

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOVA VALLEY

Dec 2012

Volume XI, Issue 12

Religious Freedom — Diverse Perspectives



From the Minister

The Rev. Lee Reid was the minister of the UU Society of The Palisades of Englewood, NJ. While walking to a Board Of Trustees Meeting on a Friday evening, Lee was struck by an automobile and died from her injuries on November 22, 1996, two days later. The accident occurred around 8:40 pm in a dimly lit area. Lee had graduated from New York Theological Seminary, in New York City at the age of 53 years young. Her congregation was an intentional ethnic and culturally diverse group of souls.

Although her reputation preceded her, I never had the privilege of meeting Lee personally, but I did have the opportunity to serve her congregation as a ministerial intern a year or so after her death. Serving there was one of the highlights of my ministerial career and I will always cherish that community as long as the cords of memory shall lengthen.

In memory of Lee and the anniversary of her death in a few weeks, I'd like to share with you her to do list for December (or anytime for that matter). This holiday season:

mend a quarrel---seek out a forgotten friend—dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust---write a love letter---share a treasure—give a soft answer---offer encouragement---manifest your loyalty in word and deed---keep a promise---find the time---forgive an enemy---listen---apologize if you are wrong—try to understand---flout envy---examine your demands on others---think first of someone else--- appreciate---be kind; be gentle--- laugh a little---laugh a little more—deserve confidence--- take up arms against malice---decry complacency---express your gratitude---welcome a stranger---gladden the heart of a child---take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth---Speak your love---Speak it again---Speak it still once again.

Thank you Lee. Thank you all. Happy Holidays,

—Michael

Star

If, in the light of things, you fade real, yet wanly withdrawn

To our determined and appropriate distance, like the moon left on all night among the leaves, may you invisibly delight this house;

O Star, doubly compassionate, who came too soon for twilight, too late for dawn, may your pale flame direct the worst in us through chaos with the passion of plain day.

Derek Walcott

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Board Meeting: Monday 17 Dec, 6 p.m.

Send Newsletter Information to
Norm Kowal, *Editor*
normankowal@bellsouth.net
Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday 25 Dec, 10 a.m., covering January 2013

Sunday Programming

Sunday, 2 December 2012, 11 a.m.

Life, Death and Infinity

Richard Graham

The Universe and everything in it are all a part of the “Quantum Soup” that surrounds us. The implications of what physicists are finding on the quantum world (which seemingly operates by a different set of rules) rewrites what we know about the universe and our place in it. Humans may think they know who we are but they are in for a major surprise!

Our speaker Richard Graham, and his wife, Diane, have recently moved to Black Mountain. His hobbies, besides annoying Diane on occasion, are reading, doing research on subjects that interest him and, of course, dissipating.



Sunday, 9 December 2012, 11 a.m.

Anticipation

Rev. Michael Carter

The liturgical season of Advent is upon us once again. My, how the year has flown by. The chill of winter is in the air as days grow shorter and colder. Holiday

shoppers run to and fro after Thanksgiving, looking for gifts at affordable prices, beating the so called, “Holiday Rush.” Some are planning to travel once again to celebrate with family and friends, while others are perhaps eagerly looking forward to going someplace away from families of origin as this can be a difficult and lonely season for many, with its bringing out at times the worst in family dynamics and crass commercialism. Yet despite it all, this is the season of Advent, the season of anticipation. What are you anticipating at this time of year? What excites you most at this time of year? One year is drawing to a conclusion and another is being born. Let’s explore the possibilities of what they will mean for us as individuals and as human beings sharing this grand experience, called life!



Sunday Programming

Sunday, 16 December 2012, 11 a.m.

Wintering

Byron Ballard

This intergenerational service explores the joys of wintering. Based on ancient concepts of weaving community at the hearth while the restful dark of the winter blankets us, Byron Ballard returns to UUCSV for a study of the "spiritual root cellar." What is in yours? What do you need to see you through the hard times? And how does our beloved community learn to share the deepest values that bind us, especially when the world outside seems cold and unfriendly? Story and song lead us as we enfold our community in safety and love.

The congregation is invited to bring sprigs of live evergreens from their homes or elsewhere to decorate the winter altar.

In addition to being a Wiccan priestess and clergy at Mother Grove Goddess Temple, H. Byron Ballard is a writer, organic gardener, and rootwoman. Her writings have appeared in local and national print and electronic media. Byron lives on an urban farmstead in Asheville's historic West End with her husband Joe and two cats. She blogs online as Asheville's Village Witch <http://myvillagewitch.wordpress.com/> and <http://www.witchesandpagans.com/The-Village-Witch/Blogger/>.



Sunday, 23 December 2012, 11 a.m.

A Musical Christmas Eve Service

Rev. Michael Carter

If you are in town, please come and celebrate the Christmas Holiday this Sunday, with songs of the season. This will be a musical service with input from our youth and those who are still young at heart. Join us!

