

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOVA VALLEY

March 2014

Volume XIII, Issue 3

Religious Freedom — Diverse Perspectives

## From the Minister

As I write this there is 4-6 inches of snow on the ground (maybe more) with more snow on the way. What a winter we've been having here in Western, North Carolina! Not that I am counting but there are only 35 days until the Spring Equinox. Oh well....

Yet with that being said, we are in the midst of some exciting happenings here at the church. After the service on February 9th, we had four people become members of our congregation. Four people! As many of you know, we are preparing for renovations to our building which would include more space for our RE classes and a possible Day Care. There are also plans in place to make more room for us to congregate and have good conversation after the service, making us a bit more welcoming to old timers and new visitors alike. On March 9th we will begin our Canvass Kick-Off, with all of these activities mentioned being part of our 5 year plan. You may have also noted that I am in the pulpit 3 Sundays a month (January, February, March, and June) and these services have been well attended.

Being the keynote speaker at The Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast was a very proud moment for me, and not only was our congregation well represented, it really gave us more visibility in the community, with many expressing the sentiment that perhaps a visit by them to one of our services may be in order. Much to my delight, while attending a service or two with my family at the Hendersonville UU Fellowship recently, 3 members of that congregation came up to me after the service to tell me that they would be contributing their financial resources to our Chalice Lighter's Grant request. These are exciting times indeed for UUCSV.

There are also more TED Talks scheduled as part of our adult RE, and aside for having to cancel our second Transcendentalism class due to the threat of inclement weather, we really had a nice turn out for our first installment. If anyone is still interested in attending, its not to late. Just contact myself or Tricia West, our administrator. On another note, I am attempting to get more people involved during my Sunday services. Occasionally, I may need someone to do the Opening Words or a Responsive Reading. If anyone is interested please let me know. I would really welcome it.

Believe it or not, Spring will surely follow this winter as she is wont to do, and of course bring with it the promise of new life. Our congregational life appears right now to be following the same pattern. The seeds we planted are finally beginning to grow and we still have much work to do. I encourage each and every one of you to take the time to connect with what Albert Camus calls, "the invincible summer," within. Take the time to appreciate just how far you (and we) have come collectively and individually on the journey of our lives. Take the time to pat each other (and ourselves) on the back. We've come a long way....

Peace and Richest Blessings to All,

Michael



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### UUCSV Board of Trustees

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**Board Meeting: Monday 17 March, 6 p.m.**

Send Newsletter Information to  
Norm Kowal, *Editor*  
[normankowal@bellsouth.net](mailto:normankowal@bellsouth.net)  
Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday 25 March, 10  
a.m., covering April 2014

Let us not wish away winter. It is a season to itself, not simply the way to spring. When trees rest, growing no leaves, gathering no light, they let in sky and trace themselves delicately against dawns and sunsets. The clarity and brilliance of the winter sky delight. The loom of fog softens edges, lulls the eyes and ears of the quiet, awakens by risk the unquiet. A low dark sky can snow, emblem of individuality, liberality, and aggregate power. Snow invites to contemplation and to sport.

Winter is a table set with ice and starlight.

Winter dark tends to warm light; fire and candle; winter cold to hugs and huddles; winter want to gifts of sharing; winter danger to visions, plans, and common endeavoring—and the zest of narrow escapes; winter tedium to merry making.

Let us therefore praise winter, rich in beauty, challenge, and pregnant negativities.

—Greta Crosby, Unitarian Universalist

As Dr. King so eloquently reminded us, we as human beings ought not to simply make peace our goal; he noted that peace is the tool we use to achieve our goals. The Board of UUCSV has crafted a covenant that states we not only have goals to achieve, we will behave in a manor of right relationship as a tool to achieve those goals. In this spirit our Board Covenant was born.

—Reverend Michael Carter

## **UUCSV BOARD COVENANT**

*We, the Board of Trustees, covenant to perform our work together in accordance with our UU Principles, affirming and promoting each other's inherent worth and dignity, equity and compassion between us, and acceptance of the rich diversity of our ways and beliefs.*

Our work as board members will be guided by right action, right speech, and right relationship -- especially when we disagree.

### RIGHT ACTION

The welfare of the church must always be foremost in our consciousness -- principles before personality.

We will practice inclusion and transparency in discussions and decision-making while acknowledging the need for efficiency & confidentiality.

Demonstrating trust in one another and in our democratic process, we agree to disagree when necessary, and to support the decisions of the group.

