



The UUCG
beacon

December 2008

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

December 7

Remembering John Murray, the Father of Universalism
Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 14

Listening to the Wisdom of the World's Religions
Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 21

The Earth Forever Turning Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

Christmas Eve
A Child is Born

Rev. Ann Marie Alderman

December 28

Making Peace A Marathon
Bev Harju

Children's activities are available each Sunday.

President's Notes

Standing on the Side of Love(ing)

Well, the elections are finally over, and I think I'm just starting to get accustomed to the lack of political ads on TV. Overall, I was pretty happy with the results with the exception of a couple of judges and of course the several discriminatory ballot measures which passed in several states.

Proposition 8 in California has probably garnered the most attention, as it sought to overturn the decision of the California Supreme Court to create marriage equality for same-sex couples. The narrow passing of the proposition purports to amend the California Constitution to prohibit such marriages, but court cases are already under consideration to nullify the decision. Questions also remain as to whether the change nullifies same-sex marriages conducted while they were legal.

While the result of the vote was not highly surprising, what is most concerning to me is how such a small majority of those voting can attempt to take rights away from a group. In order for a legislature to revise a constitution, a super-majority (2/3 in most cases, but possibly 3/4 in some) is required. So how can a 52% popular vote do the same extreme task? That doesn't make sense to me, and I hope that the same reasoning will be the ultimate finding.

One good thing that has come from this vote is a groundswell of activism that hasn't seen for some time on GLBT issues. November 15th, rallies were held across the country in every state, and at least seven were held across North Carolina! One can also look to the closeness of the vote as a positive thing. A similar initiative in California in 2000 did not seek to change the Constitution, but changed the state's Family Code to define marriage as between a man and a woman. This initiative (Proposition 22) passed with about 10% more support (61.4%) than Proposition 8. While few candidates in 2008 supported complete marriage equality, believing in civil unions was much more widely espoused than only four years earlier!

Remember that it was only in 1967 that the US Supreme Court overturned laws banning interracial marriage in the case *Loving v. Virginia*. At that time, such laws were in effect in 16 states (including NC). While some may protest, it is my hope and belief that this decision will be the precedent that leads us to marriage equality. On the 40th anniversary of the decision, Mildred Loving (1939-2008), whose marriage was the subject of the case, expressed the same sentiment.

Reflections

. . . of Rev Ann Marie Alderman

Here's a month full of reasons to celebrate December from Rev. Ann Marie...Happy Holidays!

12/1: World AIDS Day--Day to pray for healing of all those suffering with AIDS and HIV. * **12/4:** Yoruba/Santeria feast of Orisha *Shango*, Defender Against Evil. * **12/5:** Day for meditation on Tantric Bodhisattva Goddess *Red Tara*, protector against evil and harm. * **12/6:** Mindfulness Day--Zen Buddhist day for mindfully seeing and acting with compassion for the poor and oppressed. * **12/7 eve to 12/8 eve:** Eid al-Adha--Muslim day of sacrifice to the one universal Deity for the good of all. * **12/7 eve to 12/15 eve** (12/14 peak): Geminid Meteor Showers. * **12/8:** Rohatsu--Zen Buddhist celebration of the *Buddha's* enlightenment. * **12/8:** Christian feast celebrating St. Anna's conception of *Blessed Mary*. * **12/8:** Death day of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1111), Sufi saint who taught about unity of the soul with the one universal Deity of 99 names and attributes. * **12/10:** Birthday of John Murray (1741), Trinitarian Universalist who believed that *Jesus* died to save all humanity, not just Christians. * **12/10:** Day the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, and fundamental rights were recognized world-wide (1948). * **12/11 eve to 12/13 eve:** Feast of the Immanent Feminine Divine Spirit--honoring Goddess as *Maha Devi Shakti* (Hindu), *Allat Ruh Sakinah* (Old Arabic-Sufi), *Eloah Ruach Shekhinah* (Jewish Kabbalah) & *Holy Spirit Wisdom* (Christian). * **12/12** (11:37 a.m. EST): Full Moon (Snow/Fire Moon). * **12/12:** Baha'i feast honoring the one Deity as *Masa'il--Mystery*. * **12/12:** First Appearance of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, Mother of God and Mother of the Oppressed, at the former shrine of Aztec Moon Goddess *Coatlicue* (Mexico 1531). * **12/13:** Feast of the Light-bringer-- hon-

