



The UUCG Beacon

PRESIDENT'S NOTES



As I was traveling recently I happened to walk by several shops with all kinds of things for me to buy. I belong to several clubs that give me points for various activities which I can use to buy wonderful things. Sadly, I haven't been able to find anything I want to own available for purchase in these clubs. Most seem totally useless to me. It made me wonder who buys all these things. We live in a consumer society. We are bombarded with messages, overt and subtle to induce us to spend our money. They try to convince me I won't be a true man, or good father, or be respected or happy if I don't buy whatever is being sold. The marketers have gotten good at finding what triggers will get us to buy.

This time of year, especially is when the pressure is greatest. We have to find the perfect gift, and have the most spectacular decorations. We need to prepare the perfect dinner and have the most fun party. This is supposed to be "The most wonderful time of the year". In fact it is the most stressful and depressing time for many. There is certainly nothing wrong with buying something you need or will really enjoy. Somebody has to prepare Thanksgiving dinner and have parties. It's important not to let these things take control of your life, however.

I like to evaluate my purchases and activities from the future perspective. I try to answer the question "Will be glad next week that I bought or did this?" If the answer is no, then I probably should forgo it. Of course, I don't always know what I will think tomorrow, next week, or next year. It has been my best test to date, however.

This also the season of giving. We are bombarded with requests for donations. They come in the mail, on the phone, and through the internet. It is good to contribute to worthy causes. We want to help others and make the world better. Sadly, it is also the season for scams. I encourage you to donate what you feel you can, but check first. CharityNavigator.org, charities.org, and givewell.org are all useful sources to ensure your donation goes to help your cause, and not a swindler. Giving locally can also help make sure your donation is used for good. Beware of sound alike charities that try to fool you into thinking they are someone else. The UUSC, Cancer Support of Eastern North Carolina, First Born Food Bank, and the Greenville Homeless Shelter are all good causes that our congregation supports. Of course, our church can always use help.

As we navigate the holiday season, do things you enjoy, buy things you want to have or to give, find ways to help others. Above all, remember that this a time to get together with friends and family; a time to celebrate; a time to be joyful. Don't let commercial pressures or unrealistic expectations control you. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanza, Happy Mawlid-an-Nabi, Happy Yule, and of course, Happy New Year.

Feryl Masters, UUCG Board President

MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS



Have you ever been where it's really dark? Feeling helpless? Afraid?

My great grandparents' farmhouse had no electricity upstairs and an outhouse out back. As a kid when I needed to get up in the night to relieve myself, the night was so black I couldn't see my hand even an inch in front of my face. Climbing down the stairs, outside and down "the path" was frightening! Even a single candle seemed very bright.

In the countryside, when the sky is clear and the landscape free of street lights, stars seem to "come out at night." It is glorious!

Our dark winter season is blessed by multi-colored, interfaith lights: Christmas stars, Hannukah menorahs, Kwanzaa kinaras, India's Deepavali (cluster of lights), and the bonfires of Winter Solstice. *"No theology or cherished church doctrine has a monopoly on kindness and friendship and hope, on joy and the opening of the human heart"* (Robert Nelson West).

The problem is that all our interfaith lights are outshone by the "light pollution" of commercial, entertaining, holiday light shows everywhere we go.

As we gather with loved-ones for the holidays, our little lights of kindness and friendship and hope will shine brightest when we dare to step out of the holiday glitz and bring our honest light to the dark, helpless feelings of the ones we spend our holidays with: family, friends, and nameless strangers.

May we allow others' twinkling lights of hope and faith bring rays of joy to our own darkest nights as well. We need one another. Let many lights shine!

Blessings!
Rev. Rod Debs, Pastor

Note: Please send me a picture of yourself with your infant, child or grandchild. I am gathering these proofs that love and compassion are at the core of our humanity, even when dark fear and violence seem to dominate so many relationships at home and abroad. I hope you enjoy looking through your pictures of loved ones as you search for one to send to me! Bright blessings!

UUCG Board Notes November 2015

This month, the Board:

- Accepted Lilani's resignation as Interim with thanks for her service.
- Agreed to hire Holly Brown as Interim DRE
- Accepted Susan Foreman's resignation as Membership Co-Chair with thanks for her service.
- Appointed Ruel Tyer as membership Co-Chair
- It was noted that Lilani and Susan will continue to help as their time permits.
- Approved Policy Manual updates from Ambience, Communications, and Finance Committees
- Thanked Toni Broshears for her work cleaning out the office
- Agreed to investigate alternative cleaning services

NEWS-----



Social Action Committee

Share the Plate for **December** - Greenville Utilities Neighbor to Neighbor (aka Warm In Winter) Program -- The Neighbor to Neighbor program meets local needs by providing funds to assist low income families in Pitt County with their heating bills. It's a voluntary program, supported through GUC customers' tax-deductible contributions. GUC matches contributions, up to \$20,000 each year. <http://www.guc.com/neighbor-to-neighbor>

World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day is observed internationally each year on **December 1st**. Here are some local events to commemorate the day.

