



# UUFC WORLD

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clemson

230 Pendleton Road, Clemson, SC 29631

March 2009

Volume 31 Issue 3



## MARCH - SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Reflection - 10 a.m. Social Time-10:30 a.m. Services - 11:00 a.m.

### March 1

Reflection: Reverend Cynthia Prescott

The Big Picture

Reverend Keith Kron

### March 8

Reflection: J. Malmgren, Buddhist Meditation

Mystic Women: Hildegard and Julian

Reverend Cynthia Prescott

### March 15

Reflection: Marty Bynum

Strong Is What We Make Each Other

Reverend Cynthia Prescott

### March 22

Reflection: Christine Grewcock, Equinox

Ethical Eating

Green Sanctuary Group

### March 29

Reflection: TBA

Skeptical Women: The Iowa Sisterhood

Reverend Cynthia Prescott

## In Memorium: Charlotte Palmer

Charlotte Palmer, widow of Merrill Palmer, former UUFC member, and long-time Clemson resident, died in San Jose, California on February 6th.

Charlotte and Merrill moved to Clemson from Tennessee and lived in Clemson for over 50 years, raising four sons and serving the community in countless ways. Many of us will recall seeing one or both of them traveling around town on bicycles as their primary means of transportation. They were avid hikers and campers and dedicated environmentalists. Charlotte was a master gardener and was always willing to help others with their gardening challenges.

Charlotte was also an accomplished pianist who played the organ for Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and the piano for the Fellowship. She and her husband were active and enthusiastic members and supporters of the Fellowship, the League of Women Voters (charter member), and the Sierra Club. Both Charlotte and Merrill were actively involved in the creation of the Clemson Child Development Center which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. They continued to give it their loving attention, he with maintaining the building and grounds and Charlotte as a cook. Charlotte was also actively involved in Clemson Community Care from its beginnings in the 1980s, working as a volunteer and serving as a board member. They were generous supporters of many community services as well as the arts.

Charlotte's vocation was as a homemaker, mother, community volunteer, and musician. She and Merrill raised four sons in Clemson: John, Fred, Eric and Allan, and were the proud grandparents of four grandchildren.

*Submitted by Berneice Holt and Holley Ulbrich*

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

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**THE VIEW FROM HERE**  
Martha Alexander, UUFC Board President  
*What THEY said about us*

We Unitarian Universalists are small in number so I am always amazed and often amused when we are mentioned historically, in the media, or in books. These references to us that have caught my interest go from the sublime to the funny.

Thomas Jefferson considered himself a Christian, believed Jesus was a great moral teacher, but did not believe that Jesus was divine. He believed in Dr. Joseph Priestley's Unitarian form of Christianity and once asked that Unitarian ministers be sent to VA. In a letter to Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse in 1822 he wrote, "I rejoice that in the blessed country of free inquiry and belief, which has surrendered its conscience to neither kings nor priests, the genuine doctrine of only one God is reviving, and I trust that there is not a young man now living in the United States who will not die a Unitarian." In 1825 he again wrote to Dr. Waterhouse that his neighborhood was too slender and too much divided into other sects so that "I must therefore be contented to be a Unitarian by myself..." Yet Jefferson never joined a Unitarian congregation. (*The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Special Collections, UVA Library)

In *Magic Time* (Sarah Crichton Books, 2006, page 316) by the late Doug Marlette, he wrote "A young white Unitarian minister named James Reeb had been beaten by whites with a baseball bat and had died in the hospital." Rev. Reeb was walking down a street in Selma, Alabama on March 9, 1965, following a voting rights march when he was attacked. He died March 11, 1965. Following the tragedy in the Knoxville church, a person was quoted as saying "How could this happen to such a peaceful people?"

Someone wrote to Annie's Mailbox that after moving to a new town and being an atheist, this person was having a hard time finding friends. The answer was that dozens had written in that the Unitarian church was the place this person should go. The writers even gave the UUA website so the person could find a nearby congregation.