oring Goddess as *Juno Lucina* (Old Roman) & *Lucia* (Old Swedish); merged with the Christian feast of St. Lucia. * **12/14:** Christian feast of St. John of the Cross (d. 1591), whose suffering--for advocating church reform--generated mystical union with Deity. * **12/15** (A 1/25): Old Egyptian festival of Neteret *Amenet-Rait-Mut*, the primordial Great Mother. * **12/15:** Day the Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution, guaranteeing fundamental rights to all (1791). * **12/15:** Death day of Fr. Pavel Florensky (1943), Orthodox Christian mystic who taught that *Holy Wisdom* is *Our Mother*, the *Holy Spirit*, third part of the *Holy Trinity*. * **12/15:** Day the Catholic Church silenced Fr. Matthew Fox for teaching Creation Spirituality (1988); day to mourn the silencing of all religious dissenters and reformers. * **12/16 to 12/24:** Christmas Novena/Las Posadas--Christian remembrance of the journey of *Blessed Mary* and *St. Joseph* to Bethlehem and their taking refuge in a cave-stable. * **12/17:** Yoruba/Santeria feast of Orisha *Babalu Aye*, Healer of Deadly Diseases. * **12/17:** Day the Clean Air Act was enacted (1963); day to give thanks for the air we breathe. * **12/17 to 12/23:** Saturnalia/Opalia--Old Roman festival honoring God *Saturn* (the weak Sun) & Goddess *Ops* (the fallow Earth); celebrated with gift-giving, revelry, and abolishment of all class distinctions. * **12/17 eve to 12/24 eve** (12/22 peak): Ursid Meteor Showers. * **12/18:** Day the Constitution's 13th Amendment went into effect, outlawing all slavery (1865). * **12/21** (7:04 a.m. EST): Winter Solstice/Solar New Year--Marks the beginning of Winter and the shortest day and longest night of the year; celebration of the darkness with dancing near the hearth fire. * **12/21 to 12/22:** Old European Festival of Evergreen Trees; merged into International Arbor Day. Celebrated by planting trees
(See REFLECTIONS page 3)

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

Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person

(REFLECTIONS continued from page 2) and hanging wreaths (symbols of eternal life). * **12/21 to 12/25**: Old Romano-Egyptian festival of Goddess *Isis* giving birth to God *Horus*. * **12/21 eve to 12/29 eve**: Hanukkah/Festival of Lights--Jewish festival commemorating a victory in their struggle for religious freedom and rededication of the second Temple of Jerusalem to *Elohim*. Menorah candles are lit. * **12/21 to 1/9**: Hopi & Zuni Soyala New Year Festival of purification and renewal. Homes are cleaned, fires doused, and personal restraint is observed. * **12/22**: Taoist festival honoring *Wang-Mu/Empress Mother*, Mother of Compassion and Wisdom, and manifestation of the *Tao* (Cosmic Power of Creation and Destruction). Also celebrates the peak of the feminine *Yin* half of the year and the *Shen* of Earth, North, and Winter; prayers are made for rest and renewal, and offerings are made to the Cosmos. * **12/22**: Tohji-Taisai-Shinto rite honoring Sun Goddess *Amaterasu*. Storm God *Susano-o* angered Her, and She withdrew into a cave until enticed out with music and dance. * **12/22**: Beginning of Capricorn (the Goat). * **12/22**: Birthday of Lily Montagu (1873), who co-founded Liberal Judaism in 1902. She was the first Jewish woman to serve as lay minister, both officiating and preaching. * **12/24 eve**: Mother Night-- Christian vigil for the laboring *Blessed Mary*. * **12/25** (OC 1/7): Christmas-- Christian celebration of *Blessed Mother Mary* giving birth to *Child Jesus* by the power of the *Holy Spirit*. * **12/25 to 1/5**: Yule--Old Anglo-Teutonic festival honoring *Freyr* and *Freyja* (Deities of Fertility) and the new-born *Balder* (God of Light), son of *Frigga* and *Odin*. Celebrated with evergreens,

fires, and feasting. * **12/26**: Day commemorating the death of Zoroastrian Prophet *Zarathustra* (551 BCE). Zoroastrians worship by making offerings to a sacred fire. * **12/26 to 1/1**: Kwanzaa--Festival celebrating positive African traditions; emphasizes unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. * **12/27** (7:23 a.m. EST): New Moon. * **12/28**: Day the first woman was ordained a Catholic priest (without Vatican authority) (1970). * **12/28**: Day the Endangered Species Act was enacted (1973); day to mourn those creatures already extinct. * **12/28**: Day an Islamic court ruled female genital mutilation to be un-Islamic and banned the practice (1997). * **12/28 eve to 1/7 eve**: Muharram/Muslim New Year (Year 1430) & A'ashurah. * **12/29**: Day Guatemala's 36-year civil war ended (1996); vigil for true peace, justice, and respect for the human rights of all in Central America. * **12/31**: Oharai/Grand Purification Festival--Shinto rite exorcising evil from the world. * **12/31**: Yoruba/Santeria festival of Orisha *Yemaya*, Mother of the Sun and Moon. * **12/31**: Baha'i feast honoring the one Deity as *Sharaf--Honor*. * **12/31**: Feast of *Father Time*, who ultimately overcomes us all. * **12/31 eve**: New Year's Eve--Vigil for the new year; night for self evaluation and resolving to better oneself.

