

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOVA VALLEY

March 2013

Volume XII, Issue 3

Religious Freedom — Diverse Perspectives

From the Minister

It appears that the weather is reminding us that winter still has some time to go before she exits the stage. Then again, while in New York for my father's funeral last month, where wind chills made the "real feel" temperatures around 8 degrees with gusting winds and snow the week I was there....well---let's just say our weather has been balmy in comparison. Still I do love the season of winter and it is good to be back home to the mountains of WNC.

Last month was the month of February. The month where we celebrate Presidents Birthdays (Lincoln specifically) and Valentine's Day. It was also African American History Month. Yes, I realize it's the shortest month of the year, but we take what we can get, right? Of course African American History is part of American History as well. We all know that.

I intentionally chose not to do a specific sermon on African American history for February as I wanted the freedom to do a sermon on that topic at anytime during the church year as well as in February if I so chose to. Yet, I would be remiss if not mentioning it.

Of course we can continue to debate just when the first Africans were brought to these shores. Some scholars maintain that Africans were always here (read the book, *They Came Before Columbus*, by Ivan Van Sertima), while others say that in 1492, Pedro Alonzo Nino as the navigator of the Santa Maria, arrived here with Christopher Columbus, as well as African servants, and slaves.

What we do know for sure is that in 1619, twenty African slaves, three of them women, arrived in Jamestown, VA, on a Dutch ship and were sold as indentured servants. Indentured servitude acts as a forerunner to slavery in English colonies. There is an desert and a sea between that time and the inauguration of President Barak Obama for a second term in these United States. Or maybe not so much. Depends on who you speak with. Of course there is much work to be done before, "justice rolls down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Many thousands have gone. Yet, we have come a mighty, mighty, long way as a nation and I hold personally have much hope for our future. I hope you do as well. After all, we are an Anti-Racist and Welcoming congregation and we make changes when and where we can. That is all that is required. Our ever growing congregation is in the thick of it when it comes to anti-racism work. We have much to be proud of and much work to do.

We are now in the month of March. We have St. Patrick's Day, Passover, and Easter celebrations this month. I wanted to acknowledge these holy days with something from each tradition and so the poem writings I have included this month mark the Hebrew tradition (23rd Psalm), The Christian Tradition (The Lord's Prayer In Aramaic, Jesus' mother tongue) and a nature poem by Wendell Perry. I hope a little something was added for everybody.

That being said, try to enjoy the winter season while we still have it and are here to see it. Who knows what changes more climate change will bring to our area. We do know that spring is on the way. Also know that it is my pleasure and privilege to serve this congregation!

Peace to you,

Michael



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Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday 26 March, 10 a.m., covering April 2013

Psalm 23 (Translated from the Japanese)

God, You are my pace-setter, I shall not rush.

You make me stop and rest for quiet intervals. You provide me with images of stillness which restore my serenity.

You lead me in the way of efficiency through calmness of mind, and your guidance is peace.

Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day, I will not fret, for your presence is here. Your timelessness, your all importance will keep me in balance.

You prepare refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity by anointing my mind with the oil of tranquility.

My cup of joyous energy overflows.

Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruit of my hours, and I shall walk in your pace, O God, and dwell in your house forever.

The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me

And I awake in the night at the least sound,

In fear of what my life and my children's lives may be

I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, where the great heron feeds.

I come into peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light.

For a time I rest in grace of the world, and am free.

The Lord's Prayer in Aramaic

O Birther! Father Mother of the Cosmos, focus your light within us. Create your reign of unity now.

Your one desire then acts with ours, as in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight. Loose the cords of mistakes binding us, as we release the strands we hold of others guilt.

Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back. From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do,

the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews. Truly---power to these statements---may they be the ground from which all our actions grow. Amen.

Sunday Programming

Sunday, 3 March 2013, 11 a.m.

The Optimistic Atheist, or Atheists in Foxholes

Jeff Hutchins

This service will launch our annual Pledge Drive and Canvass of members and friends. Once again, Jeff Hutchins will serve as chair of the Stewardship campaign. He will tell us about the goals of the campaign, and he will deliver a sermon on how it is possible for someone without a belief in a traditional paternal God to find hope and happiness in their life.



that's all that I yam." What does that mean? More importantly, what emotion or state of mind arises when we repeat that mantra to ourselves? Regret? Guilt? A pledge to work out more? Liberation? One of these things is not like the other. Come and hear why it is what it is and that is all that it is.

Sunday, 10 March 2013, 11 a.m.

An Arc In The Clouds

Rev. Michael Carter

What does Unitarian Christian Minister, Rev. Theodore Parker, have in common with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Aside from the fact that they are both clergy you may be surprised. One man can only be described as a "Boston Brahmin," and the other was the great grandson of slaves. One Baptist, the other Unitarian. However, they both view the machinations of the Universe in very similar ways! See you on Sunday....