Joan Medlicott, author of the "Ladies of Covington" novels often sets events in the Unitarian church. Once I told her we are Unitarian Universalists now; she said she just thought of our churches as Unitarian. This is true of most all references to us. In Clyde Edgerton's *Walking Across Egypt*, Mattie, the 78 year old vice president of her Southern Baptist Sunday school class and head of the Lottie Moon offering for missions, bemoans the fact that her 35 year old daughter Elaine, an English teacher of the gifted and talented, is not married and has "wandered spiritually." (p. 69) However, she concedes that Elaine does go to that "Unitarian place once in a while." (p.107). She had met the Unitarian minister "with whom she agreed on every topic she could think of" (p. 69) at a cocktail party. In the old M\*A\*S\*H\* series, after Col. Potter called the chaplain's office in the Pentagon, he remarked, "He answered his own phone, he must be a Unitarian." Then there's Garrison Keillor, my all time favorite master of UU jokes. In "The Lives of the Cowboys," Dusty says that one thing you have to watch out for when you are alone on the prairie on a cattle drive, is Unitarian missionaries. And my all time favorite Keillor funny, "The Unitarians went west to convert the Indians through interpretive dance."

I realize this is quite a stretch from Thomas Jefferson to Garrison Keillor, but these are quotes that have interested me or tickled my fancy over the years.

## The DRE's Corner: Meg MacArthur News from Religious Education

The Valentine's Day Extravaganza on February 14th was a great success. Cindy Burke, Jeff Godwin and the RE teens (UU Magick) put lots of hard work into the fundraiser. After paying for the party supplies, they made \$275. The money will go into the fund for their end-of-year trip to Charleston.

Spring is coming and we're planning our RE garden! A donor provided money to purchase six EarthBoxes®. We plan to put them on the deck by the playground and garden year-round. Input from Fellowship gardeners will be gratefully accepted. These are the same EarthBoxes that will be used in The EarthBox Project. If you are thinking of contributing to this cause, check out the RE garden to see what can be done with the boxes.

Our Whole Lives: Sexuality Education for grades 7-9 starts in March. If you have a teen who would benefit from this program, please come to the Parent Orientation meeting on March 18 from 7-9 pm in the Social Room at the Fellowship. Your teen won't be able to participate if you don't attend this meeting.

Outreach: The teens helped with the unloading of food at Clemson Community Care on Saturday, February 7. They will do this again on Saturday, March 21.

The Early Learners and Advanced Learners plan to plant trees at a Habitat house on March 29. The Early Learners and Advanced Learners plan to plant trees at a Habitat house on March 29.

Last Easter, instead of hiding Easter eggs, we hid canned goods and donated the cans the children found to Clemson Community Care. That worked well so we have decided to do it again. There will be a box in the RE room next to the Library at the Fellowship. You can deposit canned goods in the box for the Easter "can" hunt. Easter will be April 12 so there's plenty of time to collect canned goods.

Thanks for supporting Religious Education at the Fellowship.

## NEW ADULT RE CLASS:

Starting March 15th, the adult learning group that meets on Sundays at 9 a.m. will be reading "The Axemaker's Gift" by James Burke and Robert Ornstein. Cecil Huey will facilitate. Order your copy now! For more information, contact Holley Ulbrich.

And Other Adult RE classes:

**HOT, FLAT AND CROWDED:** Please join us for a Sunday morning discussion group about Thomas Friedman's newest book, **HOT, FLAT AND CROWDED: WHY WE NEED A GREEN REVOLUTION.** Began Feb. 8 at 9 a.m. in the back Adult RE Classroom, continuing for the following six weeks. Please contact Carl Ulbrich at [cwu@nctv.com](mailto:cwu@nctv.com) for details.

And ADULT RE UU101 - SOURCES class: March 10, 17, 24, 31, Tuesday evenings, 7:00-8:30pm, Library, Les Grady.

