

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF THE SWANNANOVA VALLEY

Feb 2015

Volume XIV, Issue 2

Religious Freedom — Diverse Perspectives



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## From the Minister

February 2015. African American History Month, President's Day, and Valentine's Day all occur in the month of February. The New Year is here and already I am speaking with folks who have made resolutions and other promises to themselves about "turning a new page" in their lives, only to discover that they are having much difficulty doing this. I too know the feeling. It is always difficult for some people to let go of outmoded ways of thinking and being in the world. This may be because the old is so familiar to us and the fear of change and the unknown can appear to be much too daunting. Relationship challenges, negative thinking, money worries, feeling overwhelmed with the condition of our planet and it's geopolitics, the threat of war, the list goes on and on and on. After all, what's a human being to do?

I suggest the old Zen Buddhist saying, "*Don't just do something, stand there!*" In other words, surrender to the past. Let's start focusing on what we do want in our lives instead of what we don't want. Quantum physicists remind us that what we focus on we create. So many of us worry about things that are really out of our control and this causes more stress and strain on ourselves and others. Perhaps we can learn how to just give in and to surrender. "Surrender," however, means that we have to learn to trust; trust in ourselves, our fellow human beings, and in Life itself. For those reading this of a more theistic bent, you may substitute the word God for the word Life if that is more comfortable for you. At any rate, if we can at least sometimes, stop imposing our expectations and interpretations on each other and life in general, we can let life unfold and see what develops. Life doesn't require us to believe on faith. Life asks of us that we stop trying to make Life conform to our personal pictures of reality. The results of this paradigm shift can be astounding. Situations go smoothly. Problems resolve. Relationships flow much more easier. Your Life begins to work and you begin to realize that one's job is just to show up, to be present, and to allow things to happen.

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**Board Meeting: Monday 16 Feb, 6 p.m.**

Life is about healing, reconciliation, joyful expression and intimate communion. Whenever and wherever the ego sees a problem, Life sees an opportunity to love more deeply. Fear keeps you and I from letting go of the old and make room for something new, because there is no guarantee that the new will be any better than the old. We'd rather hold on to the old and invite the new in at the same time. We all know from experience that this will never work! Attachment to the past keeps us from moving toward the future. Letting go of the past is never easy, but who ever said that it should be? The human ego has at it's very nature the desire to become attached to the past and to project that past into the future. This is basically because the ego is uncomfortable with change. Its job is create continuity.

And what is continuity? It can be many things but many times it is simply the projection of the old upon the new. If something is continuous, it is not miraculous. Miraculous events are not continuous with what happened before them. Miracles ( in the sense that I am using the word) represent a shift in energy, a paradigm shift out of past perception, and past limitations. They are unpredictable and unexpected, much like the experiences of Life itself. We call them miracles or coincidences, synchronicities, luck, etc. The reality is that without our surrender of the past they could not take place. Without our surrender, miracles would not happen in our lives.

So for the month of February (and beyond) let's prepare the ground work and the space in which the miraculous occurs. Not just for ourselves, but for our free liberal church community, and the world at large. Just remember, as of the date that I am writing this (January 16th) there only 17 more days till Groundhog Day!

## Sunday Programming

**Sunday, 1 February 2015. 11 a.m.**

### **The Myth of the Individual**

**Senator Terry Van Duyn**

As she speaks with groups about the kinds of problems she would like to work on in the NC General Assembly, Senator Van Duyn muses that we may have "ceded the argument about the fundamental role government has to play in making our lives better." As an example, she says "It is hard to talk about the need to increase funding for childcare subsidies if you've already lost the battle on whether government is able to make anything better." She cites Sister Simone Campbell's remarks about the myth of the individual and how we need to work together to create opportunity for each other.

Senator Van Duyn is a Democratic member of the North Carolina State Senate, representing District 49. She was appointed to the position to replace the late Senator Martin Nesbitt, who died in March. She won the general election in November with over 61 percent of the vote. Recently her Senate Democratic colleagues voted her Minority Whip.



**Sunday, 8 February 2015, 11 a.m.**

### **UUs and Lent: What can we learn?**

**Rev. Michael Carter**

Since my somewhat controversial reception after being invited to speak at one of our neighboring churches celebrating the Lenten season, I began to wonder what

the meaning of Lent may have for Unitarian Universalists. Since I am also slated to speak this Easter Sunday on the Universalist meaning of Easter, this talk may shed some light on both holidays of the Christian Calendar and how we as UUs may interpret the significance of the season. Lent is the season of patience and prayer before



Easter. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word Lencten, or spring, the time of the year when the days begin to lengthen. For those of us who may not be ready just yet to throw the proverbial baby out with the proverbial bathwater, and if our wounds are not too deeply imbedded from the religion of our parents (read traditional, evangelical, or orthodox Christianity), this season may have something to contribute to our inner or spiritual lives. See you at church!

