



# The UUCG beacon

**December 2006**

The **beacon** is published monthly  
by the Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Greenville  
252-355-6658  
www.uugreenvillenc.org  
**beacon** Editor: Don English  
Email: beacon@uugreenvillenc.org

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

**December 3**

*Talking About God*  
**Ed Day**

**December 10**

*The Great Story*  
**Rev Michael Dowd**

**December 17**

*Bend & You Need Not  
Break*  
**Rev Frieda Gillespie**



**December 24**

*What Child Is This?*  
**Rev Frieda Gillespie**

**December 31**

*Bring in the New and Do  
Away With The Old*  
**Worship Committee**

Children's activities are available  
each Sunday.

## **President's Notes:**

Giving Thanks at Thanksgiving...

People spend a lot of time arguing whether the glass is half full or half empty. Your answer can color your whole life. I've debated that question. Then one day, I realized that I was looking at the problem wrong. The answer is that the glass is too big. Too often we get trapped in an either/or mindset. We overlook a less obvious solution.

November is chosen as a time to give thanks for what we have. It is a very sensible time for those who farm for a living – literally – as our ancestors did. A successful crop meant you didn't go hungry. November is no longer as significant, but we still need a time to think about our blessings and be thankful. Even our troubles can be valuable. After all, a nice warm bed is not nearly as wonderful in July as in December. It takes being cold to appreciate warmth. Food always tastes better when you are really hungry. When you are hot and thirsty, a cool glass of water is a joy.

All too often we don't appreciate what we have. When we wonder where our next meal is coming from, we have to decide between Food Lion and Krogers; between Cracker Barrel and McDonalds. Few of us have ever had to worry if there will be a meal. How often do we stop and appreciate hot water at the turn of a handle? Lights at the flick of a switch? Heat without having to gather or chop firewood?

Yes there are troubles and travails aplenty in this world. We have much to do to make our lives, our church, our community, and our world a better place. We shouldn't enjoy our blessings and ignore the rest of the world. But while we work to make things better, we can take some time to enjoy what we have.

Are we lucky because of all the blessings we have, or cursed because of all our problems? I can't help but wonder if we aren't getting trapped in an either/or mindset. After all, how would we recognize our blessings without an occasional problem to point them out? How would we recognize our troubles without the good times to show what can be? You can't have mountaintops without valleys. Make the most of both!

--Feryl Masters

# Reflections

Reflections . . . of Rev Frieda Gillespie

Notes from the Interim

There is nothing more beautiful than someone whose eyes are opening. I met such a person at the church one blustery morning. It was the kind of day when everything seemed to be in flux – wind howling, trees swinging wildly, intermittent downpours. It felt like anything could happen. A young man appeared at the door of my office and came in. He said he lives in the neighborhood and wondered if I had time to talk with him. He brought his bible with him. He may read this on the web and of course will know that I am speaking about him. I hope he will know that it is because I am grateful to have met him. I can't reveal the details of our conversation without his permission, but suffice to say that he was seeing the world anew as if a lens had been taken from his eyes and what he had been taught was no longer as real as what he could see for himself. When he left I felt as though I had been visited by an angel and had heard a story of grace. These are not terms I use very much at all. But there was no other way I could describe it. We are from different worlds theologically but in essence I felt he was a kindred spirit—a seeker and it touched me deeply that he shared his quest with me.

All great teachers urge us to doubt, to look for ourselves and so purify our vision that we come closer and closer to what is true and real. In fact they say that to find yourself – “open yourself wide to the sky.” To find the universe, or God – look within. We need

both, don't we? And, how wonderful that we can spark one another with our questions – real questions, not the ones that entertain us intellectually, even if we come to different answers. It's the wonder in the heart and the need to understand that matter. I so wish we could begin to communicate from underneath all of the theological words. We might just all start to understand each other.