Sunday, 30 December 2012, 11 a.m.

Welcoming the New Year

Jackie Simms

A program featuring guest speaker Jackie Simms, President of the Ethical Society of Asheville.

Sunday, 6 January 2013, 11 a.m.

John Snodgrass

Religious Education Corner



Love is the spirit of our church, and service is its prayer. We say these words as we begin our Sunday mornings together in the RE classroom. Last Sunday, we began to put these words into action as we kicked off our month-long food drive for Manna during the service. Children helped to gather the many generous food donations from the congregation. We also presented the Stories of Hope for the UUSC's annual Guest At Your Table program, and gave out boxes to members and friends after the service. On December 9th we will begin our morning continuing to talk about the importance of giving to others less fortunate. Children will be asked to bring a gently-loved toy to donate the following Sunday, which will go to Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministries, along with donations from other friends and members. These are some of the ways we help our children understand our Unitarian Universalist principles. I am sure there will be many more opportunities for you and your children to give to others during this holiday season. But giving is for every day of the year, and I encourage you to talk with your children and older youth about ways to give all year long. Go as a family to work at Manna Food Bank. They always need helpers to package food. Take a morning and help out at one of the many animal rescue operations. Help together to serve a hot meal to the homeless. There are so many ways to give. Love is the spirit of our church, and service is its prayer.

Classes for the Coming Month

Preschool—Our Natural World

Cooperative play and nature stories

Parents are asked to remain with their children during the December 16 service, so that our dedicated teachers may join in the service. The preschool room will be open if you need to leave the sanctuary, but childcare will not be available.

Preschool care will be available on November 25, December 23, and December 30

Grades K-6—Celebrating Rainforests

November 25 No regular RE classes. Children may attend the service

December 2 Rainforests: People of the Rainforest (Part 1)

Religious Education Corner

December 9 Rainforests: People of the Rainforest (Part 2)

December 16 Intergenerational Service with Byron Ballard. "Wintering".

December 23 No regular RE classes. Children may attend the service.

December 30 No regular RE classes. Children may attend the service.

Grades 8-12/young adult—Sharing the Journey: Small Group Ministry with Youth

December 2 "One of the Loneliest Nations on Earth"

December 16 IG service

All classes resume January 6, 2013!!

Annual Food Drive

The food drive continues through December 16th. Please place all donations in the Manna food barrel in the lobby, and we will get this to Manna at least once during the drive.

Toy Drive

We will hold a one-day toy drive on December 16th to benefit Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministries. Please bring an unwrapped toy to the RE room on this Sunday so that we may include your donation.

Important Dates to Remember

December 2 RE Committee meets 12:30 p.m.

December 16 IG Service and Toy Drive

December 23 Holiday service with Michael Carter

January 6, 2013 Classes resume!!

As always, feel free to call me if you have an idea to share or have any concerns.

—Sybil Argintar, Director of Religious Education

sybil.argintar@yahoo.com, 230-3773



Choir News

In December, the UUCSV Choir will sing on December 16th for the Winter Solstice service with Byron Ballard. We will sing songs of the season including "Deck the Halls." We will have the opportunity to contribute our voices again at Michael's Christmas service on December 23rd. For the 16th, we will rehearse on Sunday December 9th at 10 AM (because of a Town Hall meeting that afternoon), again on Wednesday the 12th at 6:30 PM, and on the 16th at 10 AM. The choir is a wonderful, fun bunch of people! Come sing with us!

—Linda Metzner, Choir Director



Membership Committee

In December we will move our committee meeting from 10AM the second Sunday to after church on December 2nd, the first Sunday, this is for December only. Our committee has grown, we now have 8 members, Diane Graham and Carol Sheeler being the newest to join our group. Everyone stepped right up and took on responsibility, thank you all.

We will have the spring UU101 sometime in January. This is for new and prospective members and anyone who wants to know more about our church history and the history of the UU Denomination. Our minister Rev. Carter will lead the class with the help of a member or two and a light lunch will be provided. Look for further information when we get closer to the date.

We are delighted to announce that several people attending our church have asked to be added to our growing list of members, we will announce these when we finalize their membership.

We still need people to offer to be greeters, we have full instructions. We prefer volunteers but if we have to, we will call and ask you personally to help out, so save a call and volunteer please, it is a rewarding and not difficult job.

Have a great Thanksgiving if this newsletter gets to you before the day; otherwise have a great winter.

—Ann Sillman, Membership Chair



Birthdays

- December 3rd Phil Fryberger
- December 5th Sarah Gilmour
- December 6th Annie Hall
- December 17th Gene Chilton
- December 21st Jane Carroll

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

Friday Fling

December's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups every third Friday of the month, will be held on 21 December 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 "The Reader" (2008; Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes) will be shown. For further information call Norm Kowal (669-4668).



From Michael

To listen is very hard, because it asks of us so much interior stability that we no longer need to prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, statements, or declarations. True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their presence known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept.