## Sunday Programming

**Sunday, 15 February 2015, 11 a.m.**

### **What UUs Don't Believe**

**Rev. Bob MacDicken**

Even though UUism is a creed-less religion, the notion that UUs don't believe anything at all—or that we can believe anything that comes into our heads—can



get us into trouble. The context of our faith and spiritual community may suggest limits to what UUs can hold sacred and still claim our liberal religious heritage. The limits sometimes fall within known religious boundaries (e.g. fundamentalism within almost any religion) and sometimes we need to create them ourselves.

Rev. Bob MacDicken is in his 14th year as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Catawba Valley in Hickory. He has served as pastor, assistant minister, interim minister, minister of youth, or minister of music for several different congregations (primarily part-time) representing eight different denominations, ranging from a small Presbyterian Church in Quilcene, Washington, to a large African American Baptist Church in Washington, DC. Bob was born and raised in Tacoma, WA. He received his BA from the University of Redlands (CA) (Cum Laude in Religion) and his MDiv from American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley.



**Sunday, 22 February 2015, 11 a.m.**

**Rev. Michael Carter**

**Seeds**

What kind of seeds are we planting in our lives? What kind of harvest are we producing with our thoughts, words, and deeds? Do our actions and thoughts fall on fertile soil, or harsh and rocky ground which choke our messages of love and forgiveness? When was the last time you even thought about this? This Sunday we will examine the Parable of the Sower, a story told by Rabbi Jesus, as well as the theme of a Sci-Fi book written by African American writer Octavia Butler, of the same name. Its harvest time . . .

**Sunday, 1 March 2015, 11 a.m.**

### **The Separation of Heaven and Earth**

**David Novak**

Storyteller David Novak wonders whether we are all children of a rancorous cosmological divorce?

Member of the UU Church of Asheville, David Novak is an award-winning storyteller, author and actor, performing on the main stages of the nation's top storytelling festivals. Recipient of the Circle of Excellence Award from the National Storytelling Network, Novak teaches graduate storytelling courses at East Tennessee State University and is an A+ Fellow for the NC Arts Council. David's tours take him across the U.S. and around the world including New Zealand, the Czech Republic and a recent encore tour in China. David is a frequent guest speaker at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center and is often seen locally performing a monodrama as R. Buckminster Fuller.

**From the Caring Committee**

Friends and members, your church and I again thank all who have been willing and able to help out when asked. And thank you for coming to me with offers to help. Your name has been placed on my list of helpers. Since this is for the February Newsletter, the people from our congregation who had surgeries late January should be recovering well. Keep them in mind if you do not see them in church. And please let me know of any one who needs help. Thank you.



—with love, Ann, Caring Committee Chair

**MLK Breakfast Set for February 28**

The 25th annual prayer breakfast commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be held on Saturday, February 28 at Camp Dorothy Walls. Breakfast will be served beginning at 8 am, with the program scheduled to start at 9 am.

Special guest speaker is Tyrone Greenlee, well known activist from Asheville.

Tickets are \$15, or \$6 for children aged 3 to 12, and may be purchased from Diane Hutchins or Roberta Madden.

**Choir News**

It was a thrill for our choir director, Linda Metzner, to work with the choir on her own composition, "A Garment of Brightness" for SATB choir. A joy to work with these beautiful, willing voices! In February, we will meet to rehearse at 12:15 on the 15<sup>th</sup>, then at 7 PM on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and at 10 AM on the day of performance, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Come and sing with us!



—Linda Metzner, Choir Director

**Birthdays**

- February 10<sup>th</sup> Tina Rosato
- February 17<sup>th</sup> Sarah Scott
- February 19<sup>th</sup> Annelies Fry-berger
- February 22<sup>nd</sup> Jerry Pope
- February 24<sup>th</sup> Evelyn Carter



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

**2015 Room in the Inn Sign-Up to Begin**

Our first Room in the Inn event in Black Mountain will take place on Friday, April 3rd at the Black Mountain Methodist Church annex. Room in the Inn provides housing and meals for homeless women in the area. Volunteer sign-up will begin around after the first week in February. UUCSV will be providing all meals and volunteers for the day, including morning and evening drivers and two overnight volunteers. We will also need backups for the drivers and overnight volunteers. You can use the sign up sheet in the foyer or contact me at [flora258@isp.com](mailto:flora258@isp.com) or 686-3112.

—Connie Krochmal, Social Action Room in the Inn Coordinator

**Friday Fling**

February's Friday Fling, a fun party for grown-ups, usually every third Friday of the month, will be held on 20 February at the church. Red and white refreshments will be provided; please bring a potluck dish to share. The movie *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014; Ralph Fiennes, and many other great actors) will be shown. Potluck begins at 6:30. For further information call Norm Kowal (458-4537).