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You may get a call from me someday soon if you haven't already. After spending lots of time with the Board and committees, I'd like to get to know each of you individually a little better. So, I'll be giving you a call sometime to make an appointment. We can visit at your place, go for a walk somewhere, meet at a restaurant or the church. If you are eager to get together, don't hesitate to call me. My new **Greenville cell number is: 252 367-0103** and it will work when I'm in Framingham too! I will be there November 20<sup>th</sup> – December 9<sup>th</sup>. I'm taking a week of 'on-call' vacation to move in addition to the usual two weeks I'm away.

Also, Jennifer really enjoyed her visit here and I am grateful that you made her feel so welcomed. She enjoyed talking with the many folks who spoke with her on the Sunday she was here.

Wishing you lots of blustery but beautiful days!

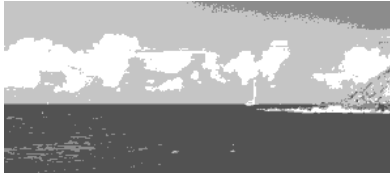
Frieda

## The Religious Education Department

November was a busy month. The Tweens started their new curriculum, **Time Travelers**. First they will build their time machine and then visit the different time periods of UU history.

The Teens continue exploring of different faiths with the study of Hinduism. They started their teen breakfast in the mornings during RE. Any teens are welcome to join us for biscuits and tea in the Teen Room. They also held a lock in on November. The featured film was **V for Vendetta**. Discussion about the film occurred during their RE time about the political and social consequences of torture, terrorism and revenge. Other movies were watched, sub sandwiches and ice cream sundaes consumed for a night long of fun and games.

Adult RE is going well with the Forum continuing to meet at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. **New to UU** class will be taught in January on Wednesday nights by Rev. Frieda Gillespie. -- Victoria Brown



# On The Horizon

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## FIRST BORN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Please join us at First Born Holy Church on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> to assist with the food distribution. Please arrive by 8:30am to receive your assignments. The distribution begins at 9:00am until 12:00pm. We distribute food packages, help with administrative work, pack food boxes and carry food boxes to cars for disabled folks.

UUCG collects plastic grocery bags for First Born. There is a large plastic, blue container in the library for the bags. I deliver the bags to First Born each month. The bags must be clean, dry and odor free. Please do not bring plastic bags with RED letters. First Born cannot use these bags because many people associate the red lettering with "contaminated" and are afraid of the food in them.

If you can provide a ride for other UUCG members please let me know. Some folks want to help but do not have transportation to Grimesland. If you need directions, please contact me at 252-916-5069 or email [toniebritt@clis.com](mailto:toniebritt@clis.com).

--Toni Britt

## Membership

The membership committee is planning a short video seminar on greeting and sharing with guests at our church. We plan to have this in January and hope you will stay for it after the service that Sunday. The date will be announced in December. We are working with the Hospitality Committee and Rich Elkins on a "Movie Night" for January also. If you are interested in the movie "Who Killed The Electric Car?", let us know.

We have a draft phone tree ready and will e-mail the draft out, in addition to posting it on the bulletin board. If you would like your place on the tree changed, please let us know.

The phone tree is not going to be used to announce meetings but is going to be used to inform members of emergencies. We ask for your suggestions.

## Angel Tree for the Little Willie Center

The Social Action Committee has arranged for UUCG to provide holiday gifts for the children at the Little Willie Center. There are 35 "Angels" at the Center. A holiday tree will be decorated with angels. Each angel has the name, age and sex of a child from the Little Willie Center. You are invited to select an angel and purchase a gift. You may wrap the gift or you may leave it unwrapped. Please deliver the gifts to UUCG on 12/10/06 or 12/17/06. I will deliver the gifts to the Little Willie Center on 12/18/06. The children at the Little Willie Center have been a focus of UUCG for a number of years. All UUCG members are invited to join me when I deliver the gifts.

The Little Willie Center needs paper supplies. These supplies include dinner napkins, paper bowls, paper plates, paper towels, paper cups, bathroom tissue, Kleenex tissue and plastic forks and spoons (no knives please). Please bring your donations to UUCG and I will deliver them to the Center. We will collect these items until the end of December.

