

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOVA VALLEY

Jan 2012

Volume XI, Issue 1

Religious Freedom — Diverse Perspectives



From the Board

New Horizons....when Dick Stennett spoke at Emily's Celebration, he said, (and I paraphrase here), "When we look at the horizon, we see an ending, but when we get there we see that it is a beginning."!

We are at the end of this year, coming to the horizon. The horizon which we shielded our eyes against the sun and gazed at from last Christmas. And here we are at a new beginning!

Already your Board of Trustees is looking ahead to next year, trying to set a course without knowing where we really are headed, but trying to point in the right direction. Just now, things are a little uncertain, so we have to plan for uncertainty! Is that an oxymoron? Planning for uncertainty? Isn't that really just what life is about? As we say every Sunday, we try to be the best people in the world that we can be.

Possibly, for the next few weeks, we can relax, knowing that this year is drawing to a close. Take deep breaths. Look out the window for snow, maybe. Put a kettle of something warm and comforting on the stove. Sleep more. Dream more. Keep dreaming on into the New Year! For what is tomorrow, but just "a dream away."

We will hope that a few of you will join us on the Board, as we have some vacancies coming up, as we wish you all the Best of the Best. The Blessed of the Blessed. The Happiest of the Happy and the Juiciest of the Juicy!

—*Mary Soyenova, Vice President, Board of Trustees*

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Th 9:30-3:30)

Board Meeting: Monday 16 Jan, 6 p.m.

Send Newsletter Information to
Norm Kowal, *Editor*
normankowal@bellsouth.net

Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday 24 January,
10 a.m., covering February 2012

Sunday Programming

Sunday, 1 January 2012, 11 a.m.

Kwanzaa—A Holiday For All Seasons

Rev. Michael Carter



Please Join us on Sunday, January 1, 2012 by exploring the African/African American Holiday of Kwanzaa. From *Umojal* (unity) to *Imani* (faith) The seven principles of Kwanzaa provide a blueprint for African Americans to reaffirm our heritage and commitment. Please

feel free to bring your African drums to participate in some drumming at the end of the service. We will hold our farewell reception for Rev. Carter immediately following the service. Happy New Year... See you there!

Sunday, 8 January 2012, 11 a.m.

Breaking With the Old, Bringing in the New

Rev. Dr. Marc Mullinax

Nothing sacred about January 1 on the calendar! Only we mortals concoct ideas such as minutes, days, months and years. January 1 is an arbitrary point we make special with calendars and rituals. However, free will is implicated. What will we choose to do, commit to, and/or leave behind, as 2012 begins? Last time I checked, we've got one life, for sure. Time to check in and see if it's the life we have chosen, or has someone else chosen it?



Marc Mullinax is a professor at Mars Hill College in the Department of Religion and Philosophy. We welcome him to our pulpit for the first of 6 scheduled visits. Look for him once a month from January through June.



Sunday, 15 January 2012, 11 a.m.

United in Our Beliefs

Bill Altork

Bill Altork will give a revealing and challenging talk. He will describe how our UU diversity of acceptable differences holds a magnetic pull on him. He will also

give attention to some of the frustrations that remain unresolved among us, while encouraging us to meet the challenge of either resolving or accepting them. Also, the beliefs that many of you have so bravely and generously submitted will be shared openly (and anonymously) to us all during the service. Please plan to attend so you can get a closer look at who we all are.

Bill Altork has been with UUCSV for over 3 years now. Although some would discount it, Bill has been a legally certified minister with Universal Life Church since 2005. But this does not matter to him because his heart, his cause, and his intentions remain the same regardless. Bill has spoken several times from the pulpit at UUCSV. He is also a member of the building committee, the Sunday Service Associates, and the Ministerial Search Committee.

Sunday Programming

Sunday, 22 January 2012, 11 a.m.

Singing Our Living Tradition

**Ann Sillman, Linda Metzner, and
Sue Stone**

In our church we like to sing and we enjoy listening to our choir perform. On this Sunday we will have an entire service based on singing, both your's and the choir's. We will have words spoken and a regular service based on the most loved songs in our hymnal and an interview with our much-loved Linda Metzner, our choir director. We will not forget our pianist, our talented Sue Stone. Come, sing with us. Music gladdens the soul and lightens the heart.



Sunday, 5 February 2012, 11 a.m.

Trust Me

Jeff Hutchins

Jeff Hutchins will speak on the issue of trust. "Trust Me" examines trust as the foundation of relationships and faith and the ways in which people trust and mis-trust each other.

Children will be in the first part of the service for another of Jeff's original children's stories.

Sunday, 29 January 2012, 11 a.m. (Meditation Sunday)

Getting Started With Compassion: A Brief Introduction to the Practice of Conscious Compassionate Awareness

Chris Larson

In our efforts to have the life we want, it can be helpful to be aware of exactly what it is that gets in the way. Experiencing this clearly and non-judgmentally, allows us to see the source of our dissatisfaction directly and move beyond it to a life of compassion, wholeness and peace. Our time together will include a guided meditation and facilitated discussion.

