to split our world in two strike  
clear as a ringing bell during this season.  
The urge to celebrate only the light, to  
yearn for its return and mourn the wide ex-  
panse of dark, is as deep as the tiny camp-  
fire in a cave of long ago. But this splitting  
of the world can only split our own souls.

What I know is that the piercing loneli-  
ness and aching longing of this season  
pierces and aches because it is mingled  
with joy. Just as one guiding star is seen  
not in the blaze of day but in the quiet  
dark, so pure joy can only be felt with the  
background of the disappointments and  
failures in each life.

We are the light and the dark. We are the  
comfort of a warm, wrapped blanket,  
dark as night. We are the blaze of a joy-  
ful laugh, a friendly visit. Each act of  
comfort and joy brings this season alive  
and each act is mingled with all we wish  
could yet be so. Let this be the time we  
shed the tears we've held back and wel-  
come those tears from a friend. Let this  
be the time we surprise ourselves and our  
neighbors with a silly burst of song or po-  
etry, a joke that says, "Let me laugh with  
you." Let this be the time we reach out to  
a stranger or one estranged to bridge a  
gap. Be tender in this long night, dear  
friends. Be gentle in this brief day.

Blessings, Karen



May the Peace of the Season be yours.



# On The Horizon

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## Sunday Morning Fare

... by Rev. Karen Day

### **Worship Services for December**

**Dec 5- *Improvising-Transforming the Present* - Rev. Karen Day and Mort Stine**

Many contemplative practices lead us to be more present in the moment. This gift is also available through the arts to all of us.

**Dec 12 - *Through the Night* - Rev. Karen Day**  
Myths and rituals have always brought people through the times of longest night. How can we celebrate and transform these ancient rites to be meaningful in today's world?

**Dec 19 - *Solstice Celebration* - Roger Robbins and Others** Following our successful equinox pattern we'll tell stories from the four corners of our inner and outer worlds.

**Dec 24 - *Christmas Eve Celebration* -Mort Stine**  
7:00pm

**Dec 26 - *Ghosts* - Ed Day**

### **The Oops Contest**

Carroll Webber reports that at the bottom of page 6 of the November issue of the Beacon we referred to how the election outcome "will effect our community." Carroll says, "I wish it would 'effect. . . community' -- but alas it will merely *affect* it instead.

--The Editor

### **From the Grounds ...**

The December Building & Grounds schedule is as follows: On Saturday the 4th of December all are welcome, including kids, to decorate the church for the holidays. Then the following Saturday, the 11th, is the regular workday. Please, let's all turn out for an hour or two to beautify our sacred space. Many hands make light work.

Lisa Brenner

### **Social Action...**

December 18th is First Born Saturday. Our car-pool will leave our UUCG parking lot promptly at 8:45. If you choose to go independently, plan to arrive at 9:00.

First Born is a small African-American church just south of Grimesland that runs a food bank. They need help to administer and distribute food. If you haven't had a First Born experience, you will find it a very rewarding holiday volunteer activity.

--The Editor

### **Beacon Deadline**

Please note this month's submission deadline is as always, 12 noon on the Tuesday after the Board meeting. Please have your items ready so that you can meet the deadline, because with Christmas later in that week, it's going to be hectic even meeting our usual deadline.

--The Editor

# Religious Education Update

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The RE Committee and family has a new manifesto, The Slow Food International Manifesto to be exact. If any of you have read "Savor life by slowing down at the table," by Sonja L. Cohen in the September-October 2004, *UU World*, Vol. XVIII No. 5, you would surely understand. I have to admit I read the article only this morning, November 13, but even this seemingly miniscule and innocuous information matters when it comes to aligning our group to this 1986 Italian-founded international Slow Food Movement. The founding premise is to slow down and enjoy life. "Slow fooders, as followers are sometimes called, respond to the rush of the modern world by intentionally enjoying life, especially food, making deep connections to people and places, living at a reasonable speed."

During the November RE's brain storming session we all agreed that our biggest common denominator, of course besides being UU, is our shared enjoyment of relaxing around a table with great food and people. This is not only evident by the pace of our meetings, but at our Halloween Party as well, which was widely attended and actually garnered written thank yous and rave reviews. This highly regarded event was the culmination of the hard work of our new Youth Advisers, Richard and April Weir with the added talents of Gail Butler. We all thank you! The party was put together in only two weeks, but its fruits will hopefully be long lasting.

In attendance at our party was a quasi-new family, with a ten-year-old boy, who tried out the congregation five years ago. The last time they came it was probably a slow day "in the back," as RE is sometimes called. You know, the kind of day when only two kids show up even though we presently have 3 Infants, 7 Toddlers/Preschoolers, 13 Tweeners, and 8 Teens accounted for in our re-

cords with all of the new members, friends, and guest. Since he felt lonely, back then, they did not return until he was old enough to stay "in the front." Since seeing that we actually have young people in our midst, they happily returned the week after the party and plan on coming back. (Yes, 31 possible attendees on any given Sunday. For names please checkout the email on Yahoo so we can save space here.)