--Toni Britt

# News, Notes and Other Stuff

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## Rev Dowd to Speak on Science & Religion

At 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 12, 2006 in the church sanctuary, UUCG will be hosting a talk by Reverend Michael Dowd titled, "Thank God for Evolution! How Science and Religion are Spurring Each Other to Greatness"

In this richly illustrated talk, he will explore the most common "evolutionary epiphanies" or "religious awakenings" that people experience when the discoveries of mainstream science are presented in ways that integrate all the threads into a meaningful, sacred, inspiring, and thoroughly up-to-date creation story. The talk will also explore these questions: Is it possible to use "God-language" in a way that theists, atheists, and pantheists can all truly celebrate? What exciting new light can this perspective offer on age-old questions about human nature and human destiny? How can an understanding of evolutionary brain science and evolutionary psychology assist us in living happier, healthier, more on-purpose lives and having more satisfying, fulfilling relationships? Finally, How does "The Great Story" open the future to hope and inspired action, and how can it energize and support our efforts to further the work of peace, justice, and environmental sustainability?

Rev. Dowd and his wife, science writer Connie Barlow, are UUs who, during the past 4 years, have delivered sermons and other presentations at more than 200 UU churches and many other venues, as well. Their itinerant ministry is featured as the cover story in the Spring 2006 issue of UU World.

--Denominational Affairs Committee

## Chalice Lighters

A Chalice Lighter is a person, a couple, or even a group of people who pledges to respond with a contribution (\$10 - \$25) when the call comes that it's time to light a chalice within the Thomas Jefferson District. Calls support specific growth initiatives in individual TJ District congregations. There are no more than three calls per year. The calls include details of who has applied for a call and what the funds will be used for. Chalice Lighters is overseen by the District's Growth and Development Council. The TJ District is committed to growth in all its aspects: personal growth, spiritual growth, growth in the health of our member congregations, growth in the number of congregations, growth in the number of individual Unitarian Universalists, and lastly, growth in our presence in society. The Growth and Development Council has primary responsibility for facilitating this growth, and one way in which it does this is by raising funds through Chalice Lighters to support congregational activities. UUCG received a Chalice Lighters grant when purchasing our current facility. To become a Chalice Lighter, you can go to

<http://www.tjd.uua.org/cl/tjd-chalice-lighter-pledge-form.htm>



--Carroll Webber

## Classes for the New You

The new UUs, that is. Class - If you are new to UUism and would like to learn something about UU History, Theology and what this church offers, join me for this introductory class. Classes will be January 17th and 24th - 7:30 - 9:00 PM. See Frieda Gillespie for more information.



## DECEMBER in Preview

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<p><b>Dates in gray indicate days that Frieda is in Framingham, MA. To contact her call: 252-367-0103 or email: <a href="mailto:minister@uugreenvillenc.org">minister@uugreenvillenc.org</a></b></p>					<p><b>1</b> 7:00 Earthbased Spirituality CG</p>	<p><b>2</b> 7:00 Pagan Coffee House</p>
<p><b>3</b> 9:30 Forum 10:30 <i>Talking about God - Ed Day</i></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b> 8:30 Breakfast@ Cracker Barrel</p>	<p><b>6</b> 6:00 Eat Out @ Mayflower</p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>9</b> 9:00 Bldg Cleanup 9:30-10:30 Social/Political Covenant Group</p>
<p><b>10</b> 9:30 Forum 10:30 <i>The Great Story-Rev Dowd</i> Noon RE Committee Meeting 7:00 Meditation Covenant</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b> 8:30 Breakfast@ Cracker Barrel</p>	<p><b>13</b> 6:00 Eat Out @ Mongolian House</p>	<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b> 9:00 First Born</p>
<p><b>17</b> 9:30 Forum 10:30 <i>Bend &amp; You Need Not Break-Rev Gillespie</i> 7:00 Book Club</p>	<p><b>18</b> 7:30 Board Meeting 7:30 Search Committee</p>	<p><b>19</b> 8:30 Breakfast@ Cracker Barrel 12:00 Beacon Deadline</p>	<p><b>20</b> 6:00 Eat Out @ Applebees</p>	<p><b>21</b> 7:00 Winter Solstice Celebration @ UUCG</p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>23</b></p>
<p><b>24</b> 9:30 Forum 10:30 <i>What Child Is This?-Rev Gillespie</i></p>	<p><b>25</b> Merry Christmas </p>	<p><b>26</b> 8:30 Breakfast@ Cracker Barrel</p>	<p><b>27</b> 6:00 Eat Out @ Finelli's</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p>
<p><b>31</b> 9:30 Forum 10:30 <i>Bring in the New and Do Away With The Old-Worship Committee</i></p>						

