



Unitarian Universalist

Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley

A WELCOMING CONGREGATION

Religious Freedom • Diverse Perspectives

**500 Montreat Road
Black Mountain, NC 28711**

*For more information about our
congregation, call*

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**Volume VII, Issue 12
Published Monthly by UUCSV**

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BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, December 16 • 6:00 p.m.

UUCSV Newsletter

Send newsletter information to

Norm Kowal, Editor

normankowal@bellsouth.net

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008 at 10 a.m.

Covering January 2009

*Design and Printing by
American Speedy Printing Center
Asheville, NC*

December Dilemma

Do you have a “December Dilemma?” At Shabbat services I attended recently, the Rabbi talked about the difficulties the holiday season presents for families with two traditions; specifically, what to do about celebrating Hannukah and Christmas. In my house we solve this by observing both, although admittedly that creates a measure of chaos. But I still feel a December dilemma-- what to do with the Christmas? Although I was raised with strong Christmas traditions, the story of the virgin birth is problematic to me, the associated commercial hype can disgust me, and the stress of gift-buying and receiving, family visits, and scheduling can lead me to say, “bah- humbug.”

But there’s also much this season that I still love--music, pageantry, the excitement of children. And a lot of blessed giving goes on in the name of “the Christmas spirit.” It’s the time of year when I reflect on the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, who was transformed not so much by the warning of impending hell to come, but by the jolt of standing outside of himself to see his life in a broader context.

At some point, I recognized that I didn’t want to give these loves up. So I follow Garrison Keillor’s advice about Christmas, and “work with it.” During these Holydays, I hope you’ll find and create interpretations that work for you. Here at UUCSV, there are many December activities planned to enrich our month and help us overcome any bah-humbugs, so look carefully inside these pages, and plan to join your fellow UUs in celebration.

Over my first three weeks here, I’ve been very blessed to have so many of you helping me. I’d like to especially thank those of you who have helped to paint and furnish the minister’s office, who have met with me to inform me about your committees’ activities, to help me navigate the church’s technical systems, or even stopped in to say hello. I’m starting to feel at home and continue to be impressed by the big heart of this community.

Merry December

~ Sally Beth

Thanks from the Board

Congratulations and thanks to Jane Carroll, Susan Culler, Walter Hoffman, George LeRoy and Pat Middleton for being voted as our new Search Committee in our congregation meeting yesterday. Speaking for the board and entire congregation, we are THRILLED to have this new team leading our search for a settled minister. The prior search committee and all of us will be glad to help this committee in any way we can.

We thank Sally Beth Shore for the great work she is bringing to our church. The services she is providing, committee support and pastoral care are going very well in her first month serving our church. We look forward to her continued leadership this year.

The board thanks our Finance Committee for outlining a range of policy recommendations to continually improve the financial management of the contributions and expenditures we do on behalf of the church. I also especially thank Lee Reading for the superb job he does as treasurer each month.

Last month we sent out quarterly reminders to everyone and thanks to all of you as we are beginning to see pledges pick up year to date. Collectively we still have a way to go to bring our contributions fully up to what we have pledged. So if you are behind in your pledge, please bring this up to date by the end of this month and earn your charitable donation for this tax year!

Karen McClelland is leading our Annual Budget Drive this year and gave the board an outline of the plan for our next successful drive. The board is currently forecasting next year’s budget so Karen’s planning group can set a goal for this year’s drive. Thank you Karen and the rest of your planning group for leading this important effort for UUCSV.

Finally, there are many of you who contribute in countless ways, many of them unnoticed, for the continuing beauty of our church. We are blessed to have so many wonderful people pitching in and contributing to the community and warmth of our church. Thank you all for all that you do.

~ Jim Carillon, Board President

Sunday Programming

Please join us for Social Hour after each program

Sunday, December 7, 2008 11 a.m. "Evolutionary Manifesto: A Creation Story for UUs"

Connie Barlow

Unitarian Universalists teach our children about other religions and to appreciate the religious holy days of a diverse peoples. But it is important that we don't neglect teaching our children THEIR OWN creation story, too. Some argue that Unitarian Universalists need to have some grounding standards that bind us together as a group. One very appealing way is to give our children and youth an exciting, personalized, dramatic sense that we all come from a deep, deep ancestry, as given by the scientific story of evolution (geological and cosmological as well as biological and cultural). Children and Youth will join us for the beginning of the service.

