

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOVA VALLEY

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Religious Freedom — Diverse Perspectives



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From the Minister

A New Year!!!

2013 is coming no matter what the Mayan Calendar says. At times it may seem like a desert and a sea separate December 31st and January 1st. Who knows what the New Year will bring? It may mark the end of relationships of many years accumulation. It may mean the first encounter with tragedy or serious illness. It may mean falling in love for the first time or all over again. It may mean accepting the truth about oneself no matter how beautiful it may be.

It may mean a new job.

It may mean an encounter with The Spirit of Life on a lonely road, or the hearing of one's name being called by that Spirit, for it is not so much that many are called and few are chosen. Many are called but few choose to listen! So high above the cacophony of noise and distraction, away from the surrounding traffic, you pause and listen. For in our culture so much is said so loudly; and yet you hear the whisper of the heart, indeed you can even feel it. Then you finally surrender and decide to answer that still small voice within.

And when the call is answered, your life becomes invaded by loving energies never before released, felt, or experienced. The page is turned. Your life begins a new chapter which only you can write. So whatever this New Year is to you, may the moment find you eager and unafraid, ready to take it by the hand with joy and gratitude....

Happy New Year,

Michael

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Board Meeting: Monday 21 Jan, 6 p.m.

Send Newsletter Information to
Norm Kowal, *Editor*
normankowal@bellsouth.net
Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday 22 Jan, 10
a.m., covering February 2013

Our mind and hearts are reeling after the events in Newton, CT. Of course the question that I have heard most often these last few hours is, why? Sixteen of the 20 kids murdered were 6 years young. Senseless! As the father of a six year old, I grieve from a personal place... Christmas gifts purchased will no longer be needed or enjoyed. Children's car seats will be taken out of cars for good, and for those families involved, the season of lights is now enveloped in an all encompassing darkness.

Yes, we grieve for the adults who were killed as well, yet the murder of young children adds an added dimension to this horrific event. I too have lost a family member to gun violence as my brother was murdered in the summer of 1995 at the age of 33 years old. It is a wound I will always lived with. No doubt for the families involved, and I must admit, just as it was for me back then, it is extremely difficult to see any good that can come out of this situation. But maybe, just maybe, our nation will re-think its sophomoric obsession with violence in our culture and specifically around the issue of gun ownership. The old adage that "people don't kill only guns do," rings especially hollow in light of the events in Sandy Hook. Perhaps these lives will not have died in vain if we are willing to look at ourselves and the society we have created, and to be willing to change.

My heart goes out to all the families including the shooter. We can never fathom the emotional pain he must have been in to cause so much misery and despair. Again the question of why? We may never know and may not really want to know. The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard reminds us that life is lived forward but is only understood backwards. Tennis great Arthur Ashe reminds us that we cannot ask why me in the bad times if we cannot ask why me in the good ones.

It takes courage to live for we do not know what each day brings. When we leave our homes in the morning there is no guarantee we will arrive back safely or in one piece. What we can do during this holiday season (which makes the murders even more shocking and painful to have occurred around the religious holidays), is to hug our loved ones a little tighter. Tell them how much we love them. Practice a radical mindfulness for life is short. Stay with and in the moment for the moments are what life is made of. And in the long run, it's all we will ever have.

Peace to you and yours!

Michael

Rev Michael J Carter

Sunday Programming

Sunday, 6 January 2013, 11 a.m.

Casserole

John Snodgrass

Many cultures tell creation stories in which elements are separated into neat categories: sky, land, water, plants, animals, people. Then it becomes our sacred duty to finish the divine task of separating and categorizing things. But is it possible that we feel within ourselves a deeper calling to mix it all together into some sort of...casserole? And could this integration be sacred too?

John Snodgrass is a wandering preacher, currently teaching at Brevard College, and making his third appearance at UUCSV. He is the author of *Genesis and the Rise of Civilization* – a book about Biblical and mythical echoes of the Agricultural Revolution. He lives with his wife and two children in Hendersonville.



Sunday, 20 January 2013, 11 a.m.

Strength to Love

Laura Collins

In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. published a book of sermons entitled, *Strength to Love*. His widow, Coretta Scott King, writes, "... this book best explains the central element of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolence: his belief in a divine, loving presence that binds all life. This belief was the force behind all of my husband's quests to eliminate social evil ..." As we celebrate the national holiday honoring the activism and optimism of King's life, we'll look at how his invitation to having "a tough mind and a tender heart" and to putting "love in action" still speak to our nation today.

Laura Collins lives in West Asheville with her teen-aged son, where she freelances as a writer, editor and retreat leader. She works part time for Habitat for Humanity where she is a fund developer. In previous lives she's been a Presbyterian minister, a chaplain, a climate change activist, and a provider of hospitality to ex-offenders., women in prostitution and a drama coach for inner-city children.