## Summary of Congregational Survey 2006

### Ministerial Profile

We are seeking a minister who will be an active part of both our congregation and the larger community. Our ideal candidate will be a good speaker who can provide stimulating sermons as well as spiritual guidance. We like sermons that focus on philosophy, spiritual growth, stimulate us to act on our convictions, the impact of science on religion, life and social issues. We expect our new minister to be an ethical model for our congregation and community. We are looking for someone who relates well with people from all walks of life—a warm and open spirit who genuinely likes people.

We endorse and expect freedom of the pulpit, and would welcome a minister who is a good administrator and who can share administrative responsibility with the Board of Directors in a cooperative and collaborative spirit. We want the minister to prepare and deliver sermons about three times a month, direct the worship services and activities, perform pastoral care, spiritual guidance, community building, leadership development, interfaith efforts and anti-racism work.

We seem to have some level of discomfort with a minister who: is from a moneyed background, bi-sexual (there may have been some misunderstanding of this question), older than 60 years, a person who is transgender, or a political conservative

We would like a person who is comfortable as an active part of our congregation and in the community at large. Growth of both the congregation and the facility will be vital in the coming years. It is important to us to establish a presence in the community that appeals to a range of people, including young adults, young families, gays and lesbians, and persons of color. We want our minister to help us to reach out and make all people feel welcome and necessary to our congregation.

### Congregational Profile

Our congregation, at present, is mature with greatest number of survey respondents in the 50-60 age range, and a large percentage over age 60. One of our goals is to attract younger members and increase the number of participants in children's religious education. We are generally in favor of member growth and enlarging our facility

About a quarter of us have been UUs for more than 15 years; 21 percent have been members for 6-10 years and 21 percent are new to the denomination (under two years). Locally, 22 percent of respondents have been members for 1-2 years, 29 percent for 3-5 years and 20 percent for 6-10 years. Most of us are heterosexual, but approximately 25 percent are gay or lesbian. As a group, we are well educated, and more than half of our members have completed graduate work at the master's level or higher. Household income is primarily in the \$50,000-\$75,000 range. Most of us pledge less than \$100 a month.

We are a spiritually diverse group, and members express a variety of beliefs including humanistic, naturalistic, mystical, agnostic atheist, earth-centered and pagan. Few of us pray, but many meditate. We are split fairly evenly between those who believe that, after death, the soul lives on only in the memory of others and that the soul lives on in some other dimension.

We attend church for the sharing of common values, intellectual stimulation, fellowship, community and as an expression of our UU beliefs. We like sermons that focus on building self-understanding, individual feelings and beliefs, building community and self-worth and dignity. Many of us particularly enjoy services that involve talkback, or an opportunity for the congregation to discuss the topic.

Most of us draw a great deal of strength from our relationship with UUCG, and the great majority of us view our affiliation as important at some level to our identity. Most of us embrace the UU principles, but few of us have attended denominational functions. However, we do participate in church activities such as Sunday coffee hours, committees, social events, adult religious education and social action.

Several of our members have organized outside activities such as book clubs and covenant groups and political action groups. We support efforts to help underserved populations including migrant workers.

We think of ourselves as a warm and supportive congregation that welcomes newcomers and that cares for one another. Many of our members have developed strong friendships and some members who have moved away continue to communicate. Although our location in eastern North Carolina puts us in a politically and religiously fundamental environment, we believe that there are many in our community who would welcome an opportunity to be part of a more liberal spiritual (and social) environment. We are eager to reach out to those whose religious and philosophical principles do not fit into a conservative mold.