**"LEARNING IS NOT A PRODUCT OF  
SCHOOLING, BUT THE LIFELONG  
ATTEMPT TO ACQUIRE IT."**

*Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955) Physicist &  
Nobel Laureate*

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**UUFC WORLD** is published monthly by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clemson. Please send your submissions to [heidisong@nctv.com](mailto:heidisong@nctv.com) or visit us at 230 Pendleton Road, Clemson, SC 29631. The deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month for the following month's edition. Visit our web page at [www.uufc.org](http://www.uufc.org). Our Webmaster is Steve Bynum.

We welcome new ideas, opinion letters, poetry, verse, inspirational quotations....even UU-appropriate cartoons or jokes!

(AND, please check UUFC Mid-week news updates via email....for more details on classes, Programs, etc!)

## Fundraising

March kicks off two of our biggest and most popular fundraisers. As of this newsletter approximate "press time" (**March 1st**) we have distributed boxes and labels for you to take home and fill with good stuff in the line of "**home and garden**" for the next UUFC yard sale on **March 28th**.

Please put books in a separate box--take two if you need to! Bring your filled boxes, as well as any furniture, to the Founders' House garage. We will be needing volunteers to sort and price on Friday night (March 27th) and to set up, work the sale, clean and haul on Saturday, so mark your calendars!

On March 8th we will launch the Spring Silent Auction for events, services and "stuff too good for a yard sale" (especially including handicrafts.) We need your forms filled out (or email holleyu@nctv.com) as soon as possible so we can develop a preliminary catalog to distribute on March 1st. We also need delivery of tangibles to UUFC no later than Saturday, March 7th so that we can set up the sale to begin on Sunday. We are looking for creativity--can you offer lessons of some kind? Take care of pets? Host an event of some kind? Lots of your old favorites will be in the auction again this year, but there is always room for something new. Events are for happenings between April 5th and the end of September. There will be a second event auction in the fall. We could also use some help in setting up the social room on March 7th. Let Holley Ulbrich or John Kenelly (kenellj2clemsen.edu) know if you can help.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

## STEWARDSHIP NEWS!

The Stewardship Committee is pleased to announce that UUFC members really came through for our "beloved community." Pledges now total \$135,514. They came from 92 individual "pledging units", with an average pledge of \$1,373. As a result, the board of directors was able to reduce some of the painful budget cuts that were made when it appeared pledges were falling far short of needs last fall.

In the past, UUFC has met 95 percent of its pledge commitment. Because some people paid part or all of their pledges up front, funds received as of Feb. 1 totaled \$18,920. This is far more than the monthly amount anticipated, \$11,292. In future issues of the newsletter, we'll be reporting on pledges received vs. pledges made, and hope the report will continue to be this positive.

Submitted by Bob Snelsire

### And more FUN Raising!!

**April 7th, 5:30 pm, Founders House**

For all UU women, here's a call to joust. We're going to have a \*Fictionary party. Please bring a salad, ever so hearty. And a beverage of your choice To moisten your voice, Though there will be coffee and tea. And plenty of laughter and camaraderie. Please rsvp to me, Nancy Oppenheimer at oppenheimerart@bellsouth.net.

\*Fictionary - A turn consists of one player picking a word from the dictionary and each other player composing a fake definition. A round is completed when each player has selected a word to be guessed.

Players earn points (1) by guessing the correct definition of a word, (2) by composing a fake definition that other players guess is the correct one, and (3) as Picker, selecting a genuine word that no players vote for.

The winner is the player who has earned the most points after a pre-determined number of rounds.

Submitted by Nancy Oppenheimer

## EAT, DRINK and Columbo's will REBATE!

Columbo's Pizza supports non-profit organizations with a rebate program, including UUFC. We collect and tally cash register receipts from the restaurant a couple of times a year and owner, Mark Conrad writes us a check for 10% of the pre-tax sales totals.

This is a very easy way for UUFC members as individuals or as part of a UUFC group to contribute to UUFC, whether you dine-in at Columbo's or carryout orders to enjoy elsewhere. Just think of UUFC whether dining with the Sunday Lunch Bunch, enjoying a well earned lunch after a Saturday work party, during a committee meeting, a Teen Lock-in or a Sunday Forum.