Connie Barlow is a renowned author of four popular science books, including "The Ghosts of Evolution" (2001) and "Green Space Green Time" (1997). She and her husband, the Rev. Michael Dowd, have been itinerants since 2002, when they began traveling the continent presenting programs about unifying science and religion in an evolutionary framework. They have presented at hundreds of churches, congregations, temples and religious centers. And don't miss her husband who will present an exciting public presentation, "Thank God for Evolution" at UUCSV on Monday, Dec. 8 at 7:00 pm. Read more about his program below.

Sunday, December 14, 2008 11 a.m. "The Many Meanings of Christmas"

Religious Education Program

This intergenerational service will focus on the contributions of our three Religious Education classes. Highlights include a dramatization of the carol, "Go Tell It on the Mountain" by the elementary students. Middle school youth, who study Neighboring Faiths, will enact "The Christmas Menorahs," based on an actual event in Billings, Montana. Our littlest children will sing for us. Readings, instrumental music, and congregational singing will complete our joyous holiday service.

Sunday, December 21, 2008 11 a.m. "Solstice Bells"

Sally Beth Shore

Now is the turning of the year, after today the daylight hours grow longer, and the darkness recedes. In celebrating the returning of the light, we connect with our human history. That human history includes cultivating an awareness of the Cosmos, which can bring us liberation and inspiration.

Sunday, December 28, 2008 11 a.m. "Closure"

Sally Beth Shore

The Holidays coming to a close, now is when we think about the New Year, and we tend to look ahead-- with excitement or anxiety or perhaps both. A lot of us make (or think about making) New Year's Resolutions. To create the future we want, we need we need to make peace with the past. By taking a little time to acknowledge both the highs and lows of our past year, we can put them in perspective, and move forward into 2009.



Sunday, January 4, 2009, 11 a.m. "By Means of Beginning... The Age of Wisdom"

Rev. Dr. Calen Rayne

The words Bereshit bara Elohim are often translated as "In the beginning God created." A more precise translation of the Hebrew is "By means of beginning God created..." Turning to the "nameless religion" of the Himalayas, known as "sacred conventions" or "patterns of heaven and earth," we will explore the nature of Wisdom in the unfolding of creation.

Calen has a MFA from Naropa University, and a DMin from Wisdom University. Calen is minister of Wisdom Tabernacle in Black Mountain and on the adjunct faculty of Wisdom University. Calen has been a circuit rider for UU congregations from New Hampshire to Florida since 1995, and is a member of UU Society for Community Ministries, UU Psi Symposium and Spiritual Directors International.

Holiday Surprise

Here's a brainteaser for you: What do UUCSVers Jane Carroll, Ursula Goebels-Ellis, Beata Kaufman, Karen McClelland, and Barbara Rogers have in common besides lovely silver hair? Give up? They all are artists associated with the Black Mountain Center for the Arts pottery studio. What does this mean for you? On Friday evening, December 5th, the annual "Holly Jolly" will be taking place in downtown Black Mountain. Merchants will be open late for shoppers. Music and food will be in abundance. You are cordially invited to bring your friends and families to enjoy the activities at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts, next door to the Dripolator starting at 6:00 p.m. In particular, on the third floor of BMCA you will find original works of art in clay to admire and to purchase, some of which will be the unique conceptions of our UUCSV potters. Think Holidays, think Green, and think Creatively.

Bread Sale

On Sunday, Dec. 14th Pat Middleton will be selling numerous loaves of her world famous home-made bread after the service. All proceeds will be donated to the fund for sending our youth to Boston. Please plan to buy some fresh, multigrain bread from Pat on the 14th. Connie Krochmal contributed homemade goodies on Sunday, Nov. 9th as a fundraiser for the Building and Grounds Committee. It was a successful sale. Thank you, Connie! Please consider signing up for a Sunday slot to sell your goodies. You are invited to do this as an individual, family or committee. Let us know which church committee you wish to receive the proceeds from the sale of your goodies. The Hospitality Committee will sell prepackaged snacks during coffee hour if no one contributes home-made goodies on a particular Sunday.