## Minister Search Committee Survey Main Themes of Open-Ended Questions

**F1. Current strengths we possess to be maintained or developed in immediate future** included our satisfaction and appreciation of each other in our strong sense of community, our own diversity, our supportive welcoming approach and open minded attitudes. We recognize our members who share their talents and leadership efforts. Another strength our congregation possesses and recognize is our efforts in social action activities within the community.

**F2. Main things we want to accomplish in next 3-5 yrs.** We overwhelmingly want to grow in both membership and space. We are looking at identifying a more appealing and larger building with surrounding land. We want to grow in our current strength of socially conscious activities and build strength in our adult and children RE programs. We want a minister who will be interested in developing local campus ministries, and build stronger interfaith alliances while also moving us toward a Welcoming Congregation status. We also want to enliven our congregation with a stronger musical program.

**F3. What current church problems/issues concern you? What problems/issues are likely to be pressing in five years?** A concern about finances, the lack of focus on finances and fundraising, to buy another property and the need for more space, the lack of adult education and a dearth of young families, poor communication all around, a lack of tolerance for some groups (esp. conservatives and fundamental Christians), a general lack of participation in church activities by many people, with most of the burden of keeping the church going shouldered by a few people, a need for more people to participate in all aspects of church life, and learning to deal with disruptive behavior and personnel issues.

**F4. What qualities (professional skills/expertise and personal) should our next minister possess?** Warm and caring, devoted to the congregation and to UU principles. Should be intelligent and have excellent communication skills and the ability to think critically. Should demonstrate a capacity for strong leadership and administrative skills and be a mediator and counselor to the congregation. Having conflict management experience would be a desirable attribute. Must be able, with the board, to articulate a clear vision for the church and inspire members to strive to attain that vision. Must have spiritual depth and be able to provide thoughtful, provocative sermons that motivate and energize the congregation. Should be able to work with other ministers in Greenville and have excellent interpersonal skills; be able to tell a good story.

**F5-What achievements will make you say, "I'm glad the minister is among us"?**

Substantial membership growth to further exciting adult RE programs and the offering of stimulating children RE curricula. Spiritual rewards through intellectual and inspiring sermons with special music and social action activities helping to develop a bonding among church family. Leadership in developing commitment, participation and collaboration among members is crucial. Leading us toward a better facility. Increasing our visibility in the community, a thriving ECU campus ministry and the recognition of UUCG within Greenville/Pitt County. It is important that the tone set by the minister effectively intimates "we are a loving group respecting one another and coming together for the betterment of all living things".

**F6.- Describe the worst mistake your new minister could make.** Not listening to the membership and wanting to run the whole show was the first comment entered and which also turned out to be the feeling of many in the congregation. Alienating, dividing the congregation, causing conflicts, being a snob were all considered grave mistakes. Lack of personal intellectual development regarding external happenings was deemed a negative. Pushing a personal/political agenda or ridiculing the beliefs of others as well as not caring about leading the congregation forward were felt to be unwelcome attitudes.

**F7. What expectations do you have about the minister's family and personal life?** Seven said little or none. Be active members of the congregation; a couple liked the idea of a "two-for-one" arrangement with the spouse taking an active role in the administrative and educational realms. Congregation should respect the personal lives and privacy of the new minister and his/her family; also need to make them feel welcome and comfortable. Exhibit good character and positive settled relationship(s); should represent the congregation well to the community at large and help create a positive image

**F8. Would you like to see the church's membership grow? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of growing?** Almost all said that our membership needed to grow with one statement to the effect that if we do not grow we will die. Overall we agreed on the need for more diverse and/or young members. Increased membership will result in more activities with greater involvement of the members, bigger and better RE program, a greater community presence, the work will be spread out rather than being done by just a few members who tend to get "burned out", more knowledge of UU in the community. We are afraid we will need more space and space costs money, do not want growth to come at the expense of UU focus and values, several expressed concerns around the possible loss of the feeling of "family" with fewer one-on-one interactions/connections and more members whose names they do not know

**F9. Are there any special issues that you would like our ministerial Search**

**Committee to consider and on which you would like to express your views?** There were 21 answers with 7 answering "no". The remaining answers indicated that they were hoping for a "people person", someone to both lead and challenge us as a congregation., someone who could guide us, but not "run" the church. There seemed to be a need for someone to provide both worship and intellectual services, and someone who would be enthusiastic about congregational growth and community visibility.

