



The UUCG beacon

December 2005

The *beacon* is published monthly
by the Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Greenville
131 Oakmont Drive
Greenville, NC 27858 • 252.355.6658

Sunday Services—10:30 am

December 4

A Welcoming Congregation, Feryl Masters

December 11

True Colors, Bruce Maxwell

December 18

Winter Solstice Ceremony, Roger Robbins

December 25

Christmas Service, Ed Day

Sunday services begin at 10:30 am
unless otherwise noted.
Children's activities are available each
Sunday unless otherwise noted

For All You Do — Thanks

A recent survey showed southern states to be the most charitable. North Carolina didn't make the top 10, but our congregation certainly does its part. We give our time and our money to more causes than I can name. Much of this is done as individuals, but more and more, we are joining together to make our efforts more effective through our fellowship.

This willingness to give is what makes our congregation possible. Some is obvious — pledges, leadership roles, leading services. Much is invisible unless you look for it. Karen, or a guest speaker, stood up in front each Sunday and led us in wonderful services. Karen deservedly got thanks and recognition for what she did, but she was always ready to point out that many people made it possible.

Building cleaning and maintenance, orders of service, music, greeting, refreshments, religious education, and countless other tasks are completed by our members and friends. They are done without fanfare week after week. They are remarkable only when they don't happen smoothly. Even then, someone is usually ready to step up and "do what needs to be done."

Unfortunately, because things are done so consistently, we don't notice them. I still occasionally notice something that has been done, and I realize that someone has been doing it for years.

We all do these things because we love our congregation and want to contribute—not for recognition or payment. Still, it's important to recognize the contributions we all make. Make it a point to thank people for doing the ordinary, necessary things.

And don't forget yourself. Your contributions help make our congregation what it is. We tend to focus on our errors and omissions. That's valuable as a learning method—to a point. It's important also to remember what we do well and

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Reason & Rhyme

. . . *Ed Day*

Well, Karen is gone and we must look to the future. A new minister will be arriving in time to bring us new leadership and new ideas.

It is important to remember that what makes this congregation special is not the person at the lectern but the people in our religious community.

As I think over my years in the church, it seems remarkable that there are so few faces that were here when Shirley and I first came, and yet the spirit and atmosphere are remarkably the same.

People come and people go, as even ministers come and ministers go, but our religious philosophy attracts those who want to think for themselves and yet are willing to be dedicated to

common efforts that help us build and maintain our special community.

Love really is the doctrine of this church, the search for truth is its sacrament and service is its prayer. These principles must not be words only, but must be the motivation for our lives together and separate.

As I take the role of interim minister, I look for the community to help make the task doable. Where there are differences we must bridge them, where there are difficulties we must overcome them and where there are opportunities we must seize them.

This is our Christmas issue, so let me say, "Happy Holidays." Oops, I mean "Merry Christmas." Anyway, I hope everyone goes into the new year with joy and hope and confidence.



An Ode (of sorts) to the Holidays

Christmas comes but once a year

(well maybe twice if you count Eastern Orthodox)

And of course it is filled with good cheer

And we all get presents by the flock(s).

(sorry about that but a rhyme is a rhyme)

So even though there most likely will be no snow

I hope you all have a very good time.

Especially the kids, for as we all know

It's the kids who make the holiday fun

Anyway Merry Christmas to all of you

Now that this poem is nearly done

And I agree that the end is overdue.





Sunday Morning Fare

December 4

A Welcoming Congregation, Feryl Masters

Beyond Tolerance. We want to accept people of all faiths and lifestyles, but how welcoming are we? The UUA has developed a Welcoming Congregation Program. This is an opportunity to examine our feelings, and learn more about others.

December 11

True Colors, Bruce Maxwell

December 18, Winter Solstice Ceremony

Roger Robbins.

We will welcome back the Season of Simplicity.