Michael Carter (not our regular Michael Carter, but rather that other Michael Carter... really, you can't have too many of them) is a graduate of the Emory University Chandler School of Theology. He served in the United Methodist Church for eight years working in parishes in Georgia and Kentucky, as well as serving on the staff of one of the oldest statewide peace organizations in the United States. He spent many years in the corporate world and now is a starving entrepreneur living near Brevard.

Sunday, 17 March 2013, 11 a.m.

I Yam What I Yam: The Zen of Popeye

Rev. Michael Carter

Popeye first appeared in the daily King Features comic strip Thimble Theatre in 1929 and continues in syndication today. Though at times he seems bereft of manners or uneducated, Popeye is often depicted as capable of coming up with solutions to problems that seem insurmountable. Perhaps his most memorable mantra is "I yam what I yam and

Sunday, 24 March 2013, 11 a.m.

Psychology, Religion, and UUs

Rev. Michael Carter

How do these three disciplines intersect and co-exist in our personal, emotional, and religious lives? Is our religion (or any religion for that matter) a form of therapy as some have claimed? Is there even a difference between psychology and religion? If so, what is it? Let's unpack these questions and explore together how this "unholy trinity" of the personal, emotional, and the religious can be of crucial significance in transforming ourselves as well as the society in which we live. See you at Church!

Sunday Programming

Sunday, 31 March 2013, 11 a.m.

Every Moment, Easter

Anna Matheson

What does a Buddhist do with Easter? Where is the celebration and freedom of the redemption story present in a mindfulness practice? We will explore some possible parallels between the Easter story and the Four Noble Truths, which are the foundation of Buddhism. We may find that it's all here, right now, in this present moment.

Anna Matheson, MSW, was raised Catholic and currently has a Buddhist mindfulness practice. She has trained with Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, and was ordained into the Order of Interbeing in 2007. Anna is the Co-Founder of Mountain Mindfulness Sangha (Asheville) and leads mindfulness practice groups at the local jail. She also volunteers with the Center for End-of Life Transitions which assists families with home funerals and after-death care, the perfect continuation of her previous career as a Hospice Social Worker.

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, teacher, prolific author, poet and peace activist who has written more than 100 books on the practice of the mindfulness of each moment as a way to alleviate suffering and bring about peace. His titles include *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (1995), and *Going Home, Jesus and Buddha as Brothers* (2000).



Sunday, 7 April 2013, 11 a.m.

The Courage to Love

Rev. Bob MacDicken



We have all heard "Love your enemies," but what about those people we once considered friends who have wronged us? What about people whose lives intersect ours but seem a contradiction of ours? What about people who are REALLY intolerant? Love as Jesus talked about it, compassion as the Dalai Lama talks about it, takes courage -- but it is well worth the effort.

Bob MacDicken is in his 12th year as the part time minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Catawba Valley (UUCCV) in Hickory, NC. Born and raised in Tacoma, Washington, he received his BA from the University of Redlands (CA) and his MDiv from American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley. He was ordained as an American Baptist Minister in 1967, and became a Unitarian Universalist in 1982. In celebration of UUCCV's 50-year Jubilee, he published a book of his meditations titled *Love and Breath* (available at Malaprop's).

Bob and his wife, artist Eileen Ross, are former members of UUCSV and have lived in Black Mountain since 2004. Bob and Eileen are parents/stepparents of 6 adult children, and have five grandchildren, ages 22 months to 23 years.

Religious Education Corner



Reflections

As we head into spring, it is a time for me to see how children and youth in our classes have grown through the year. Some physically, but most spiritually, intellectually, and personally. We've been growing in RE. We have three new youth in our Sharing the Journey class, one new child in our K-6 Celebrating Rainforests class, and we have visitors frequently. It makes me so proud every time there is someone new in class at how accepting our children and youth are of that person. They welcome everyone into the group and in just a few minutes it feels as if that child/youth has been there all along. I see children adding thoughtful comments about what we are studying, and also witness intense levels of emotion sometimes for what might be going on in their own or their parents' lives when we share our joys and concerns. I see children taking responsibility for helping with service projects—baking things, taking charge so things run smoothly. Empowering children and youth to be themselves, to take on new responsibilities, and to accept others meets all of my goals as a director of religious education! Give your children and teens a hug. They deserve it!



Religious Education Corner

Classes for the Coming Month

Preschool—Our Natural World

Cooperative play and nature stories

Grades K-6—Celebrating Rainforests

February 24 In the Rainforest: Our Footprints—Ways to Recycle and Conserve Energy

Most of March and April will be spent learning music and creating scenery for our end of year service on May 19th. We'll finish making trees, flowers, t-shirts, and layers of the rainforest!

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

March 3 Nerds

March 17 Group's choice



Save the Rainforests Fundraiser Bake Sale A Great Success!

Thanks to everyone who helped with our Save the Rainforests bake sale on Sunday February 17—bakers and buyers! We raised over \$100! Combined with the almost \$50 the K-6 group has contributed in of-fertory money so far this year, we can already adopt three acres of Costa Rican rainforest through the Nature Conservancy! Our goal is to be able to adopt 10 acres. Cost is \$50/acre and we have ten children enrolled in this class. So, be prepared for some additional yummy items coming up at our sales on the following dates:

Sunday March 17th and Sunday April 14th. Sale starts at noon, right after the service.