Sunday, 13 January 2013, 11 a.m.

Zebras; Black and White Together?

Rev. Michael Carter

What is it about interracial couples, particularly when they are African American and European American, that scares our culture so much? I find this to be especially true if they are showing their affection for each other in public. Sometimes referred to as "Zebras," or having "jungle fever," these couples even today, with intermarriage at it's highest demographic rate in years in these United States, endure emotional, psychological, and at times even physical abuse from their fellow citizens. Let's look at a bit of US history on the subject.



Sunday Programming

Sunday, 27 January 2012, 11 a.m.

Dignity

Rev. Michael Carter

Our first UU principle states that we as Unitarian Universalists covenant to affirm and promote, the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I personally feel this is the cornerstone of our faith tradition for it is something that one does not have to earn or barter for. Yet what does it mean to really live this principle of ours in the day to day life of the individual? See you there!



member for the United Way.

An ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, Judy earned her Masters of Divinity from Harvard University Divinity School and served both as a hospital chaplain and parish minister. She is the Affiliate Community Minister and a member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hendersonville. In her role at UUFH, she serves as facilitator of the Henderson County DREAM Scholarship program.

Judy is a nonprofit professional who has a Masters Degree in Nonprofit Administration from the University of San Francisco. She has over 20 years experience in various nonprofit organizations in Atlanta, Georgia; San Francisco and Oakland, California; Boston, Massachusetts; and Brooklyn and Manhattan, New York. Her nonprofit experience includes housing and homelessness issues, anti-racism efforts, community organizing in urban centers, and working with adult, teen, and child survivors of domestic, familial, or sexual violence, in addition to her current service as director of The Free Clinics. She has served in various staff and board capacities, as well as a fundraising consultant and nonprofit trainer. She earned her BA from Smith College in Northampton, MA.

A relative newcomer to North Carolina, she and her husband, Rev. Michael Carter, minister of UUCSV, relocated from Brooklyn, NY in 2005. A lover of the southern Appalachians, she was raised in the mountains of north Georgia where her family still resides. She is the proud mother of a beautiful almost seven year old daughter, Kevyn Mary.

Sunday, 3 February 2013, 11 a.m.

A Leap of Faith

Judith Long

At this time of year, we have perhaps already disregarded our New Year's Resolutions. We begin the shortest month of the year, awaiting spring, even as we learn what the Groundhog has in store for the coming of the seasons. I invite you to join me in an exploration of "faith," that foundation of our actions in a religious community. Considering that without foundational faith, our actions may ring false and can lead to cynicism and burnout. Join me in taking a "leap of faith"... that weds attention to the life of our spirits to our efforts to better our world.

Rev. Judith Long is the Executive Director of The Free Clinics (Henderson County, NC), where she has served for over seven years, working in a community ministry capacity. During her tenure at The Free Clinics, the organization has tripled in size with respect to staff, programs, budget, and most importantly patients served. In 2008, The Free Clinics successfully completed a \$1.85m capital campaign, built a new facility, and launched an endowment.

For five years, she has served on the board of directors of the NC Association of Free Clinics, the past two years as President. Locally, she has served on the board of the Partnership for Health for seven years and is an incoming board

Religious Education Corner



Is it really 2013 already? Didn't we just finish summer camp? Didn't we just start our new fall classes? But, yes, time has traveled on, and it is indeed a new year. It is my hope for the world that in this coming year we may begin to see a movement towards less violence, fewer threats to our young children here and around the world. We as a nation **MUST** do better. To protect those closest to us, but also to remember that violence is a part of the daily existence of so many little ones around the world. I hope that we as a nation can serve as an example so that we **NEVER AGAIN** have to witness the pain of all the families in Newtown, Connecticut. It is all beyond what my brain can wrap itself around, yet I won't forget. I won't let it become yet another passing episode. I'll be writing letters. I'll make my voice heard, and I hope all of you will too. Do it in the memory of all those little ones and for their incredibly heroic teachers.

Classes for the Coming Month

All Classes Begin for the Spring Semester on January 6th

Preschool—Our Natural World

Cooperative play and nature stories

Grades K-6—Celebrating Rainforests

January 6 Rainforest Riches, Treasure Hunt, and Tasting Party

January 13 Discovering and Helping, Making Rainforest T-shirts

January 20 Rainforest Fundraiser

January 27 Making rainsticks, rainforest flowers, and rainforest clay animals

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

January 6 Where She Blows

January 20 Is It Good To Be King?

Religious Education Corner

Annual Food and Toy Drives

Thanks to everyone's generosity, we collected two full barrels of food and about a dozen bags and boxes of toys, all of which were donated to Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry, to help families in the valley. Way to go, everyone!

Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Walk

It is our annual tradition to join together on MLK Day for the peace walk festivities in Asheville. The program begins at 11 a.m. at St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, followed, at 11:30 by a short walk to Asheville City-County Plaza. Program organizers have told me that the presentations will include Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation*, MLK's *I Have A Dream*, and excerpts from Obama's first inauguration speech. For those who can stay, we'll gather for lunch after the program. We can arrange for carpooling from church, leaving at 10:30 a.m. Let me know if you are interested in joining us!

Important Dates to Remember

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| January 6, 2013 | Classes resume!! Teacher check-in at 12:30 p.m. |
| January 13 | RE Committee meets 12:30 p.m. |
| January 21 | MLK Peace Walk, Asheville, 11 a.m. |

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



Membership Committee

Hi members, prospective members and friends of the UUCSV.

I am writing this on a snowy, windy and cold Friday morning, December 21st, the shortest day of the year.

Your membership committee is wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a great New Year.

Our small church has been blessed with many new members, prospective members and friends joining us.

Here is a list of new members who have joined since August 2012.

First and foremost and probably the reason so many have asked to join, is that Reverend Michael Carter is our new ½ time minister. He joined our church as a member in August. Other families who joined in August: Diane and Richard Graham and Sarah Kirkpatrick.

Susan Phillips and Jane and Alton Hancock joined us in December and we have requests for membership from several families.

I am also pleased to announce that several families have become friends of the church since August.

We welcome you all.

On Jan 27 2013, after church we will have a new UU101 class for all new members, persons who requested membership and friends. This class will run from 1 PM to 3 PM and will include a light lunch. Rev. Carter will conduct the class with the help of Evelyn, Angie and myself.

The entire membership committee will help with the luncheon.

Our committee is delighted to have Carol and James Sheeler take charge of how we handle and integrate new and prospective memberships.

Thank you everyone on this active membership committee for all you have done to help out this past year. I am looking forward to a very busy and active new year for our church and our committee.

—Ann Sillman, Membership Chair

Birthdays

January 4 th	Aven Blozan
January 5 th	Sophia Scott
January 7 th	Robert Tynes
January 9 th	Teresa Ballinger
January 10 th	Chuck Cogdill
January 15 th	Robin Tynes
January 17 th	Mary Soyenova
January 20 th	Ann Sillman
January 31 st	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.

Friday Fling

January's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups every third Friday of the month, will be held on 18 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 "Talk to Her" (2002; a Pedro Almodovar masterpiece; "One-of-a-kind film about two comatose women and the men who love them, in very different ways. Superb, haunting meditation on love, desire, and loneliness could only have been made by Almodovar."—Leonard Maltin's 2011 *Movie Guide*) will be shown. For further information call Norm Kowal (669-4668).



From Michael

“ Self care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self, and give it the care it requires, we do so not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch.”

Parker Palmer

Holiday Card Sales

We send a big thanks to all those who purchased the UU holiday and note cards during the past weeks. Social Action does appreciate your supporting this project. The proceeds (\$190 for 19 packs of cards) will be sent to UUSC to fund their human rights projects all over the world.

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

Coffee Hour Hosting Changes

Gene Chilton with her loyal helper, Charlie, has been hosting coffee hour for us, but she is taking a well deserved retirement from these responsibilities. Hosting coffee hour is one of those behind the scenes jobs that doesn't garner much attention or thanks. Please take a moment to thank Gene and Charlie for their dedicated service to the church and your Sunday coffee.

We are happy to welcome Mary June, Jean Brown, and Allan Brown to our ranks of coffee hour hosts. Mary June has already been trained and will be hosting soon so look for her in the kitchen. Jean and Allan are going to work as a team and will be scheduled for training soon so you should see them in the kitchen in the next month. Give them all a pat on the back for stepping up and making that coffee we so enjoy each Sunday.

—*Milt Warden*



Choir News

It was delightful to have so many singers with us for two services in December, singing songs of both Christmas and the Winter Solstice. In January we will once more move our Sunday performance to the third Sunday, the 20th. We will rehearse on Sunday the 13th at 12:15 AM, then on Wednesday the 16th at 6:30 PM, and on 10 AM on the 20th of January, when we will perform. Please come and sing with us!

—*Linda Metzner, Choir Director*

From the Editor—The Last Word

Concerning the choices we make and free will, Michael Shermer, in the December 2012 *Scientific American* states: The fact that we can be conscious of the consequences of our choices means that we can choose to veto them, and we can even train ourselves to have more self-control over temptations to make choices that we know will not be good for us. Through practice and positive feedback, I can train myself to resist eating fatty foods and can even choose to design my lifestyle to avoid such temptations. All these choices can happen in a determined universe, but they are nonetheless my choices.”

I would have preferred that Shermer had gone all the way, and had concluded that a deterministic universe is compatible with free will—and vice versa. I suppose that it all depends on what we mean by “free”.

