

President's Message

Although the word never appears in our covenant or principles, trust is a very important part of our Congregational life. Trust is present in different ways, and all are important. Our congregation is built on trust, and cannot survive without it.

The Congregation trusts our leaders to work for the good of the Congregation. While there are limits on what our leaders can do without getting prior approval, our style is very different from other organizations. Many businesses and government agencies seem to

have little trust in employees to do their job correctly without detailed rules and constant supervision. It may be necessary in those organizations, but it seriously hampers what they can do and damages the atmosphere. I believe people do better when they are empowered and allowed to solve problems without tight controls.

We trust our fellow congregants to care for our church. We don't lock it up so only a select few can enter the building without proper supervision. We don't monitor who comes in and out. We set our rules for use as loosely as laws and reason permit. We don't set minimum donation levels to be members. We trust each other to contribute what we can reasonably manage to support our missions. I trust that when I need help and ask for it, it will be forthcoming. Keeping this a church we all can use and own helps foster a sharing attitude.

Lastly, and I think most important, we trust each other to respect our lifestyles, beliefs and truths. While I don't believe as many others in our congregation do, I respect their beliefs and trust them to respect mine. I trust my fellow members to listen with open minds to what I believe and accept that it is my truth, and is valid for me. In return, I respect and support those whose truth is different from mine. I trust that people will assume I have good intentions and not look for harmful motives. I also trust that people will be honest with me, rather than tell me what they think I want to hear.

While the word trust never appears in our statements of who we are, or what we believe, it is an important part of our church. Without trust, we could not be the welcoming supportive place that we are. It is important that we work to maintain the trust we have developed. Too many parts of our society have lost, or never had, the trust we share. Our trust is something truly valuable. Let us nurture it. Let us appreciate it. Let us share it with those who seek us out.

Feryl Masters feryl@uugreenvillenc.org



Minister's Reflections

Mission Statement

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville, NC

United in our diversity, we covenant with one another to search, to serve, to grow and to love. We seek out those who have been turned away, we embrace those whose spiritual path has been isolated, we strengthen ourselves to comfort the suffering, we share with our children our commitment to a more just and compassionate society.

Exclusion is something 'most everyone understands. Seeking and embracing those who have been excluded and become isolated is at the heart of our mission. It's who we are.

Many of us questioned our religions-of-origin about God's judgment of hell-fire (eternal torture) exclusion of God's children who don't believe and obey. Many left our religions over (male) hierarchy that declared the truth, wrote the rules and excluded women from leadership.

Many of us challenged being told whom we could play with, go to school with, and marry--- and we made a difference. The right to marry is now the law of the land! We still struggle in the courts with those who claim "religious exclusion" from doing their government jobs when it comes to serving those their religion condemns.

Many of us challenge economic injustices where working adults and their children live in poverty, where families are torn apart by job loss, medical expenses, homelessness. Where those with mental illness and drug addictions are abandoned to the streets or criminalized and incarcerated rather than provided treatment.

Many of us speak up to reject corporate war profiteering and nation-sponsored mass murder. Some of us are in U.S. military service and know our nation could do better.

Many of us condemn exclusion wherein ethnic and religious stereotypes are used to ridicule and threaten, and where gun violence and mass incarceration have taken the place of hangings and slavery. We are here because of the first of our covenant Principles, that we "affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person."

Many of us are here because we treasure "the right of conscience"--- another one of our covenant Principles, that we will not be excluded for our differences from the dominant culture. We have come to feel grateful for the rich diversity of humanity and diversity of insights and experience in our Unitarian Universalist congregations, rather than feeling that anyone different must be excluded.

Now, in the heat of another national election cycle, we are witness to electoral exclusion, where the right of the wealthy to monopolize public speech and electoral politics has been affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court and where legal obstacles are created to discourage the least privileged from voting and from shaping our nation's future.

The Hebrew Scriptures commanded the early Jews to welcome the stranger and to treat the stranger like family because, "you were once strangers in the land of Egypt."

You and I have known exclusion as strangers in our worlds. Now it is our joy to draw upon our wonderfully creative Unitarian Universalist diversity, and join with others of good will in our community, to find new ways to inspire a more just and compassionate society that excludes no one.

Blessings!
Rod Debs
minister@uugreenvillenc.org

UUCG Board Notes

- Revised additional sections of the Policy Manual
- Discussed the Audit Team results. The audit found no irregularities and was very positive.
- Discussed the Stewardship (Pledge) Program
- Encouraged youth participation in the service and agreed to let youth do the greeting or story when they requested to
- Discussed the need for a Leadership development program and ways to support committees and task forces.
- Reviewed and approved the changes in the Choir Director staffing. Stephen Brand and Sue Jefferson will now split the duties and payments.

