



# The UUCG beacon

## DECEMBER 2007

The **beacon** is published monthly  
by the Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Greenville  
252-355-6658  
www.uugreenvillenc.org  
**beacon** Editor: Don English  
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### Sunday Services -- 10:30 am

**December 2**

*World AIDS Day*

**Rev. Ann Marie Alderman**

**December 9**

*Encouraging Spiritual Growth*

**Rev. Ann Marie Alderman**

**December 16**

*Holiday Choral Service*

UUCG Choir

**December 23**

*Peace on Earth*

**Rev. Ann Marie Alderman**

**December 30**

*On The TJ District*

**Jim Key**

Children's activities are available  
each Sunday.

## President's Notes:

It filled me with great pride last week to watch the evening news and see Rev. Alderman as one of those interviewed responding to a story aired earlier in the week about an "ex-gay" ministry. In case you missed it, there is a link to view it on our website.

I wish I'd been able to participate as well, but feel that with two speakers, one minister and one Christian, the necessary points were made, especially that we as Unitarian Universalists don't believe that trying to change people's orientation is either necessary or beneficial.

This event led to some discussion about the UUA's Welcoming Congregation Program and UUCG's potential participation during the recent Ministerial Start-Up Weekend. While most of those present were fully in favor of seeking official Welcoming designation, some expressed concerns. I'd like to take this opportunity to address some of those concerns.

### Why focus on GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and/or Transgendered)?

GLBT people are unwelcome in many faith communities. Welcome is not assumed when it is not expressed. In the Welcoming Congregation handbook, Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong explains, "For centuries, the church has been a leading force against sexual minorities. It is not surprising that gay people are reluctant to reach out to the very institution that oppresses them. Yet, gay, lesbian, [transgender], and bisexual people have no less need for warmth, caring, and affirmation than anyone else who calls the liberal church their religious home."

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# Reflections

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REFLECTIONS . . . of Rev Ann Marie Alderman

There are so many gifts I want to give you!

My special gift to you for this Holiday Season is an evening with singer, songwriter, humorist, MEG BARNHOUSE. For a donation of only \$10 a ticket, which goes completely to pay for Meg's time and travel expense, you will be entertained and moved. Meg is the minister for our sister congregation in Spartanburg, SC and has been entertaining folks on public radio, with her books and records, and during performances at General Assembly and

countless workshops for years. She uses story-telling and incredible insight to allow UU's (or any other free-thinkers) to view living in the conservative, Bible-Belt as a liberating spiritual opportunity! You don't want to miss this!

Bring all your liberal friends! Bring all your friends, Friday night, December 14th at 8:00 pm. Childcare will be provided! (If you find that the ticket price is out of your range, please call me! I want you to be there!)

--Ann Marie Alderman

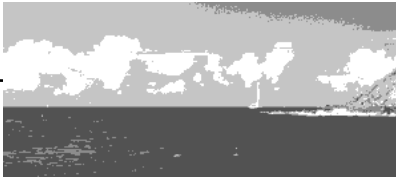
## LITTLE WILLIE CHRISTMAS ANGLES

The goal of the Little Willie Center is to meet the ongoing and ever-increasing needs of latch-key children, aged 3-17. Because many of the children come from lower income families, the UU Church has committed to making sure that every child involved with the Center has a Christmas gift. We have been involved with this project since 2002, so it is one of our long standing Social Action Committee (SAC) traditions.

This is how it works: SAC will place an angel on our Christmas tree with the name, age and sex of each child for whom we will be providing a gift. We ask that congregation members and friends take an angel, purchase a gift, wrap it and place it under the tree. Make sure you include the child's name. SAC members will deliver the gifts to Little Willie. Additional information will be in Sunday's Order of Service.

Let's continue to make this tradition the huge success, as it has been in previous years!

--Marta Dominguez



# On The Horizon

## **“It’s Not Easy Being Green” . . . Oh, Yes, it Is!**

Kermit the Frog was wrong. It is easy to be green.

