

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOA VALLEY

Religious Freedom — Diverse Perspectives

From the Minister

As I write this on the 15th of January, 2014, there are only 64 more days until Spring in the Northern Hemisphere of our planet. That's right, March 20th, 2014 is the first day of the Spring Equinox this year! Yes, I know it's still a ways to go but some of the days we have had this week reminded me of the beauty of Spring. The warmer temperatures, the promise of something new arriving with the warmer weather. I love it.

There is also the promise of something new for our congregational community as we move forward this year. We have raised \$7500 for our Building Renovation Fund. Attendance has been up for our Sunday Services which is always nice to see. Patricia Fahey has begun the task of continuing to expand our children's religious education curriculum for the youth, so our congregational life is moving on at a steady clip. I do hope that you have the opportunity to attend The Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast this year. The event is February 1 and I will be the keynote speaker this year. I cannot tell you how delighted I am to be representing our congregation this year. It is indeed an honor. If I'm not mistaken, Roberta Madden or Diane Hutchins may have more info regarding the event. Let's not forget that we begin our Canvassing in March as well as we are called to put our money where our values and principles are yet again.

As I remind you of the road ahead, the words of the first woman to be ordained in this country, Olympia Brown, who just happened to be a Universalist, come to mind. The Rev. Brown said:

"Dear Friends, stand by this faith. Work for it and sacrifice for it. There is nothing in all the world so important to you as to be loyal to this faith which has placed before you the loftiest ideals, which has comforted you in sorrow, strengthened you for noble duty, and made the world beautiful for you. Do not demand immediate results, but rejoice that you are worthy to be entrusted with this great message and that you are strong enough to work for a great and true principle without counting the cost. Go on finding ever new applications of these truths and new enjoyments in their contemplation."

We are called to invest in where our good has come from and we will bring forth much fruit from that investment. With the coming of Spring comes the expectation of growth, both inner and outer.

We are growing numerically and we are also experiencing the inner growth of our souls as we live out the principles and the values of our Unitarian Universalist faith. We are a church not for those who think alike, but for those who think alike. Let us also bear in mind that as we grow and expand, there will also be growing pains and discomfortability. Change has a way of doing this for us but we will be just fine. After the services on Sunday I cannot tell you how many people come up to me and say that they feel something special about us. Yes, they feel welcomed and that is what we want, but there is an energy here that is difficult to duplicate in other houses of reverence. Perhaps that's what it is that they feel from us. Yes, we are a "House of Worship," if you will, but we are also a "House of Reverence."

We possess a reverence for Life. What could be sweeter?

Michael

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Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday 18 Feb, 10 a.m., covering March 2014

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOA VALLEY

“ You may possess only a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding into the hearts and minds of men and women. Give them not Hell, but hope and courage. Do not push them deeper into their theological despair, but preach the kindness and everlasting love of God.”

The Rev. John Murray, Universalist

“If we agree in brotherly (and sisterly) love, there is no disagreement can do us any injury, but if we do not, no other agreement can do us any good.”

The Rev. Hosea Ballou, Universalist

Sunday Programming

Sunday, 2 February 2014, 11 a.m.

We Interrupt this Program

Dr. Marc Mullinax

Marc Mullinax returns to UUCSV on February 2nd to address the necessary inter-relationship of Gratitude & Interruptions. “What!?” you say. We get interrupted many times per day. While these interruptions can be nuisances, what if they are occasions which are extraordinary and novel? Maybe each interruption provides one more reason to be thankful, to pause and to reflect on whether our “programmed lives” are worth taking off auto-pilot. If intentional gratitude builds character and if interruptions are occasions for gratitude, this throws a whole new light on that annoying co-worker, the flat tire, and the power outage. He’ll challenge us with developing a life style of intentional, even holy interruptions.



Sunday, 16 February 2014, 11 a.m.

The Spirit of The Pioneer

Rev. Michael Carter

Today’s sermon will focus on the insight and perspective of retired UU Minister, The Rev. Mark Morrison Reed. Rev. Reed is currently a professor at UU Seminary, Meadville Lombard in Chicago. His first book, written in 1980, is entitled, Black Pioneers In a White Denomination. I would commend the book to you highly. Rev. Reed’s insights, as well as other minister’s of color in our UU denomination will be discussed as well as my own. What does it mean to be a pioneer? Let’s see.

Sunday, 9 February 2014, 11 a.m.

The Gift of Aging

Rev. Michael Carter

Well, no one escapes it and no one gets out of this world alive! In a culture like ours that still fantasizes about, worships, and is still seeking the Fountain of Youth, how do we say no to Madison Avenue and yes to life? Aging is necessary. Maturing is optional. Its all a matter of perspective. Let’s explore the possibilities of witnessing our aging process as the gift it really is.



