

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOVA VALLEY

January 2015

500 Montreat Rd.

Black Mountain, NC 28711 (828) 669-8050, www.uusv.org

Religious Freedom—Diverse Perspectives

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February 2015 Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday 27 Jan., 10 a.m., covering February

2015. Until further notice send submissions to Connie Krochmal

(flora258@isp.com)

From the Minister

As I write this column in mid-December, for the January 2015 Newsletter (deadlines, deadlines), I cannot help but recall the trajectory of the year we call 2014 through a personal and collective lens. I try to make it a personal practice to look back over the past year in December to see just how far I have come, personally and professionally. There are other lenses with which to view the events of our lives for sure. Yet for now, I will focus on the past, the present, and a probable future for after all, we are creating that future even now. The life and any organization, especially a religious one, is multilayered and complex. With a new board, the awarding of our Chalice Lighter's Grant, and the beginnings of a congregational covenant between the minister and the congregation, we have accomplished much this year.

There have been growing pains as we become more of who we say we are as a congregation and fear of change, specifically at times fear of losing what we had and who were, or thought we were in the past, (are these one in the same?) and just plain old personality differences and the like, caused some challenging times and situations, but all of this is natural. People come and go and it feels, at least from my perspective that a certain anxiety that our congregation had experienced is lessening a bit. It appears that we are now just beginning to settle in to the business of growth; numerically as well as spiritually. This is not to say that we will not continue to have our challenges individually or collectively, but we will deal with them, make mistakes as we go along, and keep moving forward. There is an old Zen Buddhist saying that goes 7 times down, 8 times up. And although the talented and prolific writer and son of the south, William Faulker, reminds us wisely that the past, "the past is never dead. Its not even past," we can learn from past events and situations, individually and collectively, and create a brighter tomorrow---If we so choose. We can all do this in the *now*. This is the conclusion that I have personally come to many, many years ago, and this year has proven no exception. I bring this perspective with me from personal experience and it informs and influences the collective (meaning this congregation and the society at large) because we are all connected and thoughts are things. Past, present, and future, converge in this eternal "now."

As we enter the new year 2015, we have an opportunity to begin with a clean slate. Yes, *Black Lives Matter*. Yes, The Middle East is still troubled as is the Ukraine. The problems right here on our own soil can be overwhelming to even think about, much less do anything about. Yet we are doing the best that we can and that is okay. For those who we perceive as not trying to do what they can to make the planet a better place, you cannot control other people or their lives. We can only be accountable for our own actions and thoughts. For example, this month the social action committee and I will be conducting more anti-racism dialogues in the community with another African American Congregation, from St. James Chapel. In late winter we will be having Adult RE classes on Human Growth Potential by internationally know therapist John Bradshaw on DVD. We are winding down our congregational/ministerial covenant process, thanks to the tireless help of many of our church family. The draft was organized and edited by David Reid, Tina Rosato, Linda Blasky and Jim Carillion. The statements were recorded carefully by Rebecca Williams.

And of course, our once a month UU Lunch Bunches are still quite popular. These are only a few of the things that we do here but they do make a difference in people's lives, including our own. Of course individually, we may be doing even more. This is part of the collective and personal or individual lens in the first sentence of this column.

It is crucial to remember that no matter what the media and our own personal fears tell us, please try to remember that it is still a beautiful world. No, not for all and that is part of life on planet earth, unfortunate though it is. As we strive to make this world a better one, don't forget to enjoy your life as well. We do only what we can do. We each have our own unique gifts, talents, and interest and it is up to each and every one of us how and when to apply them to the events and situations of our lives. It is so easy to get caught up in the trials and tribulations, the wars and rumors of wars, the fear, fear, and even more fear we are subjected to within and without, that we can forget the blessings that we already have. Sure it is appropriate to be outraged and to act. But to live in a place of outrage is to risk self destruction. Count your blessings. Remember, not all will get to see and to participate in this New Year. There is an old African saying that goes, " if there is no enemy within, the enemy without can do you no harm. I have come to realize that Life is not *either/or* but *both/and*. Permit me to remind us of the beauty and simplicity of life with this powerful but simple prayer.