One of our famous UUs, Ralph Waldo Emerson, commented that everything God made has a crack in it. His statement implies that everything that is human contains a defect, however small. His statement reminds me of Persian rug weavers who deliberately make an error in their rugs to acknowledge that human beings are far from perfect. I hope our Social Action Committee as it works toward creating focus and selecting a project can help to unify us on this issue.

SAC has met five times since September. We are a varied and diverse group—sometimes as few as four, often more. Ann Marie has gently guided us and I have made a strong effort to keep us focused. It has been our goal to find a project that:  
Is doable by a Church our size  
Is visible in the community, and  
We could all agree upon.

We considered myriad options: becoming a welcoming congregation, universal insurance, helping with the Bernstein Clinic, race relations and educating teenagers about non-violent alternatives, to name a few. Everyone had passionate interests in one project or another. In typical UU fashion, while we all respected each other’s projects, we seldom had the same level of

passion for another person’s project. However, we were able to find common ground on environmental issues. Every member could agree that we wanted a greener Greenville: sidewalks and crossing lights, more bicycle paths, and a community garden.

We agreed however that we would start with a doable project that would show immediate results and which would involve the whole congregation and engage others in our community. It is our goal to grow from there, involve ourselves with other organizations, reach out to the community at large and plan for longer-range projects. At our next meeting we will finalize and choose our project.

We are considering the following projects:  
Adopting a visible city street, either our own Oakmont or a nearby street, such as Elm or 14th, adopting a stream, becoming a Green Sanctuary. We, as a church, would make a commitment to leave a lighter footprint on the earth. And this commitment would be reflected in our daily and church life.

Longer range projects that SAC is considering could be becoming a “Cool City,” like Raleigh, creating a community garden or educating our community.

In January we will be finalizing our choices and making plans on how we will present our choices to the congregation. It is our hope to kick off our actual campaign on Earth Day, April 22.

One decision we did reach was to continue our tradition of gift giving during the Holidays.

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# News, Notes and Other Stuff

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## NOTES FROM RE

RE hosted our first Halloween Carnival this year. We had fun activities for the children, plenty of food and drink, and a very special Haunted House. The teens were the creators and participants in the haunted house using the theme of a haunted wedding party. Amber Brown was the organist at the funeral parlor. Mary Brown was the corpse bride. Aaron Gade was the talking head on the wedding banquet table and Nick Brown was the groom in the foggy graveyard. Elizabeth played the scary guide who led the children through the Haunted House. The teens were so good that the youngest children had to finish the haunted tour with the lights on. Afterwards, the teens came out to reassure the young children that they were just acting.

In December, there will be a "changing of the guard" in RE. Victoria Brown, Feryl Masters, and Patrice Alexander have finished their three-month team teaching commitment. Kim Smith, Pat Dix, and I will be sharing the team teaching through February. We will also be welcoming Jennifer Barr on board. She will be helping Rich Elkins lead the teens.

We are trying to update our contact information for the RE families. Parents, if I have not caught you already, please see me to fill out a new registration form.

The next teen night is Saturday, December 8th at 7pm. There will be plenty of pizza and drinks and a movie and/or games.

--Patty Gade

## 1ST BORN CHRISTMAS DISTRIBUTION

Please join us at First Born Holy Church on Saturday, December 15th, to assist with the food distribution. This will be the "Christmas" distribution. There are more people getting food than usual and more help is needed to distribute the food. Our congregation has promised to have at least 9 workers for this 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. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

If you can provide a ride for other UUCG members please let me know. If you need directions, please contact me at 252-916-5069 or email [toniebritt@clis.com](mailto:toniebritt@clis.com).

Thank you for your help.

--Toni Britt-Tyer


## CHRISTMAS DECORATION AT UUCG

It is time to decorate the church for the Christmas season. Building and Grounds is planning to do most of the decorations on Monday, Dec. 3rd.. If you can assist us, be at the church at 10:00 am. This will take the place of a December clean-up day. Because of the schedule of events at the church, this is the best day to start the holiday sprucing up... No pun intended...well actually the pun is intended. Bring your own egg nog.