Without even knowing about the Slow Food Movement, the youth group's first official meeting is set to be the Admiral's Cup on November 28<sup>th</sup> after services. Becky Gade enjoyed coffee with her mentor during the Coming of Age program last year and since we are here to make the teens comfortable, we thought we should follow suit this year. It helps that the Weir's are all about coffee and treats. Well, that's the RE Com for ya, we're just doing our job and staying true to our motto.

According to Chen, "the slow philosophy can be summed up in a single word: balance. Be fast when it makes sense to be fast, and slow when slowness is called for. Seek to live at what musicians call the *tempo giusto* - the right speed." Okay so as of October we have a new RE Office, come check it out; new altar; cleaned out the closet; taken account of our supplies; and made our recommendations to the DRE search committee. . . We had a great party and a fun productive meeting. We have a rhythm. Those of us in the RE Program would love for you to join us at our meetings and events and become part of a growing movement among UU's. We are not slow; we are savoring life and staying balanced.

--Cindy Fanning

**Youth Group** -- The Youth Group will meet Friday, December 17th at the Admiral's Cup. Email Richard or April Weir at [Richard.Weir@uuc.edu](mailto:Richard.Weir@uuc.edu).



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volunteers who deliver food in Grimesland and make food for the local soup kitchen. We are founding members of the Interfaith Alliance of Eastern Carolina, a group that sponsors a Thanksgiving Worship service, Prayers for Peace, Women's Dialogue and other events.

Sweet potato casserole with crunchy pecans on top is almost as filling as our new Covenant Groups. Starting in December and meeting through June, the Covenant Groups are a good opportunity to get to know each other better, serve the congregation and community, and address a topic of interest. The current groups are:

- Women
- Earth-Based Spirituality
- Arts and Crafts
- Sacred Texts
- Political Issues

Coffee conversation is plentiful at these events. Tuesday Breakfast at IHOP, Dinner & a Movie at the church, Wednesday Night Dinners at local restaurants, and Dinners for Eight hosted by congregational members.

Thanksgiving may be over, but our table and congregation are a cornucopia of satisfying conversation, caring people, and enough love to last us through the year.

--Randi Finley

**Soup & Sharing** -- December 8 at 6:00pm we'll gather for a simple soup and bread supper to share the ups and downs of the holiday season. Everyone is welcome to just sign up and come for an evening of joys and sorrows, memories and dreams.

--Karen Day

## Social Action

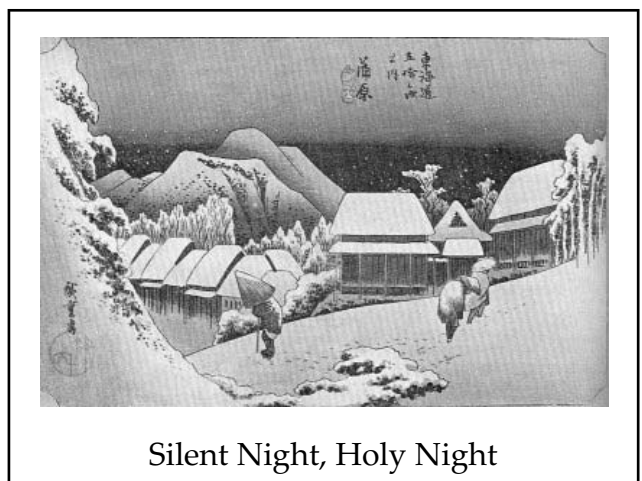
The Social Action Committee has made Little Willie's the focus of their Christmas project. We will keep UUCG informed as our plans evolve.

We are "shaking the Social Action" can this month in order to purchase a flock of chickens from Heifer International. This will help a needy family in a poor country. Please "fill up" the Social Action Committee can with your extra bills and coins.

We are going to begin collecting aluminum cans for the Blind Center in Washington, NC. The cans will be taken to the Center by Diane and Hooker Horton. Money the Center earns from the cans goes into their programs. There will be a covered container by the Social Action Committee table to deposit your cans.

Our Iraq project resulted in six large boxes being sent to our soldiers for distribution.

--Joan Sachtjen



Silent Night, Holy Night

## ***On a Personal Note . . .***

Billie Mallison is working on MADD. Many of us remember the accident in which a good friend of her son Bill, was seriously injured when he and other friends were hit by a drunk driver. Billie reports that the family of the friend are helping the guilty driver. Billie is still very much interested in the problem.

Gloria Winn, has finished the spouse's stay-at-home-and-sell-the-house job -- and will be joining Frank at their new place in Albany, NY, about the end of the year. We rejoice for them, but mourn for our loss. Daughter Paige at least is going to college in North Carolina, so we should be seeing them occasionally.