God, (or who or whatever you choose to call this energy)
Grant me the **Serenity** to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to accept the things I can, and the **Wisdom** to know the difference.

Serenity, Peace, and Wisdom to you and your homes in the upcoming year!

Michael

Sunday Programming

Sunday, January 4, 2015 11 a.m.

"Judgment Day"

Dr. Brad Rachman

UUCSV launches 2015 with guest speaker Dr. Brad Rachman, a naturopathic physician and yoga therapist based in Black Mountain. The service is provocatively entitled "Judgment Day," but don't worry—it's not about the eschatology of the Abrahamic religions! Rather, he will explore how the daily tendency of the mind

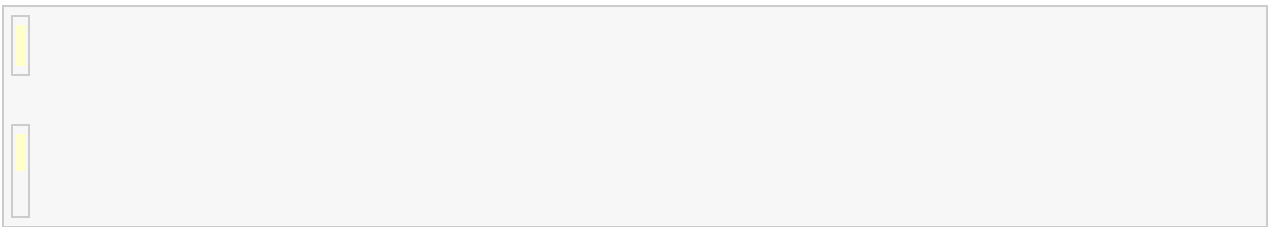
to name and judge often clouds our experience of the world, causing us to see things as we are..not as they truly are.

Dr. Rachman is well-known locally as the co-founder of the Black Mountain Yoga Center and medical director of the Rachman Clinic. His extensive, multi-disciplinary training and expertise includes biomedical engineering, chiropractic, functional medicine, yoga and meditation. He resides in Black Mountain with his wife and professional partner Martia, and two daughters.

Sunday, January 11, 2015 11 a.m.

“Fit for a King”

Rev. Michael Carter



Because I am scheduled to speak on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, this Sunday I will be speaking about the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. For those of you who attended the MLK, JR. Breakfast last year in Black Mountain, you will know that I did not get to finish my speech because I had lost my place and spoke extemporaneously. I would like to share the rest of that talk with you this Sunday to perhaps illuminate more of the humanity of Dr. King and not just the image the media has presented to us since his assassination. He was a human being, like you and me. We may never look upon his life again. Needless to say, we need his message of love, wisdom, and justice more now than ever. His life was surely a testament of hope. See you at church!

Sunday, January 18, 2015 11 a.m.

“Not My Daddy’s Faith” Nancy Polling

Nancy Polling

This sermon will explore the question; “How do we come to terms with the theology we grew up with?”

After decades of career hopping—from educator, editor, Realtor, communications consultant, back to educator—Nancy discovered a passion for writing. An effort to come to terms with the strict religious practices of her childhood has inspired much of her work, particularly, *Had Eve Come First* and *Jonah Been a Woman*. Her theology also informs her political opinions, which frequently appear in the Op-Ed section of the Asheville newspaper and on her blog: www.nancypolling.com/blog. Nancy lives in Black Mountain with her husband, Jim Polling, a retired seminary teacher turned avid bird watcher.

Sunday, January 25, 2015 11 a.m.

