



Unitarian Universalist

Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley

Religious Freedom • Diverse Perspectives

500 Montreat Road
Black Mountain, NC 28711

For more information about our
congregation, call

(828) 669-8050 • uucsv.org

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UUCSV

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BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, April 17 • 6:00 p.m.

UUCSV Newsletter

Send newsletter information to

Norm Kowal

normankowal@bellsouth.net

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Tuesday, April 24, 2007 at 10 a.m.

Covering May 2007

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Message from the Board: All A'Board!

Please see the notice inside regarding the upcoming congregational meeting to cast a vote for the Thomas Jefferson District Trustee to serve on the national Unitarian Universalist Association board. This is a rare opportunity as these Board positions do not turn over very often. There is information on each candidate on the TJD website (there is a link from our website, uucv.org) and there will be print copies available.

If our congregation were a person, I think right now we would score pretty high on the stress scale. We are seeking a minister, allocating the ministerial duties amongst the already busy congregation, and still seeking to grow in every sense of the word. Programs such as Welcoming Congregation and the Green Sanctuary, burgeoning attendance in RE and canvassing for an ambitious budget are moving forward. However the number of people doing this work has not drastically increased. And of course many of these people have jobs and/or have to take time away from activities they planned to pursue in their well deserved retirement.

Let's take a deep breath and a moment to appreciate all that we are as a congregation and the love we share. Count to ten before reacting to a perceived or real slight. Read those emails two, maybe four times or better yet, pick up the phone or meet the person for coffee. Particularly if there is a question of upset feelings involved, have an actual conversation. I believe that 99% of the time people are trying to do the right thing; we just need to agree on what the right thing might be!

Those who know me are laughing and attributing this unusually touchy-feely note to a post-vacation glow, to which I'll plead guilty. Whatever the source it doesn't hurt to try to look at each other and the world with soft eyes. Ya'll be careful out there.

↪ Margaret Bumgarner, *President, Board of Trustees*

Notice of Special Meeting

There will be a congregational meeting immediately following the service on April 22nd. The purpose of the meeting is to cast a vote for the Thomas Jefferson District Trustee on the UUA Board.

Council of Committee Chairs

Our Council, composed of Committee Chairs and administrative and RE staff, meet each Quarter in a month that has five Sundays. April is the first month this year with five Sundays. So, our Council will meet on April 29th at 12:30 in the large RE room.

Our quarterly meetings are an excellent way for Chairs and staff to exchange important information about Committee plans, concerns, and needs. We accomplish quite a bit in an hour, but we want your participation. Do send Agenda items to Angie Underwood, Chair.

Grounds

With birds singing in the morning, this means it will soon be time for a spring grounds work party. We'll announce the date in the May newsletter and in the order of service. I'll also contact individual Members/Friends once we've chosen a date.

Meanwhile we're also starting mower sign-up. A pad is available on the table in the foyer. If you are willing and able, please choose a date that suits you and add your name to the list. As was the case last year, we're hoping that every three weeks will be sufficient. I will be contacting those who mowed last year to see if they're interested in helping out. Thanks for all your help.

↪ Connie Krochmal, *Grounds Co-Chair*

Room in the Inn

As the ever increasing gap between the Rich and the rest of society becomes ever wider, the number of homeless people continues to expand. Yet, the beds that are available in shelters have decreased nearly forty per-cent (yes, forty percent) within the last decade. Here at UUCSV you have a chance to help out through the Room in the Inn program, which offers shelter to 12 homeless women in the area at participating churches. The next event will be on Friday, May 18 at the Presbyterian church annex in Black Mt. UUCSV will be providing all meals and volunteers for one day. A sign up sheet is available in the foyer. I will also be contacting individuals who have helped out in the past.

↪ Connie Krochmal, *Room in the Inn Coordinator*

Sunday Programming

Please join us for Social Hour after each program

Sunday, April 1, 2007 11 a.m.
**"Who Are You If Not UU? Thoughts for
April Fool's Day"**
Holly Lux-Sullivan

Often when asked what UUs believe, we reply in the negative: We don't believe in X, Y, or Z. But we don't always consider who we are because of our Unitarian Universalist faith. This April Fool's Day, we'll put on our self-teasing hats and imagine who we might be -- for better and for worse -- if we were not UUs.