## Coming of Age News

We think you like soup! Our Soup Sundays have been going very well; we have raised \$450. Between the sale of the Christmas cactus, sale of pumpkins and two bake sales the youth raised another \$250. By the time you read this we may have had a very successful fund raiser at Fresh. Thank you to the generous donation of the Fresh owners Mark and Courtney Tomczac! The mentors and mentees have been doing activities from going to see Selma to setting up weather stations, hikes, disc golf, and making lasagna! COA classes have included topics such as good and evil, UU principles, holiday traditions and how that relates to our family values, we have introduced the UU Pocket Guide ( a small book every UU might like to know about), components of a UU Sunday service, and personal values. The high school class spent a day on the ski slope with our mighty high school facilitators!

The reason we have been having class at the Blozan house was that is where the youth unanimously wanted to have class. It is often necessary to meet the people we serve "where they are". By the time you read this though, they will have had class at the UU! The facilitators are balancing respecting the desire of the youth with wanting the youth to be at the congregation. They come away from Soup Sundays happy and excited. They love this opportunity to serve you and be helpful.

### Supporting COA Youth

1. Return your clean containers to be filled up with more soup on February 8 and 22.
2. Visit our SERVICE BOARD which is hanging in the RE Room to see how a youth may be able to SERVE you!
3. Save the date for the MARCH 14 Talent Show and Auction. Contact Bill Altork to share your talent and Ursula Goebels Ellis to donate a special item or two for the Auction.

Thank you so much for your enthusiastic involvement!

—Heidi Blozan, Director of COA Program

## Adult Religious Education

### “This I Believe” March 10th and March 24th:

Have you ever wanted to put down into words the beliefs which drive your behaviors? If so, this adult Religious Education class is for you! A two part course will be offered to provide you with the guidelines to assist you in writing your personal credo, AKA a “This I Believe” essay.

A “This I Believe” statement is a personal credo developed by many Unitarian Universalists. Give yourself the opportunity to do what our high schoolers are doing in their Coming of Age program this year. They will be writing their credo! I invite you to take the risk of writing your own credo! Instruction and support will be provided on Tuesday evenings, March 10th and March 24th. On March 10th we shall explore guidelines for writing a “This I Believe” essay and participate in some warm-up exercises. Between the two class dates, participants will write a rough draft of their essay. At the second and final class, we shall present our rough drafts to each other. You will not be expected to complete a final product in these two weeks of clarifying your Truth. Most poets feel that a poem is never considered finished until the poet dies. So it goes with personal credo’s. All we expect of you is to begin the process of writing your credo or edit one you have written in the past.

The class will be taught by Carolyn Shorkey. Contact her before March 3rd to sign up for the class. 299-9456 or [c14shorkey@gmail.com](mailto:c14shorkey@gmail.com). We need a minimum of 10 persons to sign up in order to offer this class.

## From the Membership Committee

The newest member of our congregation is Erin Evans. Erin is an Asheville native and presently lives in Swannanoa. She is the mother of two children, a student studying complementary and alternative health, and a preschool teacher. She discovered our church by just “driving by”, but in her own words she says: “It was my old soul that led me to UUCSV. With this being my first membership at any church, I am more than excited to call this ‘home’. I look forward to this powerful year to come and the possibilities it holds!”

## **Social Action Committee**

### **HISTORIC THOUSANDS MARCH ON JONES STREET (HK on J)**

Join people of all economic backgrounds, ages, colors, and sexual persuasions in Raleigh for a love and justice revival on Saturday 2/14/15. This is also called the 9th Annual Mass Moral March on Raleigh. Pre-rally begins at 9:30 AM and march begins at 10 AM.

A bus will leave Asheville early Saturday morning, and return that evening. [www.mountainmoralmonday.org](http://www.mountainmoralmonday.org) for more information. There is also a small group going on Friday. If interested in sharing the drive and a motel room call Helen Bell at 828-551-6077.

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE FILM NIGHT---2/13/15--- ASHEVILLE UU CONGREGATION---7 PM**

The award winning documentary "Girl Trouble" is both heart wrenching and inspiring. Shot over a period of four years Girl Trouble documents the compelling personal stories of three teenage girls entangled in San Francisco's failing juvenile justice system. Film is one hour with a short discussion afterwards. No charge; donations welcome.

## **About Announcements**

The Board of Trustees has decided that announcements take up way too much time in the service. Last year we voted to not have announcements spoken, but to have them included in the Order of Service. But, people being people, wait til the last minute and rush up to the announcer with a pet project that they just HAVE to have included in the service.

Announcements have to be submitted to Trisha by Tuesday in order to be included in the Order of Service.