### RIGHT SPEECH

We promise to:

Seek to understand through active listening - not interrupting or planning our responses while the speaker has the floor

Speak in constructive and civil ways, using "I" statements when sharing experiences, feelings, and opinions

Use our time efficiently by staying on topic and avoiding repetition

Use email for information sharing, avoiding emotion-based exchanges

### RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

We promise to:

Be direct and transparent with one another, avoiding triangulation and gossip

Promptly address problems to avoid passive/aggressive behaviour

Be willing to admit mistakes and to forgive others

*We acknowledge that at times we will forget the above; and that this is a living document, always welcoming of improvement.*

## Sunday Programming

**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.



**Sunday, 16 March 2014, 11 a.m.**

### **Children Are People Too**

**Rev. Michael Carter**



Although this is a Intergenerational Service for the beginning of the service, the topic is about how we educate and care for our children. Do we really listen to what they have to say? Do they really listen to us as adults and observe how we live? We will explore this theme not only from a societal perspective, but as Unitarian Universalist, as UU religious educators, and as just plain old human beings trying to prepare our children for the future; wonderfully, bright and awesome future. See you at Church!

**Sunday, 9 March 2014, 11 a.m.**

### **Money Matters**

**Rev. Michael Carter**

This Sunday, March 9th, is the kick off point for our Canvass efforts. We are embarking on our 5 year plan and this plan will require of each one of us, our time, our talents, and our treasure. With so many different attitudes and beliefs about what money is and how it works, its time we had a discussion about the topic of money and spirituality, and why we need it to grow so as to create what Dr. King called, "The Beloved Community."

## Sunday Programming

**Sunday, 23 March 2014, 11 a.m.**

**Whose Resurrection is it Anyway?**

**H. Byron Ballard**

Spring is springing and we've celebrated Fat Tuesday and eaten our fill of pancakes. Throughout the world's cultures there are many dying and resurrecting deities whose life cycles are mirrors of the natural world.

As we approach the season of rebirth, join Byron Ballard for a lively tie-in to this season of possibility. The choir will help celebrate this time of year, sharing songs about the coming of spring. We'll finish with a circle of dirt and seed planting featuring the UUCSV congregation. The congregation is invited to bring "signs of spring" (plastic eggs, bunnies, daffodils etc) to add to the festive central altar.

H. Byron Ballard, BA, MFA, is a ritualist, teacher, speaker and writer. She has served as a featured speaker and teacher at Sacred Space Conference, Pagan Unity Festival, Southeast Women's Herbal Conference, Glastonbury Goddess Conference and other gatherings. Her writings have appeared in print and electronic media.

Her essays are featured in several anthologies, including "Birthed from Scorched Hearts" (Fulcrum Press), "Christmas Presence" (Catawba Press), "Women's Voices in Magic" (Megalithica Books), "Into the Great Below" and "Skalded Apples" (both from Asphodel Press). She blogs as "Asheville's Village Witch" ([myvillagewitch.wordpress.com](http://myvillagewitch.wordpress.com)) and as The Village Witch for Witches and Pagans Magazine ([witchesandpagans.com/The-Village-Witch](http://witchesandpagans.com/The-Village-Witch))

Her pamphlet "Back to the Garden: a Handbook for New Pagans" has been widely distributed and her first book "Staubs and Ditchwater: an Introduction to Hillfolks Hoo-



doo" (Silver Rings Press) debuted in June 2012." Byron is currently at work on "Earth Works: Eight Ceremonies for a Changing Planet". Contact her at [www.myvillagewitch.com](http://www.myvillagewitch.com), [info@myvillagewitch.com](mailto:info@myvillagewitch.com)



**Sunday, 30 March 2014, 11 a.m.**

**A Book Of Revelation**

**Rev. Michael Carter**

What is our relationship with the Bible? It affects our lives whether we read it or not. It affects our lives whether we believe in it or not. Is it truly a book of Revelation? For some perhaps. I would like us to really think about how, for those of us who are still scarred from our religion of origin, can somehow make peace with the book which has been called the foundation of Western Culture. This may not be a difficult for UUs as one might think! Let's explore.

**Sunday, 6 April 2014, 11 a.m.**

**You Are So Beautiful**

**Rev. Chris Andrews**

The Rev. Chris Andrews hopes to help our congregation appreciate the gift Unitarian Universalists are to our community. The idea arose from a moment with his granddaughter, when he asked her, "Chloe, do you know how beautiful you are?" She responded, "I do, Granddad, when you tell me I am." So Chris will tell our congregation how beautiful we are.