Holly Lux-Sullivan is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough and a seminarian at Meadville Lombard Theological School. She works as a page designer and copy editor at the News & Record in Greensboro when she isn't at church or school. Holly and her husband, Kevin, have a very retired greyhound and a sassy cat. The family lives happily in Mebane, where there are more churches in a five-block radius than anywhere they've ever been; Holly thinks it's a sign, but she's not sure of what!

Sunday, April 8, 2007 11 a.m.
**"EASTER: Breathe in, Breathe out,
Resurrect a dream!"**
Sally-Beth Shore

The themes of Easter are Resurrection, Rebirth, Renewal, Life amidst Death. Whether you believe in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth or not, you are invited to spend some time thinking about a broader notion of resurrection. While my own belief system doesn't have much room for the reawakening of the dead, there's a lot of space for resurrection-- of dreams, ideas, and institutions. Believing in resurrection means believing in possibility against evidence. With that interpretation, it might be easier to understand how the early Christians perpetuated a belief that their mentor and Savior had come back from the dead. Even if we aren't prepared to resurrect the dead, what other possibilities of resurrection might we engage in and find useful on our journey?

Sally-Beth Shore is a seminary student at Meadville Lombard UU Theological School in Chicago. She lives in Asheville with her husband and three children.

Our elementary class of Religious Education will present a short program of "Easter Eggs Around the World" at the beginning of the service.

Sunday, April 15, 2007 11 a.m.
"The Still Point: Silence Song Sanctuary"
Jenne Sluder

Jenne Sluder is a native of the mountains of western North Carolina. Since childhood she has found inspiration and sustenance in attuning her inner landscape to the outdoors. She is a graduate of Guilford College, where she explored the ways in which Nature has influenced perceptions and beliefs in both Eastern and Western religions. Minor in music, she created an independent study on the roots of song in early cultures. She had the opportunity to experience her findings first hand years later while living and working amongst the Nandi tribe in western Kenya, Africa. She is a student of Buddhism and will begin her graduate studies this summer through Naropa University, an institution of Buddhist heritage, studying Transpersonal Ecopsychology. She is passionate about creative expression, conscious aging, and the revival of intimacy within the human community and through the lens of Nature.

On April 15th, Jenne invites us to shift our attention to what T.S. Eliot calls "the still point of the turning world"--the ever-present Spaciousness that lies buried beneath our expectations, ambitions, opinions and to-do lists. Through poetry, song, story and silence, we will seek to remind ourselves (again and again) of the unceasing abundance and balance of the present moment. In an increasingly human-centered world that has its pedal to the metal, we are called to refine the art of inhabiting both realms, to move in and out of stillness, to move in and out of the dance. Likewise, together we will plumb both the depths of poetry and of silence. Jenne also greatly looks forward to sharing stories of her experiences in Africa as well as her gift of voice and song.



Sunday, April 22, 2007 11 a.m.
"It Takes 10,000 Villages"
Sue Miller and Belinda Box

Ten Thousand Villages, a North American non-profit fair trade retail group, supports artisans in developing countries by establishing long-term working relationships with them, paying a fair price for their products, providing cash advances and prompt final payments, and offering design assistance. We will hear stories of how individuals, families, and communities have been able to rise above dire circumstances to become accomplished artisans through their relationship with Ten Thousand Villages. Since music is such an important part of so many cultures, we will also have a chance to hear (and play) a variety of ethnic music and instruments!

Sue Miller grew up in Indiana with a combined Quaker-Presbyterian background, and a long history of volunteer work. After finishing her undergraduate degree in biology and sociology, she lived in Massachusetts and worked in software development for many years. A long-time member of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Lexington, MA, Sue moved to Western NC and started working at 10,000 Villages last winter. Belinda Box -- a member of UUCSV -- moved to the U.S. from West Yorkshire, England, and has lived in North Carolina for five years. She graduated from Exeter University, also with a degree in biology. Bel involves herself in community causes, including greenway development and environmental protection, and volunteers regularly at Black Mountain primary and elementary schools. Bel has worked at Ten Thousand Villages since 2002, and is extremely committed to the principals of fair trade and micro credit as means to address poverty in the developing world.

Sunday, April 29, 2007 11 a.m.
"Bring Your Garlands Home!"
H. Byron Ballard

How is it we can feel so disconnected with the beautiful planet on which we live, even in the face of a mountain spring? Come play with ancient Celtic notions of Beltane --dancing into nature, adorning yourself with blossoms and dew, and celebrating Life in all its messy power. And yes -- the annual Maypole dance!