Program Council Reminder

Program Council will meet after service on **February 7th, 2016.** The UUCG Program Council (comprised of the Committee Chairs and other important leaders and volunteers of the Congregation) will meet after the service, starting at approximately 12:30 pm on Sunday, FEB 7th. Please make any possible effort to join us for this (roughly) quarterly event where we coordinate the programs of the Congregation. Meeting is expected to last until about 2pm. The Full Agenda is still a work in progress. If you need child care, let me know AHEAD OF TIME, and it will be arranged. Lunch will be provided. A suggested donation of \$5 to help defray the cost is appreciated.



Richard Baltaro rbaltaro@uugreenvillenc.org

Stewardship



Patrice Alexander and Feryl Masters are Co-Chairs

Looking for volunteers, especially members who have experience with stewardship/pledge campaigns in other congregations.

Two Goals this year: \$99,999 if we want to expand our programs and outreach; \$92,000 if we want to maintain what we have. This will be a challenge since several of our larger pledging units have moved in the last couple of years.

Starting in February Rev Rod will be working with the Worship Committee to include information about stewardship and pledging in our services at least monthly as a way of educating all our members and friends.

We want our theme this year to focus on the fact that UUCG is where you and your contributions can make a real difference and make you feel good - who has a gift of words who can help us come up with a snappy saying?

Pledge Campaign this year will run from Kick-off Luncheon on March 20th through April 17th.

We hope to have entertainment including skits, songs, and magic tricks so please prepare share your talents

Fundraising

Patrice Alexander and Jennifer Schultz are Co-Chairs

Looking for volunteers who have ideas about how to raise money from folks outside of our congregation--most ideas are not too crazy to consider so try us!

A Service Auction is scheduled for Saturday, March 12, at 6:00 p.m. It will be a Potluck Dinner. We really need assistance from everyone in identifying services and items to be donated/auctioned off, then promoting the auction to friends and family, and finally attending and having a wonderful time bidding on some great items. Service items that have proved very popular in the past have been massages, dinners-to-go (like chili and cornbread), frozen soups, group specialty dinners, gift wrapping, sewing services, shopping services, maintenance and handyman services, etc, etc. In addition - if you have items that you think will bring more at the auction rather than the yard sale in May please donate them. We would also like to have a silent auction.



Share The Plate



February's Share the Plate is Joy Soup Kitchen

In 1994, Barbara Taft realized that her mission in life was to feed the homeless after she saw how many people were looking to her church for help. She gathered support from many churches and volunteers to start the JOY Soup Kitchen.

This ministry has since fed thousands of people from around the area who, without the soup kitchen, would go hungry. Between 130-170 people are fed each day, including many children! Clothing and other donated supplies are also available for those in need.

February 2016 Worship Schedule

Feb. 7 "Feel Good" Rev. Rod Debs, pastor

Feb. 14 "Chocolate Communion" Michael Betteken Feb. 21 "Standing on the Side of Love" Rev. Rod....

Feb. 28 "Follow Your Heart" by Richard Selzer, ECU Readers' Theatre

Pizza Fundraiser!

We will be holding a fundraiser at the Pizza Inn at 1840 Greenville Blvd (between 10th and Charles) from 5 to 9 PM on Tuesday February 23rd. We can use a few helpers, and lots of diners. We will get the tips and a portion of the dinner bills that evening. If you plan to eat out, come see us and help raise some money for UUCG.



EAT PIZZA AND HELP US RAISE SOME DOUGH.
IT'S AS EASY AS PIE!



With February being African American History Month, both of our monthly film series will focus on African American history or experiences.

Moral Movies

Saturday, February 13th, starting at 6:30pm will be Moral Movies focusing on African American History. The final film has not been determined yet, because having recently screened "Selma", a dramatic recreation, we would like to do a documentary instead, but haven't found the right one yet. Should those plans not work out, we may have another historical drama, and two possible candidates are:



"Mississippi Burning" (1988) starring Gene Hackman and Willem Dafoe about FBI agents investigating the disappearance of civil rights activists in 1964, **or**

"Ghosts of Mississippi" (1996) starring Alec Baldwin, Whoopi Goldberg, and James Woods where the widow of murdered civil rights leader Medgar Evers and a District Attorney struggle to finally bring the murderer to justice.



Moral Movies is regularly held on the second Saturday of each month starting at 6:30pm. Refreshments are served and a discussion of the film and surrounding issues follows the showing.

That morning is also the Moral March in Raleigh. The Moral March (also known as HKonJ) and Moral Mondays protests at the General Assembly were the inspiration for a Moral Movies series in the Summer of 2014. Our Moral Movies series is a local continuation of that same effort

Classic GLBT Movie Night

Friday, February 19th, starting at 7:00pm, Classic GLBT Movie Night will turn the focus from history to the experiences of African American LGBTQ individuals and feature a film by African American writer and director Patrik-lan Polk (most well known as the creator and director of the Logo series Noah's Arc). "The Skinny" (2012) is the story of five Brown University classmates, four gay, one lesbian, who reunite in New York City for a weekend of fun, sin, secrets, lies and drama.



Classic GLBT Movie night is regularly held on the third Friday of each month starting at 7pm. The film showing starts at 7:30 and is

preceded by showing three film trailers from which the audience chooses which film will be shown the following month. Refreshments are served.