Any bread bakers out there? Here's your chance to shine. We'd love to have some fresh bread to sell next time....

Religious Education Corner



Journey for the Earth Summer Camps—Registration Now Open!!

Registration is now open for our summer camp program, with an environmental theme. Each day offers a look at a different subject: recycling, water, sustainable food growth, energy, and animal world. Last year we included field trips to a solar farm, the Nature Center, Montreat Park and the North Fork Reservoir, and the community garden. Camp is very hands-on, with lots of time for creating things like recycled creatures, making solar cookers, and for the older group, making solar cars. Friends and members are \$150 per child for the full week. General public is \$160 per child.

If you have a business or know someone with a business who would like to help sponsor camp, that would help us out a great deal. Let Sybil know who to contact.

June 10 - 14 Elementary age camp, rising first through fourth grades

June 24 - 28 Middle school camp, rising fifth through eighth grades



Important Dates to Remember

March 2 Camp Expo at Sherrill Center, UNCA

March 10 IG Beginning with Michael Carter; RE Committee meets 12:30 p.m.

March 17 Save the Rainforests Fundraiser 12 to 12:45 p.m. Yummy bake sale!

March 24 and 31 No RE classes, spring break. Preschool care will be available.

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



We want to welcome Jackie Franklin, a new member of UUCSV. Here she tells us a little about herself.

She retired from a state government position in 2010, enjoys hiking, camping, cycling and reading. Jackie has traveled a lot since retiring. She is single and has lived in this area for 5 years, now lives in Asheville. She has 2 grown children and 3 grandchildren.

Our church membership continues to grow, on February 10 Sharon Shuster joined our church as a member. Her phone number is 828 687 8658. She is the latest of a lovely string of new members who have recently joined.

The membership committee is also growing. We have a new chair person, Jill Tagudin; thank you Jill for stepping in and accepting this responsibility. Ray Culotta has joined as a member of the committee and so has Sue Phillips. So our membership committee is growing as is our church membership.



Choir News

In March, our choir will be singing on the 24th. We will rehearse on March 17th at 12:15 after the service, then on Wednesday the 20th at 6:30, and again on Sunday the 24th at 10 AM. A number of us are singing for the ordination of Sally Beth Shore, our former intern minister, on March 22nd at the UUCA, 7 PM. Congratulations, Sally Beth!

—Linda Metzner, Choir Director

Birthdays

- March 4th Scott Shaw
- March 10th Howard Hansen
- March 11th Evan Shaw
- March 13th Judy Curtis
- March 14th Ann Lutz
- March 14th Marjorie Starrs
- March 16th Bertha Baxter
- March 18th Elaine Hamil
- March 18th Linda Metzner
- March 23rd Lee Reading



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

March's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups every third Friday of the month, will be held on 15 March 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 "Charlie Wilson's War" (2007; Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, Philip Seymour Hoffman) will be shown. For further information call Norm Kowal (669-4668).



Trip to Transylvania and our Partner Church in Medeser

Please see below for a description of the planned trip in May. Hopefully SOLS will send a couple of people, but the event is open to anyone. If you are interested, please see Evelyn Carter.

UU Transylvanian Pilgrimage (on a Budget)

May 11 - 23, 2013

13 days/12 nights - from \$1,140/person

Two life-changing weeks in Transylvania for under \$1,150! This is the same quality Unitarian pilgrimage that the UUPCC has been facilitating for 2 decades—but at 60% of the price. We have just replaced hotels with dorms & guest-houses, substituted village meals for restaurants, eliminated the long van ride from Budapest, and taken advantage of “shoulder-season” rates. (There is also an optional and affordable 3 day Budapest extension on offer beginning May 8 for those travelers who would like to visit this beautiful European capital city). Beginning and ending in Kolozsvár/Cluj, this tour will visit the most significant of the Unitarian holy places including Torda, Mészkő, Gyulafehérvár & Déva. You will also visit the frescoed Unitarian churches of Székelyderzs (a UNESCO World Heritage site) and Karácsonfalva, the spectacular 13th-century castle at Vadjahunyad, the medieval walled city of Segesvár/Sighisoara, and the Saxon fortress church at Biertan (Segesvár & Biertan are both UNESCO World Heritage sites). You will spend a long weekend with your partner congregation—make new friends and revitalize your partnership. If you do not have a partner in Transylvania the UUPCC will arrange for you to stay in one of the many beautiful Unitarian villages with other pilgrims.

Spartanburg? Louisville?

If anyone is planning to attend The Western Carolinas cluster in Spartanburg in March and/or GA in Louisville, Kentucky in June, please contact Diane Graham. Thank you!

—Diane



From the Editor—The Last Word

From Valentine’s Day, a few weeks ago:



“And a little something for the wife.”