**F10. Do you believe the congregation should proceed with plans to acquire a**

**larger site and building?** There were 36 answers to this question. 5 answers said "no" with concerns about money and fear of debt. They feel we should work on membership and then see. Certainly we should wait until a new minister is in place. There were 9 answers that were not sure. Again they showed concern with not being able to afford a new building, and getting in over our heads with money, and there is not enough leadership and presentation of a vision for the future. However, there were 22 "yes" answers with a feeling that Greenville is growing and we are at the limits of what we can do in our present rather unattractive and unappealing building. More RE space is needed, and we will need a bigger space to accommodate a growing congregation.



## Getting to Know Lora Hylton

Lora Hylton was born in Eaton, Ohio and was the oldest of 4 children with one sister and 2 brothers. Her family lived on a farm with Dad working on the farm and Mom teaching school. Their religious affiliation was with the Church of the Brethren, a pacifist group similar to the Quakers. When she was about 9 her family began spending winters in Arizona with Lora graduating from Scottsdale High School and then attending Arizona State College.

She met her husband in church when they were teenagers and they were married while she was in college. Her daughter was born on Christmas day while she was still in school and after her graduation, her son was born on Easter so often they celebrated birthdays and holidays together.

Lora was an elementary school teacher, teaching 4 years in Guadeloupe, Arizona. Family then moved to Kansas. When her daughter was in the 2nd grade, there was a fire in the home while everyone was out. Her daughter arrived home, ran to a neighbor who called the Fire Dept. and Lora arrived home to this shock.

Good things also happened in Kansas. Lora took graduate studies at the University of Kansas and Emporia State and she taught every grade in elementary school in Wellsville, Kan-

sas. Her husband worked first as a farmer and then with the Police Dept.

Lora attended the All Souls Community Church in Kansas City, Missouri, her first Unitarian experience and liked it so much that she began teaching Sunday School.

While teaching, Lora was a member of the National Federation of Teacher's Association and on the Board of Directors. In the political arena, she was a precinct committee woman and she did Women's Assertiveness Training in the 80's. More recently she enjoys gardening and participating with the Health Care Task Force of the Social Action Committee of this UU Congregation. Look for her letter to the Public Forum.

Because she developed a chronic illness at age 45 which causes pain in the tendons in her wrists, it was necessary for her to retire early. She moved to Greenville 12 years ago to be near her daughter and grandchildren. She has to be careful to do things at a slow pace and not overdue. She has always liked to sew and crochet and has volunteered at Spring Harbor Assisted Living making clothing alterations for the residents. She and her 2 1/2 year old Yorkshire Australian Mix, named Emmett, live together in Quail Ridge. Having been taught as a depression child to save everything, she is now in the process of reducing things to what she really uses.

--Janet Doig

## Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee is working on drainage in the playground area. The gutter didn't solve the problem. There are also drainage problems being worked on in the back yard and in the area of the A/C. The committee wants input on whether or not to keep the trellises on the front of the building. Girl Scouts are going to be growing things in the garden out back. Hopefully, we'll be seeing flowers in the sanctuary from their efforts.

There will be a Building and Grounds meeting on December 3rd after church. We will be discussing on-going and up-coming projects. Come if you're interested. We need outside and inside helpers.

--Lee Wyman



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## Working Together to Build Community



### ECU Campus Ministry

On Nov. 2nd, I attended an ECU Campus Ministry Association meeting. Our speaker was Dr. Calvin Mercer, Director of Religious Studies at ECU.