## **Welcoming Guests**

How many times have you gone someplace where you didn't know anyone, and stood around with a cup of coffee waiting for someone to speak to you? Uncomfortable? You betcha! Will you go back there?

We are often called a "social club" instead of a congregation, and we can get into conversations with people we don't get to see during the week, leaving visitors to feel left out. It takes a lot of courage for some folks to go to a new church, and we need to make sure that our visitors feel warmly welcomed.

It's good to have a reminder now and then. Take a moment or two before the service to speak to and welcome visitors. We've reserved the last two rows of chairs for latecomers, to encourage visitors to sit further up front. They often want to sit in the very back, unnoticed.

Try standing by the coffee table and offer cups. Anything to help start a conversation. "Where are you from?" is a good icebreaker. They'll be wearing temporary name-tags, so you can use their name. Tell them your name, shake their hand, look into their eyes and smile. This will go a long way to help people feel connected.

When people come to our congregation, often they're looking for a church home. They're looking for people they can relate to. UU isn't for everyone, but a cheery smile can go a long way toward making someone feel welcome."



### **LOCAL CHURCHES ANNOUNCE COMMUNITY DIALOGUES ON RACE**

Two local churches have joined forces to offer a four-week series of Community Dialogues on Race, beginning Tuesday, February 10. The two-hour programs will feature films, group exercises, and dialogue, facilitated by the Rev. Michael J.S. Carter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley. The partner church is Thomas Chapel AME Zion Church.

The schedule is as follows:

1. Tuesday, February 10, 6:30-8:30 pm, at the Unitarian Universalist church, 500 Montreat Road.
2. Tuesday, February 17, 6:30-8:30 pm, at the Unitarian Universalist church.
3. Sunday, February 22, 2:00-4:00 pm, at Thomas Chapel, 120 West College Drive.
4. Tuesday, March 10, 6:30-8:30 pm, at Thomas Chapel.

Organizers of the series are the Rev. Carter, the Rev. Wayne Purcell of Thomas Chapel, and Roberta Madden, a member of the UU church's Social Action Committee.

The program is free and open to everyone. Interested persons are encouraged to register by emailing Roberta Madden at [robertamadden@yahoo.com](mailto:robertamadden@yahoo.com).

## Money Talk

Have you ever thought about what makes UUCSV a great community for you? Here are a few of the things that are important to me...

Inspiring, provocative sermons and speakers that make me think and connect with the universe.

Enjoying the delightful music from many sources and traditions that I can either sing or listen to.

Reaching out to others in need through our Social Action Committee that provides meaningful support to a variety of people and organizations.

Providing and receiving support to our UU regional network and the UUA (Chalice lighter, WNC Cluster meetings, The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center, etc.).

If you are wondering how our Guest at your Table money is being invested, please check out the work of the UU Service Committee in Haiti. Our support of the UUSC is one important example of how we, as UU's, can make a difference both in our own backyard as well as around the world .

I invite you to add to this list and to give thanks to our staff, members and friends who work so faithfully in so many ways to sustain our congregation. We are now organizing our leadership team and game plan for the upcoming Spring pledge drive. Making our financial commitments to support this congregation is essential for nurturing and growing this great community of ours. If you would like volunteer in the canvass of members and friends please contact Jim Carillon at 628-1320.

Thanks for all that you do on behalf of our great community!

—Lee Reading, Treasurer

## Classified

Wanted: 2-cushion loveseat sofa bed or smaller sofa bed.

Call Mary at :828-216-7511.

## Upcoming Changes for Current and Newsletter

Beginning in March, the weekly Current and the monthly newsletter will be incorporated into one single format. It will still be called the Current and will still come out weekly. The newsletter will be incorporated into the Current; articles that were in the newsletter, such as "From the Minister," will still appear on a regular basis in the new Current. More information about these changes will be coming out in the next month. As with any change, there may be some glitches at the beginning, but with the support of everyone, we hope to have a system that will work well for all of us.

After a long and very productive stint of being the newsletter editor, Norm Kowal is retiring from his volunteer role. He has done a wonderful job with this and we are very appreciative of all his work. When you see him, please thank him for all he has done.

—Sue Miller

## From the Editor—The Last Word



This is my last UUCSV newsletter. I took over from Sydney Wilson with the April 2005 issue, continuing the newsletter in paper format. With the April 2007 issue the old paper format was continued, but the newsletter was distributed by the Internet (with several paper copies made available to those who needed them). With the July 2009 issue a new format was created that provided more freedom of design, and the newsletter was distributed only digitally on the Internet. With March 2015 UUCSV is shifting into a new and exciting system combining the newsletter and Current.

I wish to thank all of you for your cooperation in this venture of ours, which has brought us into the digital age. It's been a great ride!

—Norm Kowal