H. Byron Ballard has deep roots in the mountains of western North Carolina where she is active as a priestess of Inanna, Pagan activist, playwright and mom. She holds an MFA in Theatre from Trinity University and circles weekly (and occasionally weakly) with an American Tribal Pagan group. She is a member of WARD, an elder of SerpentStone, an affiliate of the WHISPER community, a founding trustee of the Coalition of Earth Religions for Education and Support and a Willful Harpy. Her interfaith affiliations include the United Religions Initiative and the Interfaith Council. She is also a board member of the local chapter of the ACLU. In her copious free time she is still learning Irish Gaelic and to play the fiddle. And gardening, for the sake of her sanity.

Sunday, May 6, 2007 11 a.m.
**"Justice Sunday: Darfur Road Map to
Peace, and Reconciliation"**
Elmoiz Abunura

The UU Service Committee has chosen "Drumbeat for Darfur" as the focus for this year's Justice Sunday. The reality of the Darfur crisis is clear. There has been a vicious civil war resulting in thousands of people killed and hundreds of thousands of civilians displaced inside Darfur and in Chad. Growing up in Sudan, Elmoiz Abunura has a unique perspective and will share his analysis and recommendation for peace and reconciliation.

Elmoiz Abunura is a human rights advocate, a Sufi Muslim, and a former prisoner of conscience in Iraq under Saddam Hussein. He grew up in Sudan and Iraq. He was forced to leave Sudan after the militant Islamic movement, the National Islamic Front staged a military coup in 1989. He was granted political asylum in this country and later became a naturalized citizen. From 1996 -- 2003, he was Director of UNCA's Africana Studies program and a lecturer in the Department of Political Science. He currently works as an economic, and political consultant on Africa, and the Middle East. He is a member of Amnesty International and other human rights organizations. He and his family live in Asheville.

Ministerial Search Committee Update

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE:

The results of our Questionnaire for the congregation are quite interesting in many respects.

Here are the responses of 54 members and 13 friends:

- 46 people say they attend church either 3 or 4 times a month. 20 attend 1 or 2 times.
- 45 people live within 10 miles of the church, 21 folks travel between 11 and 50 miles.
- 30 folks have been UUs for 5 years or less; 10, 6 to 10 years; 27, over 10 years.
- 20 respondents are under the age of 50; 37 between 50 and 69; 10, 70 or older.
- 45 of 66 are positive about growth, that is "growth is good, but want to assure that we maintain our feeling of community." 8 were enthusiastic about growth, 12 cautious, 1 reluctant.

When given the opportunity to check as many as apply to statements reflecting your religious orientation, the results were as follows:

34 eclectic, 31 ethical Christianity, 31 humanism, 29 naturalistic theism, 29 earth centered spirituality, 28 ethical religion, 24 mysticism, 18 agnosticism, 11 Buddhism, 10 skepticism, 6 theism, 6 atheism or non theism, 5 other, 4 theological Christianity, 3 Judaism in some form.

There are many possible conclusions to be drawn from these results. (It would be good to know the answers of the 30 members who did not answer the questionnaire.) We appear to have a solid core of people who attend the Sunday morning worship service on a regular basis. Perhaps we ought to be reaching out to people under the age of 50. (This is probably true in many UU congregations.) There may be collective wisdom from the 37 respondents who have been UUs over 6 years to communicate to the 30 with less experience in our denomination. It will be interesting to learn what our ministerial candidates think about our congregation when they read the results of this questionnaire in our congregational packet.

Complete results of our questionnaire are posted on the bulletin board across from the kitchen.

The Ministerial Search Committee expects to present the results of our search for a ¼ time minister to the congregation some time in May.

↪ *Evelyn Carter, for the Ministerial Search Committee*

Canvass Update

Since the newsletter goes to the printer before the Canvass deadline on March 31st, the final results aren't available at this point. If you haven't already done so, kindly return your pledge card as soon as possible to the office. We thank you for your pledges of volunteer hours and money.

Special thanks go to all of our wonderful Canvassers for doing such a great job.

Based on the pledges, Margaret will draw up a final budget, which the Board will approve at the April meeting. Then, the Members of the congregation will vote on the budget at the annual Congregational meeting in May.