Listening is much more than allowing another to talk while waiting for a chance to respond. Listening is paying full attention to others and welcoming them into our very beings. The beauty of listening is that those who are listened to start feeling accepted, start taking their words more seriously and discovering their true selves. Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality by which you invite strangers to become friends, to get to know their inner selves more fully, and even to dare to be silent with you.

—Henri J. M. Nouwen in *“Bread for the Journey”*

From Our Partner Church

Dear Evelyn, Jane, Ann and all our brothers and sisters in faith in Swannanoa Valley,

We are thinking of you often, and we pray for you in our church. Our congregation members are really grateful for your help and kindness. I hope once you will experience personally their feelings, when you will visit us. And I am very grateful, because with your help we have improved a lot this year. So far this year we had, and still have a lot of work, but the results obtained are motivating us. I am really overloaded still now, because here the minister's work is very broad (we have not committees and stuff), but the people here appreciate my work, and this is motivating me. I do not want to praise ourselves, I just want to tell you, we are so happy if with hard work we can realize something.

Now let me speak about these. Thanks God in August we have finished the renovation of the parish house. We have only the bathroom to renovate, but we plan this to the next year. I don't know, if you heard about the Project Harvest Hope? (You can read more about here: <http://harvesthope.uua.org/>). With their support (by tender) and with the consent of our church we realized this goal. After this we have made clean in the parish and around with a big communal work.

Then we organized a religion and crafts camp for the children of Medeser and Varalja (my husband's church). My husband and I did the programs, and the children parents prepared the food for us. The camp lasted five days, and 23 children participated in. You must know, we used your financial support (\$910). Thank you for this gift, due to which you contributed to children and adults can be high-enriched with a gorgeous experience. Many thanks for everybody, who helped us! In recent years you helped us a lot. It would be nice if you could collect funds to a few people to come here visiting us in the next year. Many people want to know you.

Moving on, if I'm not mistaken we mentioned you that we would like to repair our church, which is a monument. We started this work, in this year we must get the engineering plans. In September three engineers were working in the church survey for two weeks. During this time they lived in the renovated parish house.

And then with two women from our congregation we participated on the 2nd International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women in Targu Mures. There were many people, from the US, too. I am really sorry that none of you could come. How are you? Everything is going well in your church, and in your life? What think your church members about us? I hope, thanks your presentation, now they know much about us. We were able to watch the presentation. It was good to watch. Thanks for your work!

Sincerely yours,

Monika & Laszlo



Dec. 9th Town Hall Meeting and Potluck

The Ministerial Transition Committee and Personnel Committee will be hosting a UUCSV Town Hall Meeting after the service on Dec. 9th. The purpose of the meeting will be to inform you about the specific job duties of Rev. Carter, in his role as our Consulting Minister. He will attend the meeting and answer your questions. Following the meeting, please join us for a Pasta Salad Potluck. There will be a large bowl of marinated pasta on the salad bar. We'd like you to contribute chopped meat, cubed cheese, diced vegetables, or legumes to add to the salad bar. Do not bring any hot food. The weather may be chilly and we have no way to keep food warm outside on the portico. Think Salad Bar!

Mark your calendars. Everyone is invited and we hope you will be able to attend this informative meeting and food fellowship. Linda Metzner has graciously re-scheduled choir practice for that day to occur before, rather than after the service on Dec. 9th.

—*Carolyn Shorkey, Chair of the Ministerial Transition Committee*

UU Holiday Card Sales Continue

Social Action thanks everyone who has purchased UU Holiday Cards so far. We do appreciate your support because all the funds go to UUSC for their human rights work around the world.

As I am writing this we still have a great selection of UU Holiday cards from which you can choose. These are \$10 per pack, payable by check or cash. The designs are particularly appealing this year. A color flyer on the bulletin board shows each design. The designs include a gorgeous blank note card you can use all winter long. These will be available on the table in the foyer after the services.

—*Connie Krochmal, Social Action Holiday Card Sales Coordinator*

From the Editor—The Last Word

In 1950 Theodor W. Adorno et al. published a book, "The Authoritarian Personality," that was partly responsible for the development of ideas explaining why conservatives and liberals are different kinds of people, who process information differently. On average, conservatives prefer simplicity and clear distinctions, where liberals are more comfortable with ambiguity and nuance. Conservatives are hierarchist and highly sensitive to in-group/out-group distinctions, where liberals are egalitarians. Conservatives come to decisions quickly and stick to them, where liberals deliberate, sometimes to the point of dithering. Conservatives are more sensitive to threats while liberals are more open to new experiences. [Some of the previous material is not my own.] Just this year two books have appeared that very nicely apply these ideas to our contemporary American society: "The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion" by Jonathan Haidt, and "The Republican Brain: The Science of Why They Deny Science—and Reality" by Chris Mooney. I recommend your attention to them.