Sunday Programming

Sunday, 23 February 2014, 11 a.m.

Burn Baby Burn

Rev. Michael Carter

You have heard me say that we as Unitarian Universalists have our martyrs as well. This morning we will learn about the life and death of one Michael Servetus. Servetus gave his life in the search of truth and the freedom to express that truth! In 1553 Servetus was burned at the stake by orders of John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland.



Sunday, 2 March 2014, 11 a.m.

HeartSpeak: Listening & Speaking from the Heart

Cathy Holt

Most of us would like more connection and less conflict with family and co-workers. But it's easy to get triggered by a comment and react in a way we regret later. Learn how to respond to a difficult comment with empathy to yourself and the other person. We can create the quality of connection that allows everyone's needs to be met. Learn a basic practice for reducing stress through "Heart Coherence," in which our hearts can inform our minds while balancing the energy of the whole body.

Cathy Holt studied NonViolent Communication with Marshall Rosenberg. She has been teaching "HeartSpeak" and Communication for Connection for over four years. She is author of HeartSpeak: Listening & Speaking from the Heart and The Circle of Healing. She is also a biofeedback therapist and works with guided imagery for sleep induction as well as preparation for surgery.

Friday Fling

February's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups every third Friday of the month, will be held on 21 February 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 Band's Visit" (2007; "Egypt invades Israel - this time to make music. If this film doesn't delight and touch you, maybe you should have your heart examined." - Richard Corliss, TIME MAGAZINE) will be shown. For further information call Norm Kowal (669-4668).



Birthdays

February 10th Tina Rosato

February 17th Sarah Scott

February 19th Annelies Fryberger

February 22nd Jerry Pope

February 24th Evelyn Carter

February 27th Marjorie Alexander



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

Choir News

Thank you so much to everyone who helped me observe my fifth anniversary as your choir director in January! Special thanks for the beautiful mugs made by Barb Rogers.

She was our drummer in January along with Ann Sillman, and flutist Janine Wiltshire.



In February we will meet on the 16th at 12:15, then on Thursday the 20th at 7 PM, and then the day of performance, the 23rd at 10 AM. Come sing with us!

—Linda Metzner, Choir Director

Building Grant Matched

THANK YOU to each and every one of you who were able to contribute to our building fund. As of January 20th, the total amount collected was \$7,170.00. A special thank you to volunteer Tim Perry for taking on the additional accounting responsibilities of recording and reporting the donations.

Since 2006, Milt and Carolyn have offered a space in their home as a way to raise funds for non-profit giving. They offer the suite in the lower level of their home to traveling UU's. Their first guests wrote in the guest book - "It's wonderful finding such a UU home family and accommodations where we could speak freely and openly. And all of their very reasonable suggested rates go to non-profits—so it fits my favorite concept: 'This or something better is now happening in harmonious and satisfying ways for the highest good of all concerned.'" Carolyn and Milt have enjoyed home hosting and living the concept of the ripple effect. Good deeds begets more good deeds.

Which leads us to the history behind the matching grant. In the summer of 2013, Carolyn and Milt home hosted a couple of UU's from Arizona for 50 days. This was their first long-term guest stay. In exchange for staying in their home, their visitors generously donated \$2500 to be used by Carolyn and Milt for non-profit giving. The gift of choice was UUCSV. Carolyn and Milt thought that if their donation of \$2500 could be matched by the congregation it would benefit UUCSV building projects, for the 'highest good of all concerned'. Again, thank you for your generosity in making this matching grant a success. The initial grant of \$2,500 became \$7,170!

Money Talk

As your new treasurer (actually your recycled treasurer... I did this volunteer job from 2005-09) I plan on using our monthly newsletter to provide updates and answers to your questions about the business side of our congregation. First of all, I want to thank Dawn Wilson for her fine work establishing a solid process for handling money and paying our bills. This chain of custody helps to ensure that all financial transactions are done on a timely basis, money is quickly deposited at the bank and accurately accounted for. One of the many volunteer opportunities that need to be fulfilled each and every Sunday is counting the plate. We use two people in order to ensure accuracy and safety. Many not for profit organizations fall victim to theft or fraud, but I believe we have appropriate controls in place to prevent this from happening. Did you know that Tim Perry, in addition to preaching on the occasional Sunday, is our volunteer bookkeeper? I look forward to working with Tim and thank him for his dedicated service to our congregation as well.