“African American Humanism”

Rev. Michael Carter

It was in a UU church where I first encountered African Americans who boldly stated their hum from these men and women who dared to self identify as they did and to risk the scorn of not only the dominant culture, but those of our African American community at large. It took courage and conviction then as well as now, for the stigma was not only a sort of “heresy” but the very questioning of what it meant to be an African American man or woman was at stake. Join me as we take a look at the history of AA humanist in our denomination and the society at large.

Sunday, February 1, 2015 11 a.m.

“The Myth of the Individual”

Senator Terry Van Duyn

As she speaks with groups about the kinds of problems she would like to work on in the NC General Assembly, Senator Van Duyn muses that we may have “ceded the argument about the fundamental role government has to play in making our lives better.” As an example, she says, “It is hard to talk about the need to increase funding for childcare subsidies if you’ve already lost the battle on whether government is able to make anything better.” She cites Sister Simone Campbell’s remarks about the myth of the individual and how we need to work together to create opportunity for each other.

Senator Van Duyn is a Democratic member of the North Carolina State Senate, representing District 49. She was appointed to the position to replace the late Senator Martin Nesbitt, who died in March. She won the general election in November with over 61 percent of the vote. Recently her Senate Democratic colleagues voted her Minority Whip.

Coming of Age News

The COA Leaders hope you have enjoyed seeing our COA youth participating in services as well as selling baked goods and soup on Sundays. We are meeting with the middle school group and the high school group twice a month. Now that they have formed cohesive groups, we are asking them to start thinking—in true UU fashion! Over the next few months, they will be writing down and talking about their thoughts to questions about self, beliefs, values and more. How can you support these Coming of Age kids? We’re glad you asked!

- 1. Keep a Tupperware container in your car on Sunday. Then you can already have your lunch planned twice a month when the youth serve homemade soup. This will happen twice a month.**
- 2. Talk to them when you see them. Ask them how COA is going for them and what they are learning. Ask how their mentor is. We have 11 FABULOUS mentors from the church spending time with these youth.**
- 3. On Wednesday, January 21st, go out to eat at FRESH Wood Fired Pizza and Pasta. FRESH owners Mark Tomczak and Courtney Smith have two daughters in the COA program and are donating a percentage of the entire days sales to our Boston Trip fund! So take a friend or your spouse out to lunch, or bring a tableful of friends to dinner. You’ll have a great meal and the more people who fill the restaurant that day, the more money we raise.**

4. **Look for the new Service Board this Sunday. On it you will find ways to “hire” the COA youth for service projects. Do you need your lawn raked? Would you like to know how to use that new iPad or phone you got for Christmas? Want someone to help take down your Christmas ornaments? Call Heidi Blozan and she will make sure that your needs are addressed. The board will give our kids opportunities to earn money (by donation) and do community service, and for church members to get help as they need it.**
5. **Participate in the Talent Show and Auction on March 14.** Contact Bill Altork to be in the program billaltork@gmail.com. or Ursula Goebels-Ellis to donate a special item such as service, vacation, dinner, vintage item (\$25 minimum bid) ursulage@gmail.com.

Thank you for all the support you offer our youth! Together we are creating a dynamic congregation for all ages and stages.

Heidi Blozan,
Director of COA

Birthdays

We will no longer publish the birthdays in the newsletter. The information hasn't been updated with changes in the membership in many years. Perhaps at some point, they will get them listed in the weekly Current. That would be more timely for remembering to wish a friend a happy birthday.

Carolyn Shorkey and Milt Warden

The exception this month is Melanie Ross, whose birthday is January 18. She requested that hers be listed.

Caring Committee

Dear church friends and members,

The caring committee wishes you all a very happy Holiday season and a great New year.

This past year your committee, with the help of many of you, has been able to help several Members/Friends of our congregation and continues to do so when called upon.

I have been honored to be your facilitator and personally thank every one of you who stepped up to the call for service, thank you so much. Without you we would have no congregational Care.