↪ *Connie Krochmal, Canvass Chair*

Welcoming Congregation Update

Our sixth Welcoming Congregation workshop on March 13, "Religion & Homosexuality" facilitated ably by Tim Perry & Peter Boggs had 31 folks in attendance, our largest group yet. Useful handouts from that workshop are available in the office, with in depth analysis of the usual Biblical scriptures, what they really say and don't say.

The seventh workshop will be on April 24, the 4th Tuesday in April (not the usual 2nd Tuesday). Entitled, "Experiences of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and/or Transgender People," the workshop will be a panel discussion, with individuals from each group sharing their life experiences and answering your questions. The workshop will be facilitated by Jane Carroll and Deb Vingle. Refreshments always served and rides available 669-6677.

Tuesday, April 10th will be a great event too as we welcome the Soul Force BGLT youth travelers. See the separate announcement about the Congregational potluck!

Welcoming Congregation: UUCSV to Feed Traveling Students

Our congregation will host a group of 30 students for supper at our church. These students are traveling on a bus with an organization called Soul Force. Soul Force is an interfaith movement committed to ending spiritual violence perpetuated by religious policies and teachings against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Following a day of dialogue with their peers at Montreat College, we will provide a meal for these traveling students at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10th. Please sign up to bring a dish on the sign up sheet in the lobby or contact Carolyn Shorkey with your offer of food. She can be reached at 299-9456 or cashorkey@bellsouth.net. You are welcome to join us for dinner and a discussion!

Rummage Sale Update

We need donations for the rummage sale to be held at "Trillium: A Festival of Follies and Flings" on April 21st from 8:30 - 9:00. We are particularly interested in outdoor living items. Clothes not so much. Please bring any and all "Good Stuff?" to the RE rooms to the left of the church foyer starting the afternoon of Sunday, April 15th until Friday at noon on April 20th. "Good Stuff" is:

- Clean
- Mildew and mold-free
- Free of pet hair and smell
- Unbroken
- In working order
- All parts and pieces present
- Antiques in just about any condition
- Non-toxic
- Passes the "It's not junk" test

We will pick up Good Stuff during the week prior to Trillium if need be. Questions? Contact Jane Carroll at 664-1695 or dr_jcarr@msn.com. Proceeds go to our partner church in Romania.

Greeters for April

- April 1: Trish Byers, Bill Rouser, Robyn Schuster
April 8: Jerry Pope, George Leroy, Sabrina Mills
April 15: Bette Bates, Robert Tynes
April 22: Ann Lutz, Sue Miller, Lee Reading
April 29: Mary Soyenova

Volunteers?? Please call Connie Krochmal at 664-9286 if something comes up and your date doesn't work out.

Note: Greeters are asked to set up folding chairs before the service. Jey Hiott will be doing announcements in April.

THIS I BELIEVE Class to Be Offered

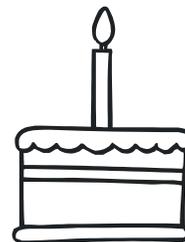
Have you ever heard an NPR This I Believe essay and wished you had time to discuss the essay and hear more of them? Carolyn Shorkey will facilitate four-one hour sessions whereupon we will explore numerous essays from this radio project. In each class we will reflect upon the core beliefs that guide daily life for a variety of contributing essayists. Each of the four sessions is independent of the others. So, feel free to come to one or more sessions. The sessions will meet from 9:45 to 10:45 Sunday mornings April 29th, May 6th, 13th, and 20th. We'll meet in the small RE room. A breakfast carb will be provided, bring your own beverage. Teens and adults are welcome!

A two hour class will be offered for those who would like some guidelines and support for writing your own This I Believe essay on Sunday evening, June 3rd from 5:30-7:30.

For more information, contact Carolyn via email: cashorkey@bellsouth.net or by telephone before 9:00 p.m. at 299-9456.

Birthdays in April

- April 7th Fern Martin
April 10th Pat Middleton
April 16th Bobby Decker
April 17th Jim Clayton
April 18th Monroe Gilmore
April 28th George LeRoy





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Hospitality News

KATHI DONS THE APRON

Thanks to Kathi Rice for stepping forward to fill some vacant slots as coffee hour host and donning the hospitality apron. You can also wear the hospitality apron on occasion! We are seeking coffee hour hosts for the summer season. The duties have been divided so that if you are not able to do preparation of coffee and cleanup, you have the option to help either before or after the service. Your time will be appreciated by the sippers and nibblers. There will be a sign-up sheet posted in the foyer. When you sign up, Milt and Carolyn will contact you about training.