The Rev. Chris Andrews, a lifelong resident of Louisiana, always has a home in Little Switzerland. Formerly a minister in the United Methodist Church for 42 years, he served at 1st UMC in Baton Rouge for many of those years. Chris now leads Jubilee Pioneers, an eclectic group of folks in Baton Rouge seeking ways to practice "good religion." He is not a Christian, but instead calls himself a "follower of Jesus."

## Religious Education Corner



You Wonder - What Have We've been Doing? Well, we've been super busy the past two months and are all very excited for the weeks and months to come! Since this is my first attempt at communicating through the newsletter, we want to ensure that we are comprehensive and give everyone in the congregation the full RE picture, share with you what we're doing and what journeys are before us.

With Sybil Argintar's departure and her capable and well-versed hands, the RE Program has undergone significant change. I've been delighted to be a part of working with our youth, teachers and congregational members yet it certainly will take time to adjust and learn all that we need to in order to have a stronger, growing and vibrant program. To this end, I've been working closely with RE committee chair Sue Phillips and the entire RE committee and staff, often meeting with them before or after service, e-mailing and talking on the phone to ensure youth have a well-planned program. Slowly I'm gaining experience with all the coordinating that needs to occur each and every Sunday regardless of how many youth are in attendance. It takes just as much time and energy to prepare to teach two children as it takes to teach ten there. We are all hopeful that with some carefully planned outreach, community events, follow-up to visitors, and families we haven't seen in a while, we can increase attendance and see each Sunday have a consistent youth presence in every age group.

We are also discussing options for RE outreach so that we can attract more youth of all ages to the program, ensure we are using our resources wisely by either combining groups and/or other cost saving and time saving measures.

Fortunately, we continue to have very dedicated teachers who are willing to volunteer their time on Sundays, for meetings and at events. One area we continue to discuss is recruiting more teachers to be either regular contributors (teachers or assistants), presenters to lead a service or two on topics that we've planned, drivers to help transport youth to other area services (once a month in the Middle and High school groups) and having enough committee members who can help plan, organize and attend events. To be in compliance with having two adults in each class, we still need staff in just about every area. We need assistants, main teachers (in March we need a main teacher for Islam), and greeters who help put out the 11am signs near the parking areas, help youth to set up and put back chairs, greet new families and give and get youth registration forms, and a few other small tasks that youth can also help with. If any Congregational member(s) would like to join us, the RE committee meets after service on the second Sunday of each month. We want to continue to grow the program and to backpack onto Sue's African proverb—my proverb for the last decade or so, as an advocate for people with various challenges and abilities, as a former teacher and a parent (to one energetic girl you can hear playing piano after service sometimes)—"It Takes a Village to Raise a Village." Please think about how you can help the RE Program one time or consistently, and join us raise this UU Village.

In Service,

Patricia M. Fahey, DLRE

## Religious Education Corner

### EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

The Elementary Class's adventures have included the study of Islam and Buddhism. Each Sunday they listen to a vibrant story with great artwork that is read by the teacher. They've learned about different cultures and customs, prayers, fasting and have had a food adventure where they got to make a traditional food with dates. Many of the youth were surprised that it tasted so good. Mandelas and prayer mats are also projects the group has worked on.

Islam Unit: Statue of man praying to Allah:

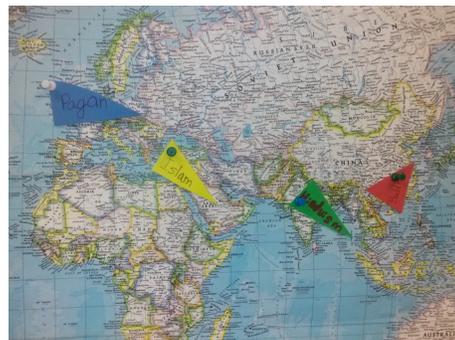


Crafting a visual project to go along with the unit they're focusing on is a great way to get these younger youth to use some of their other intelligences (spatial, artistic) and put their kinesthetic energy to good use as they decorate their project and the classroom. They also make use of a world map to flag where the religion is predominantly located. Hands on projects will continue to be used on a regular basis with this group.

Prayer made by youth in Elementary Class:



Map which pinpoints world religion that youth have studied:



## Religious Education Corner

Adventures with the Middle and High school groups have included visits to a Quaker service and the UUC Asheville. Before each trip, youth are briefed about the service and what they may encounter. When they return from the trip, they discuss what it was, what are some differences and similarities, and they continue to add to the World Religions chart for symbols, literature used, etc. which is located in the RE classrooms. This discussion time is important for them to process what they've seen and heard, and is a frequently used visual aid in weeks after attending a different service.