All YOU have to do: 1) ask the cashier at Columbo's to stamp your white cash register receipt on the reverse side with their Columbo's name stamp (not your credit card or check card receipt). 2) place your stamped receipt in the money aquarium or Sunday offering basket. That's it!

Really, that's all you have to do in order for UUFC to get a 10% rebate check.

Submitted by Sandra Sanderson

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## Green Sanctuary

The next time you cut your grass, think about this -- 54 million Americans mow their lawns, using 800 million gallons of gas per year. Power lawn & garden equipment produces 5% of our nation's air pollution, emitting high levels of:

carbon monoxide  
volatile organic compounds  
nitrogen oxides

**From EPA** -- A traditional gas mower produces as much air pollution as 43 new cars each being driven 12,000 miles.

**From DHEC** -- Power lawn equipment is the second leading cause of air pollution in South Carolina (after transportation).

**FACT:** One hour of mowing is the equivalent of driving 350 miles in terms of volatile organic compounds.

**FACT:** One gas mower spews 87 lbs. of the greenhouse gases and 54 lbs. of other pollutants into the air every year.

**FACT:** Over 17 million gallons of gas are spilled each year refueling lawn and garden equipment -- more than the total amount of oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez.

So, what can YOU do about it?

Come to the **Tri-County Lawn Mower Exchange** on April 18, (10 a.m. - 1 p.m.) at the CU Kite Hill Recycling Center. Bring your old gas mower and exchange it for a new battery-operated mower. The cost of the new mower will be \$199 plus tax. If you do not have a mower to exchange, the cost of the electric mower will be \$299 plus tax. These mowers normally retail for \$400, plus \$50 for shipping. The only down side is the cutting blade radius, which is 14" (so it will take a little more time to cut your grass than normal). However, because they are battery-operated, there is no cumbersome extension cord. They create only 1/4<sup>th</sup> the noise pollution as a regular mower, and there is virtually no maintenance because there is no oil, gas, spark plug, or carburetor. It costs less than 2¢ of electricity to recharge the battery. And best of all, they start with the push of a button, so no more yanking on that darned starter cord!!!

It is first-come, first-serve, and supplies are limited, so please come early.

Submitted by Steve Johnson



## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Kathryn Smith

The Outreach Committee met in February for the first time and would like to announce the following:

**Fourth Sunday Food for Thought:** A program on "Ethical Eating" will be featured after the service on March 22, led by Ellie Taylor and Catherine Mobley. This is open to everyone. Please bring a dish to contribute to the pot-luck lunch and join the discussion.

**Fourth Sunday Offerings:** The March offering will go to Clemson Community Care. Carol Ward delivered 48.4 pounds of food to CCC in February. Remember donations of non-perishable foods should be brought to UUFC the first Sunday of each month.

**Habitat Volunteers' Dinner:** Our church will provide a pizza dinner for a group of about 15 college student volunteers working on a Habitat for Humanity house. They will come to the fellowship on Monday, March 9 at 6:30 p.m. If you would like to chip in for the pizza or bring a salad or beverage to complement them, please contact Kathryn Smith at [ksmith@cancerassociationanderson.org](mailto:ksmith@cancerassociationanderson.org).

### Garden Fest: Building Community, Growing Vegetables

Would you like to provide people who are facing tough economic times with a chance to start gardening and grow their own food? UUFC is one of several community groups working on Earth Day 2009 events. Garden Fest: Building Community, Growing Vegetables will be held at the SC Botanical Garden on Saturday, April 18 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Simple, interactive displays will teach people how to grow vegetables. Experts will be on hand to answer questions. It is free and everyone (even experienced gardeners who would like an update) are encouraged to attend.

A related project is The EarthBox Project. In early April, it will provide gardening kits to people identified by Littlejohn Community Center and Clemson Community Cares (CCC). An EarthBox is a container garden on wheels that comes complete with soil and fertilizer along with plants. It can be re-planted with seasonal crops year round, and the same soil can be used over again for five growing seasons. Money is being raised to purchase 24 EarthBoxes. A donation of \$60 will provide one EarthBox with plants. We are seeking experienced gardeners to volunteer as mentors to help recipients with planting the EarthBox this spring, re-planting in the fall, and answering questions throughout the year. If you are interested in sponsoring an EarthBox or being a mentor, please complete a form located in the foyer.