~ Carolyn Shorkey and Milt Warden co-chairs of the
Hospitality Committee

Green Sanctuary

Shopping for body care and hair products is no easy task. Stores have aisle after aisle of different brands, many of which contain harmful ingredients. How can we know which ones to buy? Here are some tips.

Look for products with the Natural Product Association's approval. To qualify, the products are manufactured under strict guidelines. Ninety-five percent of the ingredients in a product must be derived from natural sources that are sustainable or renewable. The ingredients must be minimally processed. None of the ingredients can pose any potential risks to human health. Unnatural ingredients are allowed only when a viable natural alternative is not available. As protection against mosquitoes and other biting insects, use natural alternatives, such as BugBand insect repellents. This DEET-free insect repellent repels insects naturally with essential oils like geraniol. The BugBand lotion is the most earth-friendly choice. Avoid hand soaps, cleaners, and other products that are labeled as "antibacterial." Bacteria are building up resistance to triclosan and triclocarban, which are used in these anti-bacterial products. They pose considerable risks to human health and aquatic organisms. These act as endocrine disruptors. Their use is restricted in Canada and Japan. While medicines are regulated by FDA, cosmetics and personal care products aren't. So, consumers should carefully research each item before buying.

Check the Environmental Working Group's database. This lists 25,000 personal care products at www.cosmeticsdatabase.com. It also explains why some ingredients are unsafe. The Safe Cosmetics website (www.safecosmetics.org) alerts consumers to unsafe products. According to the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 61% of the lipsticks tested contained lead.

Here are some general suggestions on ingredients to avoid. Artificial fragrances can contain phthalates, which are linked to reproductive problems, allergic reactions, and asthma. Avoid products that contain parabens. Though the FDA says this preservative is safe in the amounts that are used, they might pose cancer risks. Other ingredients that may be associated with cancer include synthetic colors, triethanolamine (TEA), imidazolidinyl urea, and DMDM hydantoin. Some ingredients cause irritation or allergic reactions. These include sodium lauryl sulfate, sodium laureth sulfate, and artificial fragrances. The latter can also be a neurotoxin.

↪ *Connie Krochmal*

Room in the Inn

The Room in the Inn coordinators have chosen the dates for Black Mountain's participation next year. This program provides meals, shelter, and transportation to homeless women in Buncombe County. UUCSV will be providing all meals and volunteers on Friday, January 9th. This will take place at the Black Mountain Methodist church annex on Church St. Winter is sure to bring cold weather. So, these women will need your help more than ever.

As always, we will need two drivers (morning and evening shifts) as well as overnight volunteers and backups for all positions. We're also seeking volunteers who can help provide meals. Anyone wishing to sign up is urged to do so. A sign up sheet is available in the foyer. You can also contact me by phone or email (686 3112, cbk119@hotmail.com). Thanks for all your help.

↪ *Connie Krochmal,*
Social Action, Room in the Inn Coordinator

Monthly Committee Meetings, etc.

(CG = Covenant Group)

| | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|--------|---|--------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| FIRST | 9:45 RE Committee 12:30 Congregational Care Committee 12:00 Program Committee | | | 1:00 Written Word CG | | |
| SECOND | 9:30 Adult Forum 10:00 Membership Committee 12:30 Warblers | | 7:00 Open Topic CG | 5:30 Social Action Committee | | |
| THIRD | 9:30 Green Sanctuary Committee 12:30 Warblers | | 6:00 Board of Trustees | 1:00 Written Word CG | | 6:30 Friday Fling |
| FOURTH | 9:30 Adult Forum 12:30 SOLS | | 7:00 Open Topic CG | | | |

For the dates, times, and locations of specific events during the current month, go to the UUCSV website (www.uusv.org), and click on the UUCSV Calendar.

SOLS Winter Camping Trip

Yes, we are doing it again! The SOLS sisters, our women's group, will be going to Hot Springs for a two night camping trip, January 16-17th. We will share meals and lots of ridiculous fun. Plan on wearing many layers of warm clothes and walking quite a bit. Email Dawnwilson@aol.com or robyncookschuster@yahoo.com for details.