Excerpted from
THE MYSTIC'S WHEEL OF THE YEAR 2008
*A Multifaith Calendar Reflecting Eco-Egalitarian
Spirituality*

www.WheeloftheYear.com

Affirming justice, equity and compassion towards all

Worship Committee

Are you interested in being a possible Guest Speaker during a Sunday Service? We need you! We welcome people who would like to share personal experiences or readings that they are passionate about and that are spiritually relevant to other Unitarians Universalists, the community or the world. If you are interested and have a possible topic or two in mind, please let me or Rev. Ann Marie know. Tell us in person or email either of us. Talks are reflexively important experiences. For example, I find that preparing my talk for Dec. 28 about my personal peace marathon stimulates a lot of interesting thoughts. As for Worship Committee progress, we have a good core of members but we welcome newcomers as we continue to shape the worship service, an ongoing process that we enjoy.

Due to holiday events, our next Worship Committee meeting will be on Monday, December 8 at 5:30. Note the date and time shift.

—Bev Harju

Children's RE

Children's RE is preparing a Christmas skit for the story time on December 21st. The skit is *The Story of the Yule Log* and a few practices outside of our regular RE time will be required. Please sign up for a part by contacting Victoria Brown, DRE at 747-7785 or HemlocMoon@aol.com.

The RE committee is looking for new faces on the committee. Serving on the RE committee is a great way to get to know other parents and whether you are an idea-oriented person or a task-oriented person, you can make a great contribution to children's RE. If you are interested, please join us at the next RE meeting on December 7th after the service.

The next Teen Night is December 13th at 7pm at the church. Come enjoy a movie and pizza and great fellowship.

December birthdays in RE:

December 8th Liota Weinbaum — 16 years

December 13th David Brown — 3 years

December 21st Lutia Stayton — 5 years

December 27th Alex Pridgen — 7 years

—Patty Gade

Service Auction Set

Hear ye! Hear ye! The time has come again to gather together and bid on the talents of your fellow members and friends! That's right, it's the UUCG's annual Service Auction, and it's going to be held on Friday, December 12 at 7 pm. Please mark your calendars and make your plans to attend this wonderful evening.

The Auction catalog will be available for perusal starting Sunday, November 23. Don't wait to make up your shopping list! The evening will include good fun, some delightful holiday entertainment and many great bidding wars. Also, be on the look out for some delicious desserts that we'll be auctioning off, just in time for your holiday parties. The Fundraising Committee is excited about this year's event and we are hoping to make the most successful one yet.

If you would like more information, please call Jennifer Barr at (252) 258-5679, or send an email to her at chamber@ayden.com or mrs_jenbarr152304@yahoo.com.

See you there!

—Jennifer Barr



December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	01 6pm Girl Scouts	02 8:30am Breakfast at Cracker Barrel 12pm Greenville Minister's Meeting 7pm KTC Buddhist Group 7pm Choir Practice	03 7pm Adult Bible Study	04	05 7pm Course in Miracles	06 10am Christmas Parade: Greenville 4pm Christmas Parade: Griston
07 9:30am The Forum 10:30am Worship Service	08 5:30pm Worship Committee Meeting 7pm Council Meeting 7:30pm Sierra Club Meeting	09 8:30am Breakfast at Cracker Barrel 6:30pm Social Action Committee Mtg 7pm KTC Buddhist Group 7pm Choir Practice	10 7pm Adult Bible Study	11 6pm Girl Scout Leader Meeting	12 7pm Annual Service Auction 7pm Course in Miracles	13 9am Building & Grounds Workday 10:30am Christmas Parade: Farmville 2pm Christmas Parade: Winterville 7pm Teen Night (Kitchen and RE rooms)
14 9:30am The Forum 10:30am Worship Service 11:45am Membership Committee Meeting 7pm UU Meditation Group	15 6pm Girl Scouts 7pm Board Meeting	16 8:30am Breakfast at Cracker Barrel 7pm KTC Buddhist Group 7pm Choir Practice	17 7pm Adult Bible Study	18 6pm Greenweavers CUUPS Yule Celebration	19 7pm Course in Miracles	20 9am First Born Food Distribution 1pm EDS Support Group in Library 11am Christmas Parade: Ayden
21 9:30am The Forum 10:30am Worship Service	22	23 8:30am Breakfast at Cracker Barrel 7pm KTC Buddhist Group 7pm Choir Practice	24 7pm Christmas Eve Service	25	26 7pm Course in Miracles	27
28 9:30am The Forum 10:30am Worship Service 5:30pm UU Young Adults Meeting and Potluck	29	30 8:30am Breakfast at Cracker Barrel 7pm KTC Buddhist Group 7pm Choir Practice	31			

Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregation

PREZ NOTES (continued from page 1)

“Surrounded as I am now by wonderful children and grandchildren, not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and our love, our right to marry, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the “wrong kind of person” for me to marry. I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. Government has no business imposing some people's religious beliefs over others. Especially if it denies people's civil rights. I am still not a political person, but I am proud that Richard's and my name is on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about.”