Other volunteers are needed for all our Earth Day projects, so if you wish to help, contact Catherine Mobley (868-6530) or Ellie Taylor (654-1331). Also, take extra flyers and talk with other organizations, individuals, churches, or any small group of committed people (at work, school, club, etc.) to sponsor an Earthbox.

Submitted by Ellie Taylor

Many thanks to Cynthia for offering to be the point person at the gathering, Holley Ulbrich for bringing veggies and dip and Carol Ward for making brownies. Thanks to Pat Zungoli for bringing this need to our attention. Habitat for Humanity was the focus of our Fourth Sunday Offering in January, and UUFC donated \$330.

**Green Sanctuary:** The discussion of "Hot, Flat and Crowded" by Thomas Friedman has attracted 12 participants. Carl Ulbrich has been leading the discussion on Sunday mornings. Remember to bring your burned-out and dated technological items to Founders' House basement, where they will gathered and taken to a recycling day in April.

**Clemson Area Congregations In Touch** will hold a Lay Academy on "Medicine, Religion and Ethics: End of Life Issues" on Monday, April 20, 7-9 p.m. at First Baptist Church. Registration at the door is \$10, with proceeds divided between Clemson Community Care and Clemson Child Development Center.

**Outreach Committee meetings** are held the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. in the library. We meet next on March 5. Please join us if you are interested!



## COUNCIL OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS-2009

Cindy Lee Board Representative &  
Chair of Council

Building/Grounds	Allen Guest & Meg Williamson
Communication	Jan Lay
Hospitality/Holidays	Anita Stutzman
Membership	Karen Hiebel
Outreach	Kathryn Smith
Religious Education	Mark Mellott
Stewardship	Bob Snelsire
Ways and Means	John Kenelly
Worship	Holley Ulbrich

### Summary of Feb. 11, 2009 Board minutes

Attending: Martha Alexander, Christine Grewcock, Karel Keel, Robin Kimbrough-Melton, Cindy Lee, Rev. Cynthia Prescott, Eleanore Richardson, Sandra Sanderson, Carolyn Turner  
Correction to the minutes of the Jan. 14 meeting was "Annual Program Fund dues for UUA fiscal year (6/30/09) is pledged, budgeted and committed under UUFC's bylaws. Any adjustments to Fair Share will not be applicable until the FY 2010 begins as of 7/1/09)." Karel moved, seconded by Eleanore to approve the minutes as corrected. Motion carried.

Christine submitted a revised 2009 budget. Karel moved, seconded by Robin, to accept the revised budget. Motion carried.

Personnel contracts for Julie and Elaine have been signed.

It was moved by Cindy, 2nd by Karel, to appoint John Turner as chair of the Bylaws committee. Motion carried.

A motion to increase the minister's housing allowance to \$11,760 annually was made by Robin, seconded by Sandra. Motion carried. Carolyn moved to accept the Professional Expense Allowances Reimbursable Expense Policy as printed, Robin seconded. Motion carried.

- Submitted by Carolyn Turner, Secretary -

## MONTHLY EVENTS & GROUPS

**Covenant Groups: We have 6 on-going Covenant Groups.** Please inquire at the office if you are interested.

### UUFC Board, Committee, and other Business Meetings

Outreach Committee, 1st Thursday, 6:00 pm,  
Library

Membership Committee, 4th Wednesday, 5:30pm

RE Committee Meeting, 3rd Tuesday, Noon,  
Founders House

Board Meeting, 2nd Wednesday, 7:00 pm,  
Social Room

Finance Committee, 1st Wednesday 6:30 pm,  
Library

Green Sanctuary, 1st Tuesday, 5:00 pm,  
Founders House

COSMOS, 3rd Thursday, 4:45 pm,  
Founders House

Staff Meeting, 3rd Wednesday, Founders House

### Miscellaneous Monthly Events:

**Clemson Community Care Food Collection,**  
1st Sunday, Main Building

**Trading Post,** 2nd Sunday, Main Building

**Benevolence Offertory,** 4th Sunday, Sanctuary

**UUFC Women's Salad Supper Group,**  
4th Wednesday, 6:30 pm, Founders House

**The Nekkid Muse: A UUFC Coffeehouse**

2nd Friday of each month, 6:00 pm, Pot Luck  
dinner, then Nekkid Muse Coffeehouse, 7:00pm.