Chris Larson has been a lay practitioner with the Zen Monastery Peace Center in Murphys, CA, since 1988 and has facilitated workshops and retreats for the past twelve years. He lives with his wife and daughter in Asheville, where he serves as guide for Mountain Zen Practice Center. Chris has studied extensively with Cheri Huber and practices a unique style of Zen Buddhism that is easily accessible and readily applicable to daily life in western culture.

Religious Education Corner



What a difference a month can make in our lives. As I wrote the last newsletter, it was with a heart filled with joy in anticipation of all we had happening for all of our children and youth in RE for the holiday season. But life has a way of throwing punches at us in the most unexpected moments. This congregation will forever be diminished by the loss of our beautiful Emily Eliot-Gaines the evening of December 3, 2011. Emily was a wonder, that these mere words really cannot portray. Her impact, in her much too short sixteen years, was deeply felt by all facets of the Asheville and Black Mountain communities, as witnessed by her Celebration of Life on Saturday December 17th. She touched so many lives with her happy, carefree spirit, yet was serious in the most phenomenal ways in everything she undertook within the musical and theatrical arts.

On a personal level, I know there will be a space for her in my heart always. And a deep sense of sadness for a good while to come. Yet at the same time, I am deeply inspired by the light she brought to my life and I know, in time, when life is difficult, I will be able to remember some funny moment, some sarcastic remark, some silly grin of Emily's. I can only hope that her much beloved family, Bert, Eileen, and Aaron will slowly be able to heal and remember her light with a smile. I hold them, too, deeply in my heart, as they begin a long process of moving forward, one day at a time.

Blessings to all as we move together through this time. My strength comes from the connection I feel to this church community, filled with so many

caring, generous people.

Curriculum offerings for the coming month:

We are reorganizing our curriculum offerings for the spring semester to better serve the needs and age groups of our children and youth. We will return to three classes, broken into grades as noted below. A more detailed listing of classes will be noted in the February newsletter as we are in the process of setting up our spring schedule now.

Infant/preschool Class: We Are Many, We Are One; free play, stories, and songs

Grades K-5 Class: In Our Hands and Moral Tales

Grades 8-12 Class: A Chorus of Faiths

There will not be any RE classes scheduled for January 1, New Year's Day. All classes will resume on Sunday January 8, 2012.

Toy Drive

Thanks to the generosity of this congregation, our first toy drive ever was a great success! We took two large loads of new and gently used toys to Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministries after Sunday services on December 11 and 18. Thank you all so much for your contributions. Our children had fun wrapping them and then presenting them during

the service on December 18th.

Social justice and service in action!

Important Dates to Remember

January 8 Monthly RE Committee meeting, 12:30 p.m.; IG beginning ages preschool through

Grade 5

January 13 All Ages Games Night 6 - 8 p.m. (see flyer elsewhere in this newsletter)

Co-sponsored by the Membership Committee and the RE Committee

January 16 Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Walk—11:30 a.m.

Departs from in front of St. James A.M.E. Church on Martin Luther King Drive

in Asheville. Join us—bring a water bottle and lunch if you like!

As we all begin a new year, may your days be filled with hope and love.

— Sybil Argintar, Director of Religious Education (sybil.argintar@yahoo.com)

Birthdays in January

- January 4th Aven Blozan
- January 5th Sophia Scott
- January 7th Robert Tynes
- January 9th Teresa Ballinger
- January 10th Chuck Cogdill
- January 15th Robin Tynes
- January 17th Mary Soyenova
- January 18th Melanie Ross
- January 20th Ann Sillman
- January 25th Phil Evanzo
- January 27th Pete Ronman
- January 31st Jim Carillon



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

With Honor and Delight

The Board of Trustees approved a request from the Sunday Service Associates Team to engage the Rev. Dr. Marc Mullinax as a pulpit supply minister. He will be in our pulpit once a month for six months. He replied to our wish to have him in our pulpit by saying, "I accept your invitation with honor and delight."

Dr. Mullinax is a professor in the Religion and Philosophy Department at Mars Hill College. He has been in our pulpit twice, most recently on Oct. 2nd. Perhaps you remember his sermon in October which was titled, "Made For Joy".

Carolyn Shorkey will be the liaison between our congregation and Dr. Mullinax.

We are very fortunate that Dr. Mullinax is willing to step up to the pulpit and help to guide us in becoming the best people we can be. It is with honor and delight that we welcome him for six Sunday visits into our relaxed and reverent Sanctuary.

Choir News for January

On January 22nd, the UUCSV Choir will participate in Music Sunday, in which we will sing and retell the history of various songs in the UU hymnbook. We will do one special song in memory of Emily Eliot-Gaines, "Szekely Aldas" from Romania.