December 24

Christmas Eve Service, Ed Day

December 25

Christmas Service, Ed Day

Season's Greetings

December Hospitality

Dec. 4 Bagels, Jeanne Stone and Matthew Farris

Dec. 11 Cookies, Lorraine Obremski and Sondra Haynes

Dec. 18 Bagels, Terry Shank; Don and Sylvia English

Dec. 25 Cookies, Sue Daughtry



December Birthdays

Marcia Fletcher - 12/09

Alice Arnold - 12/15

Mark Barnes - 12/19

Solstice Observances

Last call for anyone interested in contributing in some way to our Solstice Service or to organize the Christmas Eve Service. Otherwise you may receive visits from three spirits; expect the first at the stroke of 1:00 am. . .

Roger Robbins

...And at the Town Commons

Dark Solstice for us north-of-equator folks is December 21st. The overhead sun brushes the Tropic of Capricorn at 1:35 pm EST that day and gradually starts back north. The usual ceremonies will be held that evening—one at the Town Commons and one by the Earth Spirituality Covenant Group.

Dinners for Eight

For the past year, I have been the facilitator for Dinners for Eight. If you have not participated in one of these dinners, I encourage you to do so.

About every three months, I put a sign up sheet on the bulletin board with the date for the next Dinners for Eight. Before the dinner, I remove the list, take it home, and divide the list among the hosts. If I don't have enough hosts, I'll call someone on the list and ask them to host.

The host provides a place for the dinner and the beverage. Each guest brings a dish. The hosts call everyone on their lists and coordinate the meals. The purpose is not to have a gourmet spread, but to have a simple meal where people get together and

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News, Notes and Other Stuff

First Born Update

The food distribution at the First Born Church in Grimesland is on December 17. There is just one distribution in November and December, and they're big ones. So, please consider volunteering. Plan to arrive between 8:00-9:00 am to get your assignment (that's an hour earlier than usual). If you don't want to get up that early, just come later. I'm sure the box carriers could use some relief.

To get to First Born Church from Greenville: Take Rt. 33 East to Grimesland. In Grimesland, turn right on Chicod Street. Continue for about a mile and you'll see the church on the right hand side of the road. Questions? Call Tracy Donohue, First Born volunteer coordinator, at 252-758-0693.

Nutcracker Ballet at ECU



Dance Arts Theatre will present The Nutcracker Ballet at Wright Auditorium on December 11 and 12. Net proceeds will benefit the University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina's Children's Hospital. Lilani Masters and Miranda Clark will be among those performing. For tickets, call 328-4788 or 1-800 ECU.ARTS

December Workday

The Building and Grounds workday will be on Saturday, December 3 at 9:00 am. We will be decorating for the holidays and need help to make the church festive. ~ Lisa Brenner

Holiday Love Feast

Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church invites the UU churches and fellowships of North Carolina to the annual UCONCI (Universalist Convention of NC, Inc.) Love Feast and Candlelight Service on December 11, 2005.

The covered dish supper will be at 5:00 pm, followed by a candlelight service led by Rev. Barry Whittemore and music by James Merritt.

Each year members and friends of the churches and fellowships in North Carolina assemble for fellowship, food and celebration of the season. Following the long Christmas tradition at Outlaw's Bridge, the warmth and light of this candlelight service is shared and concluded when the light of love and peace is passed from one to another.

Join UUs from Raleigh, Durham, Morehead, Wilmington, Kinston, Red Hill, Richmond VA, Outlaw's Bridge, New Bern and beyond as Unitarian Universalists come together on this memorable annual occasion.

Outlaw's Bridge is located on Hwy 111 near Albertson, about 18 miles southeast of Goldsboro.

Directions: From Kinston follow NC 55 West for 19 miles to NC 111, follow NC 111 South for 5 miles to Outlaw's Bridge Church on the left.

Note: If you are free on the afternoon of Dec. 11, you may want to stop by Cliffs of the Neuse State Park. Winter isn't ideal, but it's just a few miles from the Hwy 55-Hwy 111 intersection and is well worth the trip.