SPRINGTIME COVERED DISH POTLUCK

We will be stretching ourselves beyond finger food for a full buffet covered dish potluck after the service on April 29th. So won't you fix your favorite springtime luncheon recipe, bring a lawn chair and join us for a celebration of community? The Hospitality Committee looks forward to seeing you at lunchtime.

FOLLOW GEOFF'S EXAMPLE

Geoff Stone religiously brings his coffee mug to church every Sunday. We encourage you to follow his good example. If 40 people brought a cup to every Sunday Service, there would be 2,080 fewer cups added to the landfill each year. Thanks for inspiring us, Geoff!

Warblers

We'll meet our usual third Sunday after church (April 15 at 12:30) and fourth Sunday before church (April 22 at 10:00). There's also a fifth Sunday in April, so we might sing more then. And there's Tom Clay's idea: With nice weather, folks will go outside for food and coffee, leaving the sanctuary free. Then, anyone who wants to sing could gather around the piano for fun and singing! It's good for the soul.

Friday Fling

April's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups, will be held on April 20th at 6:30 p.m. at Norm Kowal's place (now ladybug free!) in Black Mountain. Carpooling will be at 6:00 p.m. at the church. Refreshments (red and white) and some snacks will be provided, but feel free to bring your own. Bring finger food, so that we can make a light supper out of it. The movie "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan" will be shown, and we can spend some time visiting afterwards. For further information, call Norm Kowal (669-4668).

We need volunteer hosts for June through September. Please call Norm.

Religious Education Corner

RE continues to move along at a busy pace. Chalice Children generally has had two to three active pre-schoolers attending. The World Religions class studied Buddhism this month, and attended the first part of several services. Heidi has been teaching most of these classes and I have filled in when she wasn't able to be there. We had a guest speaker talk to the kids about her life as a Buddhist and what that meant. We also created a nature altar, where we gathered interesting objects outside, that the children then arranged as they liked and talked about why they picked those particular items. We then spent some time in front of our altar with a meditation exercise that I explained to them they could practice at home. They understood how they could apply this to their everyday lives by taking time to relax and breathe when they had a big project for school or other stresses in their lives. That was a great connection for them to make. Our next religious faith tradition will be Islam, which in light of today's world events is likely to spark much discussion and thought. We hear so much about the negative more extremist sides of Islam that we tend to forget its many peaceful tenets. I look forward to hearing the children's perspectives. Attendance in this group generally is running about six to eight children each week.

The Teen Covenant group continues to have five or six regular attendees, alternating between attending the adult service or meeting with a covenant topic of their choice. Some of them attended the facilitator workshop led by David Blanchard-Reid. Three of our teens attended the Mountain CON the first weekend in March, and seemed to enjoy their time there. Many, many thanks to Karen McClelland who attended as the youth advisor for this group (and thanks to the other adults who offered their time also—you're not off the hook, because I'm keeping a list for future events!) In the next few weeks, church member Pepi Acebo will be talking to the group about expanding what they already have into a more formalized YRUU program. He will also talk to the teens about other denominational opportunities they can attend and be involved with.

For me, my attendance at the Philosophy of Religious Education renaissance module in Winston-Salem the first weekend of March was my spiritual "fuel". There were about eighteen attendees, most of which were DREs, but some were church members involved in RE. This was a dynamic, thoughtful, fun group of people with so much to offer. The workshop facilitators, Tandy Scheffler and Kathleen Carpenter, long-time DREs, were incredible. The workshop was exhausting, but also energizing, and I came away with many new ideas and directions. I thank the Board and the RE Committee for providing me with this opportunity to learn and connect with others who are deeply committed to children and RE.

The RE committee is in the process of planning for upcoming services which will involve the children, including Easter and the end of May. The committee is also holding a retreat the afternoon of April 1 to develop more detailed plans for next year including curriculums, teaching teams, summer activities, and safe congregation programs. Look soon for more information and be thinking now how you can volunteer some of your time to our children. I promise, when you work with our children and youth, you will be amazed and awed and won't regret a second of the time you spend with them. Stay tuned!

~ Sybil Argintar, RE Coordinator