We will rehearse on Sunday, January 15th at 12:15 PM, then on Wednesday January 18th at 6:30, and again on the 22nd at 10 AM.

We enjoyed a warm and wonderful Holiday service on December 18th, and hope you will join us in the New Year if you love to sing!

—Linda Metzner, Choir Director
(annelinde@hotmail.com)

Congregational Care Committee

The Congregation Care Committee has a new Chair. Dawn Wilson will fill the shoes of Barb Rogers. Although it will be mighty difficult to lead with the compassion and organizational skills shown by Barb in these many months. Huge thanks to Barb for her caring leadership. Dawn will try to organize the soup deliveries without spillage, delay or spoilage. And she will try to organize care teams as needed with as much efficiency as she can muster. Please contact her with Congregational Care issues at dawnwilson@aol.com or 828-713-5590.

Friday Fling

January's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups every third Friday of the month, will be held on 20 January 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 "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" (2000; George Clooney, John Turturro) will be shown. For further information call Norm Kowal (333-4925).



Sign up for Round Robin Dinners by January 6

Round Robin potluck dinners are the best way for us to build a community here at UUCSV.

In Round Robin dinners, groups of six to ten people gather in someone's home or other locale. The host provides the main course and beverages, and the guests are each assigned a different course to bring. People who agree to host will coordinate and host one dinner in three months, and then will be guests at two other dinners. Many participants do not host (for a variety of reasons), but are scheduled as guests at one to three dinners.

If you would like to join the dinners for February through May, or if you have questions about Round Robin, contact Jeff Hutchins no later than January 6. Call him at 669-3823, or send him an email: jeff@jeffhutchins.com. He will have a few short questions for you. The schedule will be posted by January 15.

Women's Spirituality Group (Wyrđ Sisters Group)

Women's Spirituality Group (Wyrđ Sisters Group) invites women to meet on Wednesday, January 4, at 6:30 p.m. at UUCSV. Topic: "Mary Magdalene, What do we Know of the Woman?" At our last meeting in October, we decided to rename ourselves the Wyrđ Sisters Group. The Wyrđ Sisters are the women who control their own fates/destinies...and have some fun doing so.

Report from the Women of Wisdom (WOW) class - This class has now finished its 13 circles with a crowning (Croning) ritual. We now can dance the Sun/Moon dance, a gracious and beautiful circle dance.

The Wyrđ Sisters Group is open to all women, and follows a rotating leadership circle format, and we hope to see you soon. Contact Barbara Rogers at 828-333-2721 for more information.



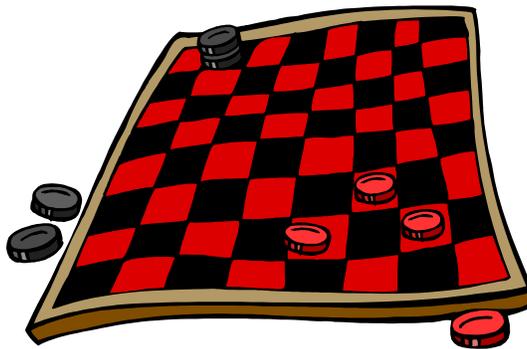
From the Editor—The Last Word

“I was heartened to learn recently that atheists are no longer the most reviled group in the United States: according to the political scientists Robert Putnam and David Campbell, we’ve been overtaken by the Tea Party. But even as I was high-fiving my fellow apostates (“We’re number two! We’re number two!”), I was wondering anew: why do so many people dislike atheists?”

“I gather that many people believe that atheism implies nihilism — that rejecting God means rejecting morality. A person who denies God, they reason, must be, if not actively evil, at least indifferent to considerations of right and wrong. After all, doesn’t the dictionary list “wicked” as a synonym for “godless?” And isn’t it true, as Dostoevsky said, that “if God is dead, everything is permitted”?

“Well, actually — no, it’s not. (And for the record, Dostoevsky never said it was.) Atheism does not entail that anything goes.”

—The first three paragraphs of “Good Minus God” by Louise M. Antony, from The New York Times of 18 December



ALL AGES GAMES NIGHT

Come one, come all to UUCSV's ALL-AGES GAMES NIGHT!

- WHAT:** Intergenerational Games Night
Co-sponsored by the RE and Membership Committees
- WHEN:** Friday, January 13, 6-8 p.m.
- WHO:** All ages, UUCSV members and friends
- WHERE:** UUCSV
- BRING:** Healthy snacks and drinks, favorite non-electronic games

Gamesters ages 12-100 will meet in the sanctuary

Gamesters ages 6-11 will meet in the RE area

Gamesters younger than 6 will be cared for in the RE area

Board games, cards, etc. available—or bring your personal favorite.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE:

RSVP to Evelyn Carter (251-1416 or gardenerev@charter.net)

We need a minimum number to have the party!!