He mentioned an interesting project that he offers in his classes called The Monastic Project. It started several years ago when a student wanted to do something besides the usual term paper. The student and he developed a project to find out how it would be to apply the guidelines of monastic life to your own daily life. For 28 days, the student would: eat a simple diet of healthy natural foods, no tobacco, no drinking, no caffeine; take a vow of celibacy, observe modified silence on the third and fourth Mondays, tell the truth all the time, write down what money they spent and their TV time, use their phone only when necessary, use the internet for work only, play no more than one hour per day of video games, do one daily act of kindness without anyone knowing they did it, do at least three hours of extended kindness/ volunteer work, do progressive relaxation exercises for a minimum of five minutes before bed, strive to do their work with awareness of their body movements, thoughts and feelings; perform a minimum of 65 minutes daily practice of conscious

physical movement, conscious breathing, formal meditation practice, spiritual reading, and journal writing. During the project the student would have regular short conversations with Dr. Mercer and with peers involved in the project.

The students who have participated in this project have found it very rewarding. Of course, the students are motivated to stay with the project because they're getting a grade! Dr. Mercer is wondering if the project would work outside the classroom setting. For that reason, he requested we contact our Campus Ministries to see if there were people interested in the project. He would be willing to mentor them. He said it would be fine if I invited any folks interested at the UUCG to participate, too.

If you're interested in learning more about The Monastic Project, I have left the manual for it in the UUCG library. Or you can contact Dr. Mercer at [mercerc@ecu.edu](mailto:mercerc@ecu.edu) He can email you the manual as an attachment. Dr. Mercer stressed that this is not an easy commitment. It needs to be performed with complete thoroughness in order for it to be of real value. I'm presenting this project to the members of our congregation because I think perhaps some of you might have an interest in it.

--Tracey Donahue

### WINTER SOLSTICE

In the Western Hemisphere, the revolving Earth's tilt brings the Tropic of Capricorn beneath the sun on Thursday, December 21st. So for us that's this year's date of the Northern Hemisphere's longest night. Different ones of us will celebrate this special time in various ways.

--Carroll Webber

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

\*Kelly Kurz's\* husband, Dave, had the surgery to save his leg. The surgery was very successful, and he was able to return home after ten days. Dave is doing extremely well, but is taking things one day at a time.

\*Sondra Haynes\* had knee replacement surgery recently, and is having a slow recovery. In addition to that, her significant other has to have cardiac surgery.

\*Toni Britt\* had surgery on November 9th, and is making an excellent recovery. She was already back in church on the 20th. She said that Ruel is a wonderful nurse.

\*Joanie DeGroot's\* brother, Joel, is better, and has been moved from a nursing home to his newly adapted home where he is receiving 24 hour care. Joanie was happy to be able to talk to him again after his being so sick for so long.

\*Jean Thatcher's\* husband had a mole that turned out to be melanoma. The surgery was very successful. Good news!

\*Elizabeth Jesse\* shared the news that her son, Ethan, has left his job after much frustration. She hopes he can find another job very soon. He lives in Tennessee.

\*Jeanne Stone\* recently celebrated her 75th birthday with a surprise party planned by her daughter. How nice!

\*Ray Sobel,\* and many others, enjoyed the November Dinners for Eight.

**Don English's** sister, Sally Seib, who has been dealing with a chronic blood and bone marrow disease for the past fourteen years, was recently diagnosed with leukemia.

**Don English's** grandson, Scott English has signed a letter of intent to attend ECU on a swimming scholarship. Scott is a distance swimmer.

\*Terry Shank\* had recent visiting relatives from Germany. She enjoyed being able to talk in German for a few days.

\*Don English and Bill Baker\* did their traditional mutual happy birthday wishes for November 7th. That is also \*Katherine Jones's\* birthday. Maybe we could have a trio of mutual good wishes!

Many of us enjoyed meeting and talking with Frieda's partner, Jennifer Long, who visited from Massachusetts for a few days in November.