Neighboring Faith Chart Middle and High School:



In late February both the middle and high school groups will attend the AME Zion church to experience an African American church service as part of the unit on Protestantism (and its arms).

In-house adventures have included our recent presenter in January, Jeff Hutchins who joined us to discuss his ten years of living in Saudi Arabia. It was wonderful to learn about the culture, clothing, food, language, and prayer rituals. Jeff brought his Saudi outfit, cap, prayer mat, statues, and was energetic and enthusiastic. We took some pictures which will be on the website. Thank you Jeff and we hope you are healing well and we'd love to see you back when you're able.

Jeff Hutchins and Elementary youth. (My daughter):



Another presenter we had was Lynn Failing who joined us in February to share his expertise on Protestantism. Lynn was also enthusiastic, well prepared with visual aids and shared with youth a wide range of information about the history of the Faith, the primary advocates and agents of change. We thank Lynn for his time and presentation. Jeff and Lynn, we appreciate all that you brought to the program and we will invite you back again.

## Religious Education Corner

### Adult RE

The adults have been enjoying the usual Luunch Buunch Program on the first Tuesday of each month and have focused on learning about American Transcendentalism with Alton Hancock and Rev. Carter.

There will be a UU evening event that will focus on the questions of UU Growth and continue for three other Tuesday's.

The TED Talk for March 26 will be led by Ann Sillman as she shares videos and leads discussions about these three: Eleanor Longdens story about mental health and her journey with schizophrenia; Paula Johnson his and her healthcare and the difference physiological and insurance coverage aspects related to women's gender; and a look at sleep from a scientific perspect.

### Upcoming Events

Saturday March 8 is Soup and Movie Night. Join us from 5:00-8:00 pm to enjoy a potluck dinner followed by the movie Frozen. We ask youth and their parents to provide chili or soup to share (crockpots work well), their own eating utensils and bowls. RE staff will provide the fixing for a delicious salad, dressings, breads, drinks and desserts.

### March Class Schedule

Class: Preschool, Ages Infant - 4 yrs.

Program: Cooperative Playtime

Class: Elementary, Grades K-5

Program: Picture Books Works Religions

Program: Completing the unit on Buddhism, Lesson 14 (1st Sunday) followed by the remainder of March classes where youth will learn about Shinto Lessons 15 & 16, and Faith, Lesson 17.

Class: Middle School, Grades 6-8

Program: Neighboring Faiths - Islam

Class: High School, Grades 9-12

Program: Building Bridges - Islam

Lessons 13 & 14

## Religious Education Corner

The Middle School and High School Groups will be together for the month of March to learn about Islam. They will attend a local Islamic service and have a guest speaker.

The next Intergenerational (Beginning) Service when youth will be involved in the service is March 16. Some youth and RE Teachers will be involved. We hope to see most of our youth in attendance as the sermon is titled "Kids are People Too". Rev. Carter is encouraging the older youth to stay for the full service so they can listen to the sermon, which is all about them and how youth play an integral part in all of our lives. Please mark your calendars.

That's all from the RE corner.

Warmly,

Patricia and all the RE Teachers and Staff

**New Publicity Committee**

UUCSV has a new publicity committee to help you with all events related to our community. To ensure that all of our events get equal publicity, please contact us about your event. We provide guidelines, ideas, and help. Basic information we need: one contact person, dates, and descriptions. Contact Sue Miller: uusv.pr@gmail.com 828-989-8591

**Birthdays**

- March 4<sup>th</sup> Scott Shaw
- March 11<sup>th</sup> Evan Shaw
- March 13<sup>th</sup> Judy Curtis
- March 14<sup>th</sup> Ann Lutz
- March 14<sup>th</sup> Marjorie Starrs
- March 18<sup>th</sup> Linda Metzner
- March 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**Choir News**

In March, the UUCSV Choir will meet on the 16th at 12:15 after the service, then on Thursday the 20th at 7 PM, and then on the day of performance, March 23rd, at 10 AM. We are looking forward to singing about the coming of Spring! Warm wishes to all,

—Linda Metzner, Choir Director



**Money Talk**

My intent in writing for the newsletter is to provide information and updates about the business side of our congregation. Please keep in mind one unavoidable truth: we have to have money circulating in the church in order to take care of today’s needs and tomorrow’s dreams. Our balance sheet is currently in good shape, but as our five-year strategic plan details, we have hopes and aspirations that will require new funding in order for this vision to be realized. Together we can make it happen!