Everyone has a unique and personal relationship with money. UU's, as a general rule, are uncomfortable talking about money. No matter how you feel about this delicate subject, there are two realities that we all must embrace: we have to have money circulating in the church in order to take care of today's needs and tomorrow's dreams. Yes, we want a full-time minister. Yes, we want to pay a living wage to our staff. Yes, we want to own and maintain an attractive, functional building. Yes, we want to provide support for our sister church. Yes, we want to work for social justice and a sustainable environment, locally and globally.

Our fiscal year runs from July 1st through June 30th. Please make sure that you have paid 100% of your pledge for this year by the end of June. Pledge fulfillment enables us to take care of the "here and now." We will launch the pledge drive for fiscal year 2014-15 on March 9th. Pledging in advance is essential to allow our congregation to plan for the future. If you would like to help out with this upcoming canvass please give me a call (664-0082). This is an important duty and we will make it fun!

—Lee Reading

Social Action Committee Event



A showing of "A Call To Action Against Corporate Rule" will be presented on Thursday, February 13, 2014 at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley, located at 500 Montreat Road in Black Mountain.

The event will feature a video recording of a presentation by David Cobb, given at the Asheville Library Auditorium during his recent national Barn Storming tour. Mr. Cobb is a dynamic speaker who is sponsored by the national Move To Amend organization, a people's movement aimed at amending the US Constitution to say that "corporations are not people, and money is not speech".

The event is co-hosted by the UUCSV Social Action Committee and the Move To Amend Buncombe County organization, and is free of charge.

The program will include an introduction of the "Corporate Personhood" concept, a showing of the David Cobb video presentation, discussion, an opportunity to sign the Move To Amend petition, and an opportunity to purchase MTA tee shirts.

Contact Geoffrey Stone (828-669-0619) for more

New Member Bios

Megan Miller

My husband is Seth; we have no children, and have one extremely spoiled cat, Elton.

I grew up in Newport Beach, California and have lived in nine states throughout the years (CA, AZ, OR, CO, NV, NJ, FL, and most recently, TX). We moved to Asheville in April, 2013. I love it here - it absolutely speaks to my soul. I almost feel as though I was born in California due to some cosmic clerical error. I should have been born here.

UUCSV is roughly the same size as my first UU church in Waco, Texas, which may be why it feels so comfortable to me.

I'm retired. My career was largely in water/wastewater analysis, with a few years in watershed protection and solid waste (recycling). I have an A.A. in Liberal Studies and technical certificates in Water and Wastewater Technology.

Currently I'm just taking it easy and indulging in "me" time, doing a lot of reading, crafting and getting to know my new home here in WNC. We expect to be traveling a lot in the near future, and I hope to start volunteering either in an environmental capacity or perhaps something with libraries/literacy.

Looking forward to getting to know y'all!

Thanks,

—Megan Miller

UUCSV Working Hard on Habitat Interfaith House in Swannanoa

Since November, the UUCSV has been one of twenty faith communities working on the Interfaith Habitat house in Swannanoa. Among UUCSV volunteers in January have been Lee Reading, Roy Hensley, Jim Carillon, and Monroe Gilmour. Yiping Huang, the Mandarin teacher at Owen High, even joined us one day.



UUCSV's minister, Rev. Michael Carter, crafted a powerful prayer at the wall-raising party that was meaningful to and talked about by everyone. Then, on Jan 23, Helen Bell, Robbie Madden, and Linda Metzner led the UUCSV Social Action Committee in providing lunch for 30 Habitat volunteers at the site.

As the photos show, while the weather may be cold, the warmth of love, commitment, and fun make it an exciting place to volunteer!



Room in the Inn Sign Up Begins for March Event

Our first Room in the Inn event for 2014 will be on Friday, March 28, at the Black Mountain Methodist Church. This is a highly successful program for homeless women in the community and Social Action is very grateful for all the help our congregation has provided over the years.

As usual, we will need morning and evening drivers and overnight volunteers as well as food for all meals. Anyone who wishes to sign up can add their name to the sign-up sheet in the foyer or by email or phone (828-686-3112, flora258@isp.com.



Town Hall Meeting February 2nd

For all concerned, there will be a Building Improvement Town Hall Meeting after the Sunday Service on February 2nd. Please plan to participate in the meeting by sharing your ideas with the Building Improvement Task Force, for the best use of the recently acquired building improvement funds. We are in the very beginning stages of planning-nothing has been decided yet-and we welcome your thoughts and input on this very important step toward achieving our 5-Year Plan goals.

For more information please contact Ray Culotta (rcculotta@gmail.com) or (936) 524-0708.



From the Editor—The Last Word



"And a little something for the wife."