- PiCASO will hold their annual observance at the Pitt County Courthouse starting at Noon.
- The ECU LGBT Resource Office will be showing the film "Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt" at the ECU Heart Institute starting at 1:30pm. This is the same film shown on November 18th at Hendrix Theater, but this showing is on the Medical Sciences Campus.
- PiCASO will partner with Delta Sigma Theta for an Awareness Fair at Miller Motte College on W.H.Smith Blvd from 2-4pm and again from 5-7pm with rotating informational stations.
- The LGBT Resource Office in partnership with the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center and Campus Recreation and Wellness present World AIDS Day 2015. This year's commemoration, entitled "A Promise to Remember," honors the memory of lives lost and shares stories of determination and survival. The program will feature stories of remembrance, as well as personal stories of perseverance and hope. This event will be held at ECU's Hendrix Theater in Mendenhall Student Center starting at 7pm.



-----EVENTS

Games Night

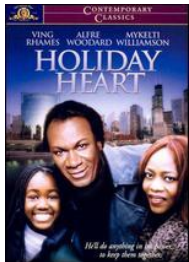
Saturday, December 5th at 6:00pm-9:00pm

Join us at the church between for fun and games and refreshments. Games will be provided, or you can bring your favorite board or card game and teach it to us!



Moral Movies/Classic GLBT Movie Night

Friday December 4th at 7:00pm.



In order to avoid conflicts with the busy holiday season, Moral Movies and Classic GLBT Movie Nights will be combined into one event and held early in December. Both will return to their regular schedules in January.

The film for December's combined Movie Nights will be "Holiday Heart" (2000), starring Ving Rhames and Alfre Woodard. As always, refreshments will be served and there will be discussion following the film.

Future Movies

January's Classic GLBT Movie Night film will be "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar" (1995) on January 15th. If you have suggestions of films for either of our regular movie events, [email Social Action](#).

December 2015

Tuesday December 1		World AIDS Day (see previous story for events/times/locations)
Friday December 4	7:00pm	Moral Movie/Classic GLBT Movie Night
Saturday December 5	6:00pm	Games Night
Sunday December 6	10:30am	"Jolly Old Saint Nicholas" Rev. Debs
Monday December 7	Evening	Pizza Inn Fundraiser (Memorial Dr. location)
Thursday December 10	7:00pm	PFLAG meeting
Friday December 11	6:30pm	Out Greenville Potluck
Sunday December 13	10:30am 12:00pm	"Interfaith Celebrations of Light" Rev. Debs Cookie Swap
Sunday December 20	10:30am	"Love Is Born Again" Rev. Debs
Thursday December 24	5:00pm	Christmas Eve Service (Free Spirit Inclusive Catholic Community)
Sunday December 27	10:30am	"Kwanzaa"

View the entire calendar at <http://www.uugreenvillenc.org/calendar.html>

STAFF

Minister: Rev. Rod Debs
 Music Director: Mort Stine
 Choir Director: Sue Jefferson
 RE Director: Holly Brown

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President: Feryl Masters
 Vice President: Richard Baltaro
 Secretary: Shannon Sparrow
 Treasurer: Brenda Stewart
 At Large: Cam Scales
 At Large: Toni Broshears
 Past President: Rich Elkins

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS

9:30AM Mindful Meditation
 10:30AM Worship
 12:00PM Lunch Groups

TUESDAYS

8:00AM Breakfast Group
 7:30PM KTC Buddhist Meditation

WEDNESDAYS

7:00PM Choir Practice
 7:00PM Team Trivia @ Coffee Shack

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Ambiance:

Brenda Stewart

Building and Grounds:

Bob Hudson

Caring:

Ruel Tyer & Ruth Abramson

Communications:

Toni Broshears

Endowment:

Feryl Masters

Fellowship:

Laura Schroeder & Michael Betteken

Finance:

Richard Baltaro

Fundraising:

Patrice Alexander & Jennifer Schultz

Hospitality:

Holly Brown & Jacki Vaughn-Heath

Membership:

Susan Foreman & Laura Neece-Baltaro

Social Action:

Rich Elkins & Sandy Shephard

Stewardship:

Patrice Alexander & Feryl Masters

Worship:

Pat Dix & Jerry Gregory

Youth Religious Education:

Shannon Sparrow & Christy Hoppenthaler

Deadline for next month's **Beacon** is **Wednesday, December 23 at 8:00 pm**

Email Beacon submissions to beacon@uugreenvillenc.org