Board Highlights

At its November meeting, the board discussed changes to the responsibilities of the Committee on Ministry. Congregational opinion will be sought before the changes are made. Congregational opinion will also be sought before a disruptive behavior policy is implemented.

A Town Hall Meeting will be scheduled soon. Copies of the proposed changes will be made available to congregational members prior to the meeting. These changes would be reflected in the policy manual, not the by-laws.

The new Denominational Affairs Committee is considering hosting a cluster meeting for other congregations in our area. The Fundraising Committee is still working on the tee shirt project (colors, designs, quotes). High speed internet access has been installed, and wireless access will be added soon

The Ministerial Search Committee will follow the UUA recommendations and not have alternates. A budget of \$1,000 was set for the Search Committee until 6/30/06; a \$2,000 budget was set for the Interim Search Committee until 6/30/06.

In other business, problems with church upkeep and supplies were brought up. Rich (the board liaison) will share the concerns at the next Program Council meeting. ~ Jackie Wyman

Children's RE

Hello from the RE Department. The Tweens are continuing their studies with *In Our Hands: A Peace and Social Justice Program*. In December they will begin their unit on *Partners with Nature*.

On November 11, the Teens attended worship services at the local Greenville Mosque. This excursion was a continuation of their study of other faiths. Many felt this was an eye opening experience. After completing their study of the Islamic faiths in December, they will begin their study of earth-based spirituality. They hope to attend a Yule service.

Richard and April Weir are planning the monthly movie night at the church in December for the Teens. It is scheduled for the first Saturday of the month.

If you have questions or want more information, please feel free to contact me at 252-747-7785 or HemlocMoon@aol.com. ~ Victoria Brown

President's Message (cont. from page 1)
give ourselves credit for that. Preparing refreshments, or taking out the trash may not draw high praise, but —trust me—it will be quickly noticed if not done. Let me be the first to thank you all for all you've done to make our congregation wonderful. ~ Feryl Masters



On a Personal Note . . .

Lowell, Shareen, and Madison Berkowitz's beloved dog, Brody, died suddenly.

Erin Ramsey's cousin, **Adam**, was denied parole and, therefore, the family will be denied his presence for the holidays. Erin also hurt her back.

Katherine Jones has completed (yes) her chemotherapy treatments and is looking forward to getting her strength back. She expressed appreciation for all the help she received from our congregation.

Bob Franke's son, Leo, has achieved national board certification as a French teacher. Also, Bob's granddaughter was recently crowned homecoming queen at her high school.

The week before Thanksgiving, **Marcia Fletcher** visited her daughter, Kerry, who has recently moved in to a new house in Columbia, SC, and her #1 son, Greg, who lives nearby. Marcia's mother, who is approaching her 95th birthday, is in a nursing home near Columbia.

Karen's farewell party included a group from the **Little Willie Center**. On hand to say good-bye were center director **Renee Arrington**, her son **Marvin Jr.**, her mother, **Mother Carr**, center neighbor **Jean** and about ten children.

We swell with pride at having a City Councilman in our midst. **Larry Spell** was sworn in November 21st. Without messing with the wall between church and state, we can comment that besides working hard and intelligently to win the election, he promises to serve the citizens of Greenville very well. And that's not all. He's starting us a choir!

On the health list are . . .

Jean Thatcher's sister, dealing with melanoma. Jean and her siblings have embarked on their sixth decade.

Hooker Horton, who no longer wears glasses, thanks to two successful cataract operations. Hooker and Dianne's son has a new job in Raleigh.

Kelly Kurz's father, fighting cancer, which prevented her from taking part in the new member ceremony.

Don English's sister, who doesn't have ovarian cancer as was feared.