**Novel Circle,** 1st Wednesday, 7:30 pm,

Founders House

**Choir Practice,** Every other Sunday, 10 am -  
Front classroom in Main building

**NEW: Literary League,** For people who love  
words. 3rd Tuesday (call Bonnie Worthen for  
details. 646-3319) Bring an appetite to become  
real wordsmiths!)

**Fourth Sunday Food for Thought:** Pot luck lunch  
& discussion on UUA-relevant topic.

NOVEL CIRCLE meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at Founders House. See summaries below for that book and books to be read and discussed for the upcoming months.

March 4, 2009. *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen. Jacob Jankowski is living out his days in a nursing home, hating every second of it. His life wasn't always like this, however, because Jacob ran away and joined the circus when he was twenty-one. The circus he joins, in Depression-era America, is second-rate at best. Once it becomes known that he has veterinary skills, he is put in charge of the "menagerie" and all its ills. With its spotlight on elephants, this romantic page-turner hinges on the human-animal bonds. The most interesting aspect of the book is all the circus lore that Gruen has so carefully researched. 350 pages, Algonquin Books, 2007.

April 1, 2009. *Infidel* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Raised in a strict Muslim family, Hirsi Ali survived civil war, female mutilation, brutal beatings, adolescence as a devout believer during the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, and life in four troubled, unstable countries largely ruled by despots. In her early twenties, she escaped from a forced marriage and sought asylum in the Netherlands, where she earned a college degree in political science and fought for the rights of Muslim immigrant women and the reform of Islam as a member of Parliament. Ultimately a celebration of triumph over adversity, Hirsi Ali's true story tells how a bright little girl evolved out of dutiful obedience to become an outspoken, pioneering freedom fighter. As Western governments struggle to balance democratic ideals with religious pressures, no story could be timelier or more significant. 384 pages, Free Press, 2008.

Submitted by Gail Brownlee



## How to Prepare Sunday Hospitality

Hospitality and Holidays is offering a show and tell class Sunday, March 22, 9:15 - 10 a.m.

### Course Syllabus

#### Description:

This course involves step-by-step preparation of coffee and refreshments for Sunday morning hospitality.

#### Organization:

This is a lecture-lab course.

#### Course objectives:

To orient students to equipment in the kitchen and social room.

To provide students with opportunities to develop basic coffee making skills.

To familiarize students with recommended food offerings.

To introduce students to the system of cleaning up.

To eliminate the excuse, "I don't know how to make coffee."

To entice students to sign up for hospitality to fly solo or in pairs.

Two covenant groups have already signed up to do hospitality over a period of time.

Hopefully more covenant groups and individuals will take the initiative. The sign-up sheet is on the kitchen door.

Also March 22 -

#### "Fourth Sunday Food for Thought"

Everyone is invited to a potluck lunch and discussion on Ethical Eating led by the Outreach Committee.

#### Early Notice of Easter Breakfast

Hold Sunday, April 12, at 9:30 a.m. for the Easter Breakfast! There will be no 10 a.m. reflection service. This is a potluck where you provide juice, egg dish, meat, bread, fruit or whatever. A sign-up sheet will appear in the atrium a few weeks before the event.

Submitted by Anita Stutzman

Reflections on the Thomas Jefferson District Growth Summit  
January 16-17, 2009  
Charleston, SC  
By Linda B. Law

What in the world is a Growth Summit? It's a gathering of UU folks who want their congregations to thrive. Karen Hiebel, Karel Keel, Bob Snelsire, Robin Kimbrough-Melton and I attended such a meeting in January. We came away with a lot of good materials, some new ideas, and some surprising facts.