Partner Church News

We have had some communications from our Partner Church in Medeser Romania. They seem to be doing well in their isolated village in the Transylvanian area of Romania. They have asked us to help fund some renovations of their 201 year old church building and SOLS has set in motion a process to send them \$2,000 from the money raised from previous Trillium Festivals. We are grateful to have the opportunity to help these dedicated Unitarians.

"Cakes for the Queen of Heaven"

You may have heard about how many people's attitudes have changed after taking the "Cakes Class," and now it's updated by UU Women and Religion. "Cakes For The Queen of Heaven," a feminist spirituality curriculum, is very experiential, embracing our own female ancestors, and rediscovering the history (herstory) of goddesses in ancient religions. The first section will be taught by Byron Ballard and Barbara Rogers at UUCSV starting January 21, every Wednesday evening for 5 weeks. A second section will continue if there is interest. More information will be available in the January Newsletter.

UU Bed and Breakfast

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and are happy to provide directions and advice for their area? The UU bed and breakfast directory "UU're Home" (formerly "Homecomings:") can fulfill your dream. For 29 years, we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at info@uurehome.com, or at 828-281-3253, and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

Host listings on the UU're Home website at www.UUreHome.com are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The paper edition is published once a year in April. For a copy of the 2009 directory and a year's access to the website listings, please click on "become a member" to pay by credit card or send a check for \$25 and your e-mail address to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.

Congregational Care Committee

The Congregational Care Committee is ready to assist our congregation in time of need by providing transportation and meals for those who are facing difficult circumstances. If needs extend beyond those mentioned, please discuss them with the Monthly Coordinator to see if we might have the resources to help. The coordinator for the month of December is Kay-Sea Conklin.

Committee Chair, Kay-Sea Conklin, 686-7502 or (cell) 230-2227, would be glad to tell you about the committee and/or add you to the "Maybe Once In A While" volunteer list.

Office Administrator Hired

The Personnel Committee is very pleased to announce that Barbara Rogers is our new office administrator. She has wonderful organizational and computer skills, and experience with UU congregations. Her office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 a.m -12:30 p.m. She will be checking the email and phone messages daily. You can contact her at UUCSV at 669-8050 and admin@uusv.org.

Welcome Barbara!

Protest Against Prop 8

Our Social Action Committee helped organize a 400-strong public protest November 15 in Asheville to support gay marriage and protest the California referendum voting it down.

UUCSVers were well-represented with signs and speakers. Particularly courageous was the family of Mary Decker, Margaret Baxter and RE

children Bobby & Maggie who spoke of the importance of family. You can see the UUA's just-released short Marriage Equality video at: <http://www.uua.org/>.



Adult Forum on Voluntary Simplicity

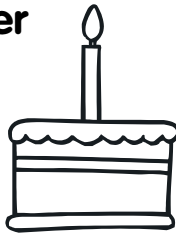
The next Adult Forum on Voluntary Simplicity will be on Sunday January 25, at 9:30 a.m. at the church. The topic will be "Living More with Less." We will not be meeting in December. The group is open to additional participants. Although all the guidebooks have been distributed, they can be shared, or members can read other material on Voluntary Simplicity, or attend without reading in advance. See you in January!

New Rehearsal Time for Warblers!

The Warblers (aka choir) will begin rehearsing AFTER church on both the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of the month, beginning in December. We will meet this month on December 14th and December 21st. Warblers sing for the December 21st Solstice service, so come on and join us!

Birthdays in December

December 3rd Phil Fryberger
December 5th Sarah Gilmour
December 6th Annie Hall



If you would like your birthday posted in the church bulletin, please fill out the form located on the table in the foyer.

Start Saving Your "Good Junk"

SOLS will be hosting the annual Trillium, A Festival of Follies and Flings on April 18th, 2009. The center piece of this festival is our famous rummage sale! It's famous for being full of high quality, reliable, good stuff. We need you to start cleaning out your closets and saving your donations. Just about anything except clothing will be accepted. Limited storage is available now, but most of the donations can be brought to the church in early April. Direct any questions to the SOLS sisters, or email dawnwilson@aol.com.