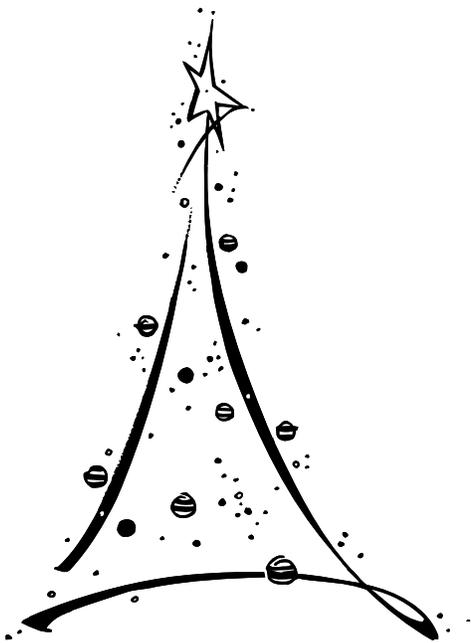
Sienie Postma and **Ben Thomas**, still not up to coming to church much. We hold them in our thoughts.

~Edie Webber



Church Calendar

- 3 9:00 am—Building & Grounds work day
- 4 10:30 am—Worship Service, Feryl Masters
- 11 10:30 am—Worship Service, Bruce Maxwell
Love Feast, Outlaw's Bridge
- 17 8:00 am–Noon, food distribution, First Born
- 18 10:30 am—Worship Service, Roger Robbins
- 20 Beacon deadline
- 21 Winter Solstice Observance
- 24 Christmas Eve Service
- 25 Christmas Service, Ed Day



Welcoming New Members

Through the Bread Ceremony in November, we were able to welcome our new members into the UU family. Patrice Alexander and son Alex, Kristen Kenyon and daughter Katherine, Brent Lindenburg and Katy McFadden, and Bill Paulson brought bread and personal stories to share with us.

Patrice Alexander had lived in Greenville since about 1990 and attended UUCG just before it moved to its current building; She now has a son and is glad to be back.

Kristen has been a UU for a long time and was happy to discover our presence in Greenville and to give her daughter the opportunity to know others through the religious education program.

Brent and Katy are from Texas and are getting married Thanksgiving weekend. Bill Paulson has been a friend of the congregation for years, and he decided to make the commitment of membership. We also welcomed Kelly Kurz, though she was unable to attend due to the serious illness of her father.

December is a holiday time for many families, and though it can be a happy time, it can also be difficult for those who have had a loss of family members, a break up, or other major life events.

If you are feeling the stress of the holiday season, please contact the caring committee, Sue Daughtry is chair, or just strike up a conversation with someone at the congregation on Sundays. UUCG members and friends are part of your family during the holidays and throughout the year – please check with each other and be open to hearing of the joys and concerns that won't be spoken until you ask. ~ *Kendall Garing, Membership*

Beacon Deadline

The deadline for the January issue is noon, Tuesday, December 20. Please submit articles and announcements by email to: beacon@uugreenvillenc.org.

Tax Reminder

Don't let January 1 slip up on you. Contributions made to UUCG on or before December 31 can be deducted from your 2005 income tax.

Dinners for Eight (cont. from page 3)

enjoy the fellowship of others who attend our congregation.

I have always had people who were willing to host and I've always received very positive feedback from the hosts and participants. I would like to invite anyone who has never joined us for this event to sign up for our next dinner, which will probably be in February. It will give you an opportunity to have a good time and get to know your fellow UUs. ~ *Kay Alston*

Wednesday night dine-outs are taking a brief sabbatical during December.



**The Unitarian-Universalist
Congregation of Greenville
131 Oakmont Drive
Greenville, NC 27858
355-5568**

*Interim Minister, Ed Day, 355-6658
President, Feryl Masters, 975-2020
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Committee chairs

*Building and Grounds, Lisa Brenner, 329-8130
Ministry, Sylvia English, 756-7010
Communications, Don English, 756-7010
Finance, Mark Barnes, 321-2605
Religious Education, Shareen Berkowitz, 321-6249
Social Action, Joan Sachtjen, 355-3121
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