\*Seinie Postma\* called Janet Doig and reprimanded Janet and Bill Baker for not visiting for two weeks. Seinie told Sylvia English that the whole congregation needs to go see her. She said all of this in English! Seinie misses us.

\*Chester Freeman's\* mother died November 14th in Belhaven.

\*Alex Pridgen\* got a good report from school. He has a very happy mother (Patrice)!

\*Lisa Brenner's\* mother died on November 19th.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH

## WE NEED YOUR HELP! CHANGES FROM THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

### Services in December

**December 3rd** - Ed Day will lead us in a dialogue about God .

**December 10th** - Rev. Michael Dowd "The Great Story" Michael identifies ways that the story of evolution bridges the rich diversity that exists within our UU communities today.

**December 17th** - Rev Frieda Gillespie - "Bend and You Need Not Break" There is more to the story of Hannakah than the legend admits. What can we learn from the rest of it?

**December 24th** - Rev Frieda Gillespie - "What Child is This?" We are not waiting for the messiah, but is she/he already here?

**December 31st** - Worship Committee "Bringing in the New and Doing Away with the Old" New beginnings and letting go.

### Program Council News

The UUCG Program Council, composed of the chairs of the various committees of the congregation, meets 6 times a year to coordinate the program activities of the church. The Council is chaired by the Vice-President. The next meeting will be Thursday, December 14th at 7:30pm. Meetings are open to all, especially if you're interested in getting more involved or taking a leadership position. If you have questions or have an item you'd like added to the agenda, please contact UUCG Vice-President, Rich Elkins at [webmaster@uugreenvillenc.org](mailto:webmaster@uugreenvillenc.org).

--Rich Elkins

The Worship Committee is tasked with managing the quality of church services. Therefore, we have begun the process of looking at how we spend our church time, what rituals we want to create, continue, modify, and develop.

In our discussions we have noticed what appears to be an increase in the number of announcements during the service, with a decrease in their effectiveness (as the microphone is carried around the room). We would like to improve the quality of the announcements by making the information available to members in writing, while at the same time cutting back on the last-minute announcements that take valuable service time.

We want to hear about all the things going on, but not at the cost of cutting back on the real core of our service. Therefore, the Worship Committee requests your help. Starting in December we would like everyone who has an announcement to send it in to the church secretary by noon on the Thursday before the service. Thank you for your help!

--Bruce Maxwell, Chair

### Guest at Your Table

Don't forget to make your daily contributions to the "guest" at your table.

### December RE Schedule

	Tween	Teen	Adult
Dec. 3	Time Travelers 1.	Buddhism	Forum
Dec 10	Time Travelers 2	Buddhism	Forum
<b>Dec 16</b>	<b>7:00 Teen Movie Night</b>		
Dec. 17	Yoga	Yoga	Forum
Dec 24	No RE	No RE	Forum

Deadline for next month's **beacon** is Tuesday 12 noon, Dec 19th

## UU Wednesday Dining Out Menu\*



December 6 – **Mayflower Seafood** -- 136 Davenport Farm Road, Winterville -- 321-6188  
December 13 – **Mongolian House** – 300 S.E. Greenville Blvd., 321-6868  
December 20 – **Applebee's** -- 202 S.W. Greenville Blvd., 355-2421  
December 27 -- **Finelli's** -- 2905 E. 5th Street -- 695-0020

### Let's Eat!

\* Wednesday dining out starts at 6:00 pm & is Dutch treat. Please let Sylvia English 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  
355-6658



**Minister**, Rev Frieda Gillespie  
**Religious Education Dir**, Victoria Brown  
**President**, Feryl Masters  
**Vice President**, Rich Elkins  
**Secretary**, Sue Ferris  
**Treasurer**, Brenda Stewart

#### Committee Chairs

Building and Grounds: Lee Wyman  
Communications: Don English  
Endowment: Bill Paulson  
Hospitality: Gail Butler & Marcia Sobel  
Membership: Ruel Tyer  
Religious Education: Patty Gade  
Social Action: Ray Sobel  
Worship: Bruce Maxwell