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. We will ask all our members and friends to make a commitment for the new year. Please consider what you can do and remember that we truly need your time, talent and treasure in order to be a sustainable congregation. A pledge of any size is critical to our success. Thank you in advance!

—Lee Reading, Treasurer

**Friday Fling**

March’s Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups every third Friday of the month, will be held on 21 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 “Volver” (Penelope Cruz; directed by Pedro Almodovar; “a comedic and compassionate tribute to women and their resilience in the face of life’s most outrageous tribulations”) will be shown. For further information call Norm Kowal (458-4537).



**Berea College Folk-Roots Ensemble (15 March)**

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley presents an evening concert with The Berea College Folk Roots Ensemble on Saturday March 15th at 7pm.

The Berea College Folk-Roots Ensemble performs a wide range of traditions-based music. They take Appalachian music as their touchstone and from there branch out into other styles, including Appalachian, English, Irish, Quebecois, blues, singer-songwriter, and spirituals. The ensemble is directed by Elizabeth DiSavino.



The concert will take place at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley, 500 Montreat Rd, Black Mountain, NC. Tickets are \$10, and \$8 for students .

For more information please contact Mary Soyenova 828-669-8854 or marysoyenova@bellsouth.net.

**HeartSpeak: Listening & Speaking from the Heart, a 3-hour class with Cathy Holt (23 March)**

Are you feeling concerned about difficult interactions at home or work? Do you find yourself exchanging angry words, or withdrawing, yet longing for more harmony and connection? Close relationships and friendships thrive when we learn to communicate from the heart. This class includes experiential, small group exercises, 1:1 interactions, poetry and music, and group games. You'll receive a HeartSpeak minibook.

Learn to: center in the heart with “Quick Coherence,” reducing stress and letting heart wisdom emerge; recognize your feelings and needs, and give yourself empathy; listen for the unmet needs behind every hard-to-hear message; observe and challenge judgmental thoughts; express your truth without alienating others.

March 23<sup>rd</sup>. 12:30 p.m.

Suggested donation: \$10-\$15 sliding scale. Please pre-register.

**TED Talks (26 March)**

We have had a short lull in the TED talks while we "enjoyed" a lot of snow and cold weather. But on March 26 we start again with the once a month series. Come to the UUCSV in the early evening after dinner and enjoy some new and some not so new thoughts shared by renown speakers on a variety of subjects. The presenter, this time Ann Sillman, picks the themes according to personal interest, keeping in mind the interests of others. The title Science is misleading, what is meant is the latest scientific information on Sleep, on Mind and on male and female Differences, more than we have understood till now.

Ann Sillman on March 26<sup>th</sup>, with Amy Allen assisting with the electronics:

- 1: The voices in my head            13 minutes
- 2: Why do we sleep                 23 minutes
- 3: Health care, His and Hers       14 minutes



### Sign-up for March 28th Room in the Inn Continues

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to help out with the March 28th Room in the Inn at the Black Mt. Methodist church annex. Social Action is still looking for overnight backup volunteers. In addition, we can still use various dishes for the evening meal, including bread, soft drinks or iced tea, another salad and one more dessert, as well as veggies and entrees. Those interested in helping can add their name to the sign-up list in the foyer or by email ([flora258@isp.com](mailto:flora258@isp.com)) or phone (828-686-3112). Thanks again for all your help.

—Connie Krochmal, Social Action Room in the Inn Coordinator



### From the Editor—The Last Word

A few of the newsletter editor's pet peeves:

- (1) Using two spaces between sentences—that disappeared with the typewriter.
- (2) Placing a hard return at the end of a line that is within a paragraph—the word processor takes care of that by word-wrapping; otherwise the editor has to repair the mess created.
- (3) Using all caps—IT'S UGLY AND HARD TO READ!
- (4) Using individual spaces (with the spacebar) instead of tabs and indents—we're not in kindergarten anymore!  
[For an excellent reference on these things, see: Robin Williams. 1992. *The PC Is Not a Typewriter.*]
- (5) Not using the serial comma (look it up)—skipping it is blessed by most major publications, but I think that to be a mistake; I stick with Strunk and White.
- (6) Finally, and perhaps most irritating, sending the editor articles for the newsletter in fits and starts rather than one complete e-mail message containing the whole shebang—a date here, a time there, a title with no content, a blurb that is unintelligible; the editor cannot read minds.

—Still, your humble servant.