Marcia Fletcher's mother is in poor health, and Marcia has been absent one Sunday, and probably will be again, visiting her.

And Carroll Webber's mother fell, fracturing her hip, and is not expected to recover.

We are hoping that Malaika and her family will be moving back to Greenville. It looks highly possible.

Jean Lowry's motorized wheel chair has been sold, and now we are looking for a customer for the lift that got her and the chair up onto the porch. Good buy for someone.

--Edith Webber

### **Committees: The Heart of Our Congregation**

A lothappens to keep our congregation going. Our members are busy both within and outside our congregation. Much of this work is coordinated through committees. Last spring, we modified our bylaws to increase the number of committees and make them more independent of the Board.

Our goal is to increase the number of members and friends involved in keeping our church alive and active, and also reduce the work load on any one person.

To coordinate the committee activities, we

have a program council which meets at least quarterly. The council has met twice so far improving communications by sharing information and schedules. The next meeting is February 2nd . The committees have ambitious goals for the year. They've also accomplished a lot. You've read about some of their activities in the Beacon already, and will be hearing more in the future. Fortunately, our committees are more oriented toward producing results than committees I've been on elsewhere.

If you'd like to be involved with one of the committees, either as a member, or on a project, please contact the committee chair (listed on page 8) or me.

--Feryl Masters



## THE MONTH in PREVIEW

### Worship Committee Invitations

### Church Calendar for December

- 1 6:00pm Eat out at China 10
- 4 9:00am Decorate the church
- 5 9:30am UU World discussion -- Ed Day  
10:30am *Improvising-Transforming the Present* -- Rev Karen Day
- 6 7:00pm Worship committee
- 7 8:30am Breakfast at IHOP  
7:00pm Committee on ministry
- 8 6:00pm Soup & Sharing
- 11 9:00am Regular Saturday work day
- 12 9:30am Political Discussion -- Larry Spell  
10:30am *Through the Night* -- Rev Karen Day
- 13 7:00pm Interfaith Alliance at UUCG
- 14 8:30am Breakfast at IHOP
- 15 6:00pm Eat out at Olive Garden  
7:00pm Contemplation group
- 17 5:00pm Youth Group @ Admiral's Cup
- 18 9:00am First Born
- 19 9:30am Spiritual Book Club-- Paul Alston  
10:30am *Solstice Celebration* --  
Roger Robins & Others
- 21 8:30am Breakfast at IHOP
- 20 7:00pm Board meeting
- 24 7:00pm Christmas eve service
- 26 10:30am *Ghosts* -- Ed Day
- 28 8:30am Breakfast at IHOP
- 31 7:00pm Dinner & a Movie

If you contributed your musical talents for the musical service last month, you'll have another chance in mid-December. On December 19th we will have a winter solstice ceremony to usher in winter, the season of simplicity, with a service similar to that which we did for autumn. Please see Roger Robbins or any member of the Worship Committee if you would like to contribute to either service in some way. Again your contributions can be wide ranging from readings, to decorations, to music, or whatever.

--Roger Robbins

### Hospitality

New Year's Eve will be the next Dinner & a Movie. Seventeen of us really enjoyed the great food, conversation and the movie *Big Fish*, selected by Rich Elkins, on Nov. 13th. We had a very pleasant New Years Eve last year, beginning with the pot luck dinner at 7:00pm and most of us were at home by 10:30. We plan to celebrate this holiday again this year by being together and having fun.

Our next Dinner for Eight will be next year on Saturday, January 22, 2005.

--Janet Doig

Deadline for next month's **beacon** is Tuesday 12 noon, December 21st

## UU Wednesday Dining Out Menu \*



### Let's Eat!

December 1 **China 10** 2516 E. 10th Street  
December 8 **Soup & Sharing** UUCG 131 Oakmont Drive  
December 15 **Olive Garden** 508 SE Greenville Blvd  
December 22 **Eating at home**  
December 29 **Eat at home**

\* Wednesday dining out starts at 6:00 pm & is Dutch treat. Please let Ed Day (355-0652) know if you plan to come so that an appropriate number of places can be made available at the restaurant.

**The Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Greenville  
131 Oakmont Drive  
Greenville, NC 27858**

**Minister**, Rev. Karen Day, 355-6658  
**President**, Randi Finley, 717-9287  
**Vice President**, Feryl Masters, 975-2020  
**Membership**, Kendall Garing, 752-2133  
**Secretary**, Jackie Wyman, 439-8581  
**Treasurer**, Brenda Stewart, 746-4714

#### **Committee Chairs**

Building and Grounds: Lisa Brenner, 329-8130  
Communications: Sue Farris, 756-8609  
Finance, Peter Satchjen: 353-5447  
Religious Education: Cindy Fanning, 412-4996  
Social Action: Joan Sachtjen, 353-5447  
Hospitality: Janet Doig, 355-1822  
Worship: Roger Robbins, 551-9072