Religious Education Corner

RE Class Activities

The preschool Chalice Children class, over the past month, has continued learning about our church environment. They've made puzzles of churches, made snacks for their families, and will be participating in the Thanksgiving and Holiday services. In December the children will also learn more about the winter holidays we celebrate. The elementary school Timeless Themes class continues to learn bible stories of the Old Testament, with discussion focusing on how they pertain to our UU values. They've also learned about the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, in preparation for our holiday program, and will be learning about Moses in the coming weeks. The Neighboring Faiths class finished their work on Judaism, including a discussion about cultural versus religious Judaism, and began their study of Catholicism with a tour of St. Lawrence Basilica in Asheville, led by Tim Perry. They are beginning to study the earth-based traditions next, focusing on Wicca. Byron Ballard will be speaking to the group on November 30th.

Don't Forget Our New Class Times

Since we have such full curriculums for our elementary and middle/high school youth, the RE Committee has decided to extend class time to 12:15 for these two groups. Preschool class will still end at 12 noon. Parents, please pick up your children at these times. This is so children and teachers can finish up projects and processing of the week's lesson. A very light snack will be served in class, but children and youth will join the adults for coffee hour at the end of class time.



Here on October 26, they toured the Basilica of St. Lawrence in Asheville and attended a Mass and saw a Baptism and Eucharistic Communion.



Middle/High School RE class visits Beth Ha Ta Phila synagogue as part of the Neighboring Faiths curriculum this year. They even got to hold and open the Torah!

Weekly Snacks

Parents, please remember to bring a plate of healthy snacks to share during coffee hour, so we are sure we have enough for everyone.

New Earth Rain Barrel Contest

The middle and high school class finished painting the rain barrel we constructed over the summer, and submitted photos to the New Earth store in Black Mountain for their contest. The youth have some finishing touches to add, and then we'll be selling raffle tickets as a fundraiser for the Coming of Age program. You could win a wonderful addition to your yard! Stay tuned!

Important Dates to Remember

DECEMBER 14TH—RE Holiday Service. Show your support for our children and youth. The preschoolers will sing a holiday song or two, the elementary age children will sing songs and do a play about the birth of Jesus of Nazareth as part of their bible stories work, and the middle and high school class

will do a skit entitled the "Christmas Menorahs", based on a true story about the real meaning of the winter holidays. Join us for a morning filled with love and hope.

DECEMBER 21 AND 28—Multi-age programs featuring service projects and crafts for the holidays.

JANUARY 4, 2009—RE classes continue for all ages

~ Sybil Argintar, RE Coordinator



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Social Action Committee Grants

Contributions to date:

OREPA \$200
Olive Tree Circus \$100
UUA Darfur \$200
Pridefest \$150
Planned Parenthood \$100
Pisgah Legal Service \$100
Clean Water for NC \$150
Homeward Bound \$150
Western Carolina for
Criminal Justice \$150

Approved:

Ministry of Hope \$100
People of Faith Against
Death Penalty \$100
Center for Diversity in
Education \$100

Total to date: \$1,600

UUCSV presents An Evening with Rev. Michael Dowd Monday, December 8th at 7:00 pm.

In this exciting and richly illustrated program, Rev. Michael Dowd will cover the major themes of his 2008 book, "Thank God for Evolution: How the Marriage of Science and Religion Will Transform Your Life and Our World," which received endorsements from 5 Nobel Prize-winning scientists, as well as religious leaders across the theological spectrum: from Baptists to Buddhists. Come learn how our modern understanding of this 14 billion year old Universe, as given by mainstream science, builds bridges, provides guidance, and restores realistic hope for individuals and families, for humanity, and for the body of life as a whole. Dowd has an evangelical background and gives a provocative program-- this is a good one to bring your friends to.

Friday Fling

December's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups every third Friday of the month, will be held on December 19th at 6:30 p.m. at the church. Refreshments (red and white) will be provided. Bring some simple food, so that we can make a potluck supper out of it. The movie "A Christmas Story" (1983, the classic Jean Shepherd tale about Ralphie, who longs for a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas, but whose mother fears that "You'll shoot your eye out!") will be shown. For further information, call Norm Kowal (669-4668).

Greeters in December

Dec 7: Kay-Sea Conklin, Scott Conklin, Susan Culler
Dec 14: Pat Middleton, Norm Kowal
Dec 21: George Leroy, Jo and Tom Motzki, Bette Bates or Robert Tynes
Dec. 28: George Leroy, Eileen, Bert, Aaron and Emily Eliot