With love,

Ann Sillman, your Congregational Care Facilitator

Money Talk

Happy New Year! Soon you should receive a document from the Treasurer that will provide you with two pieces of financial information: first, a status report on how much of your pledge you have paid after six months towards your pledge for the fiscal year that runs from July 1st, 2014 through June 30th 2015. The second piece of data will be the total amount of donations you have made to UUCSV for the 2014 calendar year. That information may be useful if you plan on itemizing deductions on your 2014 federal tax return. You do not need to calculate your total charitable giving for the year if you elect to use the standard deduction.

Remember that we are only able to track your contributions if they are received in the form of a check or money order. We can only include a cash donation in your total giving if you place a gift of currency in an envelope with your name on it plus the date the gift was made. A gift to the church of goods or services is generally not deductible on your federal and state tax returns. In any case, please know that we deeply appreciate all the ways you support the life of our congregation – in gifts of time, talent and treasure!

If you feel that there is an error or omission in your data, or if you have any questions regarding your financial support of UUCSV please give me a call or email. Thanks again.

Lee Reading, Treasurer

Four More Guest Bedrooms Needed for Oct. 16th and 17th

If there are four more hosts willing to step forward and volunteer, we will be able to start planning an autumn UUCSV Fundraising Weekend. Our hope is to raise \$2,000 for our 2015-16 budget by home hosting out-of-town UU's for a festive weekend. The host's responsibility is to provide the guests with lodging and breakfast for two days.

Any other commitments for the remainder of the weekend is totally up to the host. Congregants who are not able to home host have offered to help with other weekend activities.

At the time this newsletter is published we have commitments from these folks to host UU's in their guest bedrooms: Blozan, Shimer, Hilliard, Rosato, Madden, Reading/Lutz and Shorkey Warden. Hosts saying 'maybe' are Pope and Tatsapaugh.

Other Survey Results include:

6 congregants willing to coordinate a welcoming dinner or reception on Friday evening,

5 congregants willing to host a dinner in their home for guests

10 congregants willing to lead a hike

1 congregant willing to lead guests to the Highland Craft Guild Show

2 congregants willing to accompany guests who hold tickets to L.E.A.F

3 congregants willing to lead a local craft brewery tour

3 congregants willing to lead a tour of Earthaven Eco Village

Please consider volunteering to be a home host if you have a guest bedroom.

Contact Carolyn Shorkey FMI. 299-9456.

Guest at your Table

It is time for our congregation family to collect coins for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Guest at Your Table project. This year, we are encouraged to use recycled boxes for our home collection. Please bring your donation to UUCSV by Sunday, January 25, 2014.

This is sponsored by the Social Action Committee with assistance from the Religious Education youth and staff. Contact Diane Hutchins if you have questions at 669-3823 or dmh1211@aol.com

UUCSV Cooks Needed

There is a new group forming called Open table which will replace the Welcome Table. We were asked to provide cooks once every six weeks to cook donated food. Please let me know if you would like to work on the cooking team.

Thanks for considering,

Diane Hutchins

669-3823

dmh1211@aol.com

Black Lives Matter

A group of Black Mountain individuals, deeply troubled by the recent deaths of two unarmed black men at the hands of police in Staten Island and Ferguson, Missouri, have joined together to proclaim that “black lives matter” in an advertisement in the *Black Mountain News*.

Thirty-nine persons, including the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley and other members and friends of the church, affirm and promote “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.” Herb Way, a friend of the church, spearheaded the action.

Noting the congregation’s long history of fighting for social justice and against institutional racism, the Rev. Michael J.S. Carter said he is working with the Rev. Wayne Purcell of Thomas Chapel AME Zion Church, and UU member Roberta Madden on a series of community dialogues on race to be offered early in 2015. The program is especially timely in light of current events, Madden said.

Wanted-Two Cushion Loveseat

Mary Soyenova is looking for this item either for sale or free. She is also willing to barter. Contact her at 216 7511.