Today, the idea that prejudice should prohibit marriage based on race has been diminished to just a small portion of the population, and isn't something which could be publicly espoused without considerable protest and dissent. Had they lived in Virginia or in our own state, the parents of our President Elect would have been prohibited from marrying! My sincere hope is that we will not have to wait long before marriage equality becomes the law of our land and that public opinion follows suit.

—Rich Elkins

FIRST BORN COLLECTIONS

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. If you have food items, **non-perishable**, you can leave them in the library as well. I will deliver the food to First Born when I deliver the bags. If you have any questions concerning this Social Action project, please contact me at 252-916-5069 or email toniebritt@clis.com.

Thank you for your contributions.
Toni Tyer, The Bag Lady

USED SHOE DRIVE

The American Business Women's Association (ABWA) is working with Destined4Success to collect used shoes for recycling. The shoes are being recycled and given to people in need as far away as third world countries. **Please donate your used shoes.** Bring your unwanted shoes to UUCG and leave them in the library. If the shoes have strings, please tie them together. If no strings, please put a rubber band around them so they will stay together. All shoes are recycled except flip flops and steel toed shoes/boots. Thank you for your contributions for this project. At this time there is no deadline. ABWA plans to do this indefinitely. If you have any questions concerning the used shoe drive, contact me at 252-916-5069 or email toniebritt@clis.com.

Thank you for your contributions.
Toni Tyer, The Shoe Captain

Promoting a free and responsible search for truth & meaning

Are you ready to ride?

Calling all friendly faces and holiday cheer! You're needed to be on the UUCG's holiday float in one of five Pitt County parades! The dates and times are as follows:

Saturday, December 6 at 8:30 am - meet at UUCG to car pool to Greenville parade, which will take place at 10 am. Following the parade, we'll return to the church for lunch and fellowship, then head to the Grifton parade at 2 pm. That parade will take place at 4 pm, and everyone should be back at the UUCG by 5:30 pm. If you can only make one of these parades, that's fine. Just mark down the leaving times and plan to be at the UUCG prior to take off!

On Saturday, December 13 we'll meet at UUCG at 9 am and head to Farmville for their parade, which takes place at 10:30 am. Immediately following, we'll head to Winterville for their parade, which takes place at 2 pm. Lunch will be picnic style upon arrival in Winterville. We should return to the UUCG by 3:30 pm.

On Saturday, December 20, we'll meet at UUCG at 9:30 am and head to Ayden for their parade, which will take place at 11 am. We should be back at UUCG by 12:30 pm, hopefully the winner for the second year in a row!

Also, we can hand out candy and other literature, if someone is willing to provide it. We realize that this is a lot of parades back to back, and we certainly don't expect everyone to be in all of them. However, it will be easier if we can have different people participate in the different parades.

To sign up to participate in any of the parades, please call Jennifer Barr at (252) 258-5679, or email her at chamber@ayden.com or mrs_jenbarr152304@yahoo.com. Every person who can help will be welcome.

Taking the light and hope of UUCG into Pitt County is one of the greatest joys I've shared as a member of this congregation, and hope those who can participate this year will make the time to do so.

—Jennifer Barr

FIRST BORN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Please join us at First Born Holy Church on Saturday, December 20th, to assist with the food distribution. The distribution begins at 8:30am until 12:00pm. This will be the Christmas distribution. 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.

Thank you for your help.

Toni Tyer

Respecting the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

Deadline for next month's **beacon** is Tuesday, Dec. 18th at 8:00

**The Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Greenville
131 Oakmont Drive
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355-6658**

Minister, Rev Ann Marie Alderman
Religious Education Dir, Victoria Brown
President, Rich Elkins
Vice President, Patrice Alexander
Secretary, Susan Foreman
Treasurer, Claudia Sundman
Office Administrator, Michele Covi

Committee Chairs

Building and Grounds: Terry Shank
Endowment: Bill Paulson
Finance: Paul Alston
Hospitality: Gail Butler
Membership: Bette Nelson & Kay Alston
Religious Education: Patty Gade
Social Action: Pat Tesh
Worship: Bev Harju