--Ruel Tyer



# December 2007

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">           Contacting Rev. Ann Marie Alderman: Cell phone: 252-414-4076,            E-mail: <a href="mailto:minister@uugreenvillenc.org">minister@uugreenvillenc.org</a>. Office hours: Tuesdays 11:30-1:30 and Wednesdays 5-7 pm. Other times by appointment.         </div>						1  7:00 Fun'der Frolic
2  9:30 Forum 10:30 World AIDS Day-Rev Alderman	3  10:00 Holiday decorating  7:00 Com on Min	4  8:30 Breakfast @ K & W Cafeteria	5  6:00 Dine Out @ Red Lobster  7:00 Choir Practice	6	7	8  9:00 Bldg & Grnds  7:00 Teen Night
9  9:30 Forum 10:30 Encouraging Spiritual Growth--Rev Alderman  7:00 UU Meditation	10  7:00 Board Mtg	11  8:30 Breakfast @ K & W Cafeteria  6:30 Soc Act Com	12  6:00 Dine Out @ Thai Kitchen  7:00 Choir Practice	13	14  8:00 Evening with Meg Barnhouse	15  9:00 First Born
16  9:30 Forum 10:30 Holiday Coral Service -- Choir RE: UU Yoga	17	18  8:30 Breakfast @ K & W Cafeteria  8:00 Beacon Deadline	19  6:00 Dine Out @ Dales Indian  7:00 Choir Practice	20	21	22
23  9:30 Forum 10:30 Peace on Earth - Rev Alderman	24  7:00 A UU Christmas	25  <b>Christmas Day</b> 	26  6:00 Dine Out @ Finelli's	27	28	29
30  9:30 Forum 10:30 Jim Key, TJ Dist	31					

Deadline for next month's **beacon** is Tuesday , December 18 at 8:00 pm

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## Working Together to Build Community



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### **Why have a congregational designation?**

The congregational designation-type system is practiced in many denominations where each church is independent, but affiliated with a national or other body. In these churches, which include Unitarian Universalists, individual congregations make their own decisions. Other denominations that have similar congregational designation systems include Baptist (Welcome and Affirming), Methodist (Reconciling), Presbyterian (More Light), Lutheran (Reconciling in Christ), Disciples of Christ (Open and Affirming), and United Church of Christ (Open and Affirming). One major difference between most of these and the UUA, is that they are often run by independent associations advocating for greater GLBT inclusiveness within the denomination as opposed to being administered by an office of the denomination itself, like the UUA's OBGLTC (Office for Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns).

Of note, the only church in the Greenville area that is officially designated with their denomination's welcoming equivalent is Winterville Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

### **Won't this designation make us "the gay church"?**

We already are the gay church. We are also the pagan church, the tree-hugger church, the heathen church, the liberal church, the atheist church, or the church

that prays "To Whom It May Concern" ... you name it, we've probably been called it. I take pride in that! I'll even put our gayness up against Winterville Christian (officially designated, although no one I know of thinks of them as a "gay church.") We're definitely gayer. UUCG is the only church in Greenville that will perform same-sex union ceremonies. We recognize families regardless of their composition, where many do not. We have a lesbian minister, our previous interim minister has a same-sex partner, and you elected a gay congregation president this year. In our congregation, it isn't an issue that we've had a lesbian RE Chair, or Teen RE Leaders who are gay or bisexual. In the absence of a Metropolitan Community Church (which actually is a Gay Church), we're definitely it for Greenville and the surrounding area.

### **Shouldn't we be welcoming to everyone?**

Yes we should. And I believe we are, or try to be. (The occasional Republican joke isn't helpful). And when we aren't, we need to work on it. We need to work on issues of race and class. The UUA provides resources for this, but not a congregational designation. If it were deemed appropriate to have one, I'd be first in line to advocate for us doing it. The fact is, the UUA has a program because not all of our congregations are welcoming and we can all learn to be more accepting through greater understanding. Most GLBT people who go through the program admit that even they learn from the curriculum. I am personally eager to learn more especially about transgender issues.

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## On a Personal Note . . .

(NOTES continued from page 7)

One passage I particularly like from the UUA website that sums up a lot is as follows:

Our vision goes beyond the Welcoming Congregation Program. By taking this first step, we hope to explore more issues than those presented here – like sexism, racism, ableism, to name just a few. Becoming a Welcoming Congregation will act as a catalyst to learning more about ourselves and to ending exclusion. Only when we are truly open to the wealth of diversity in our world will the inherent worth and dignity of every person be affirmed with a large voice.

Over half of the congregations in the UUA are already designated as Welcoming Congregations. Last year, the Board wisely decided that the Interim Ministry period was not the appropriate time to begin the process, but committed to do so once we had a settled minister in place. That is past and the time is now. My greatest hope is that those people in the congregation who may have the most concerns take advantage of the opportunity to move toward greater sensitivity and understanding.

--Rich Elkins

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We agreed to support the organizations that we had traditionally supported and to add some to the list. So we will be sending donations to:

First Born, \$100

Little Willie, \$50

Foster Children of Greenville, \$50

PiCASO, \$50

The Women's Shelter, \$50

Next summer we will revisit the list of organizations that we presently support, determine if we want to continue to do so, delete some from our list or add new ones. Having this done every summer gives us a deadline and ensures program continuity.

I extend an invitation for you to join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, January 8th and become involved with the Social Action Committee. You might discover being green is fun!

--Marta Dominguez

### **SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

The Social Action Committee meeting is Tuesday, Dec 11th at 6:30 pm. It is an important meeting as we will be finalizing our project for the year. Please bring a friend. **PLEASE NOTE MEETING TIME HAS CHANGED to 6:30 PM!**

**See you there! It is easy being green!**

--Marta Dominguez



## WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH

### *Sunday Morning Fare* . . . by Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 2, World AIDS Day: Black, Poor, Female, Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 9, Encouraging Spiritual Growth: the third in a series of sermons reflecting on the Seven Principles. Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 16, Holiday Choral Service presented by UUCG's choir

December 23, Peace on Earth: Celebrating the "real meaning" of the Holidays. Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 24, Monday 7 pm, A UU Christmas, Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 30, Jim Key, Thomas Jefferson District VP

### **DECEMBER'S GUEST SPEAKER**

Jim (James C.) Key is the principal partner of The Shenandoah Group, a consulting firm focused on enterprise risk, controls, and audit solutions to help internal audit organizations add value for their enterprises.

Jim is active in the Institute of Internal Auditors, where he facilitates executive development

programs. He has developed and delivered training in control, risk management, and governance for clients all over the world.

Jim graduated from Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York and lives in Beaufort, South Carolina, where he was an organizing director for Coastal Banking Company and still serves on its board. He is also on the Board of Directors of Low-country National Bank. Additionally, Jim also serves on the board of the YMCA of Beaufort County.

Jim was a founding member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort and served as President for five years. He has chaired the Finance and Long Range Planning Committees. Also, he has served as Dean of the Mountain School for Congregational Leadership, Highlands, NC, for two years.

Jim currently is Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Thomas Jefferson District.

Jim resides in Beaufort, SC with his partner of 43 years, Liz. They have three children with partners and five grandchildren.

--Bruce Maxwell



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## UU Wednesday Dining Out Menu\*



December 5 -- **Red Lobster** -- 3501 S. Memorial Drive 756-4000  
December 12 -- **Dale's Indian Restaurant** -- 419 Evans Street -- 551-3253  
December 19 -- **Thai Kitchen** - 2400 S Memorial Dr - 252-551-1351  
December 26 -- **Finelli's** -- 511-G Red Banks Rd -- 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 Ann Marie Alderman  
**Religious Education Dir**, Victoria Brown  
**President**, Rich Elkins  
**Vice President**, Feryl Masters  
**Secretary**, Patrice Alexander  
**Treasurer**, Claudia Sundman  
**Office Administrator**, Jess Patterson

**Committee Chairs**  
Building and Grounds: Ruel Tyer  
Endowment: Bill Paulson  
Finance: Paul Alston  
Hospitality: Gail Butler & Marcia Fletcher  
Membership: Feryl Masters (acting)  
Religious Education: Patty Gade  
Social Action: Marta Dominguez  
Worship: Bruce Maxwell