Here are the most important things we learned.

- If a congregation doesn't grow it will die.
- It's not the order of service or the person leading the service that determines visitors' experience with us.
- The single most important factor in whether visitors come back and eventually become Members or Friends is **how they perceive those of us in the room that day**. How we treat each other and them!

Growth is the responsibility of every Member and Friend, not just those on the Membership Committee.

How can we work together to insure that UUFC thrives and that visitors feel comfortable with us? Here are some things each of us can do:

- When we're not sure if someone is a visitor, assume she/he is, and introduce ourselves. "Is this your first visit to our fellowship? I'm (insert name). I'm glad to meet you." If we can't remember this person's name from a previous visit, reintroduce ourselves. Our possible embarrassment matters less than showing interest in them.
- Invite visitors to sit with us. Tell them there's a point in the service when they can introduce themselves to the congregation, and we really enjoy this, but it's optional.
- If they bring children show interest in them. Ignoring their children guarantees they will not come back.
- After the service ask visitors if they have any questions and refer them to the appropriate contact.
- Tell visitors we hope they'll be back next week.

The Membership Committee will introduce some new practices this year that have worked well in other congregations. We need your participation.

## Thoughts About Death and Dying - By Myrna McKee

I have been asked to write about my emotions concerning death and dying. Death, everyone's final Solution! What happens to you after you die is an inconclusive conversation either with a person or by you with your mind. Death is an unknown place from where no one yet has ever returned. So what we do is work with a theory or our imagination. Most religious teachings try to control members of their flock by promises, threats, rules and fear. I have never felt controlled by anyone or anything. I choose my beliefs based on the way life has dealt with me, and the conclusions I have drawn. I admit to a higher power, but yet I still have fear. Many of the deeds I've done I'm not proud of. If I had the opportunity, guidance and input I might have made better choices. Thinking of *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, I often wonder if there is a second picture of me representing what I really look like?

There are so many questions. Why was Mama so sick? Why did Lucy die so young? Why was it so hard in life for me to learn? Where do meanness and cruelty, greed and envy, and lack of compassion come from? What are the seeds of "me first" and who plants them? It doesn't have to be a picture-perfect society, but the reflection of mankind's cruelty in today's world amazes me. Does not the human race care or comprehend that we are made in G/d's\* image and through this image we are all one?

But back to death, it's a 50-50 chance when we die it's over. I imagine a flower bud, young with petals tightly closed, then a live vibrant blossom proudly holding up its head, then slowly dying, turning to mush and returning to the essence of earth, perhaps to be born again next year.

Now let's examine the religions of the world. First, this essay is simplistic, but so am I. Therefore, I imagine G/d as a diamond in the sky, multi-faceted, with all the G/ds of time inscribed on different facets. To me all religions are a mix of basic truths of behavior plus imagination. They contain morals, teachings, truths, legends and a guide of how to live called commandments or dogma. This is a carrot held for support promising if we behave we will be rewarded. It doesn't matter how these words are presented. The end philosophy is the same. Be good and you get a pass, be bad and you suffer. This seems to me an attempt to control us and make sure we don't stray too far out of the lines of acceptable behavior. How about being a good person for the sake of it? To me that's a better choice?

I have worked years on learning to know myself as well as others. Not through religious books, having never read the bible, but through living life and making mistakes. Being very introspective I often, perhaps too often, examine my behavior.

In conclusion, to answer the question being asked of me: Why am I obsessing on death? Again it is 50-50. If the flower theory doesn't work, there is judgment. Now a large percentage of the world believes in some form of organized religion, which has judgment. It is difficult to dismiss their energy, belief and faith. Am I backing different horses? Yes. One is a no-lose ending. To die and not be judged is ok because it is painless. To wait dead for the day we are to stand and be judged won't bother me, as it will pass in a heartbeat. If there is a higher power, it will be good to me. For I believe doing good is the only way.

I admit to curiosity as well as denial. My journey through life is coming to a close and yet I am angry. I want to be young. I want to catch the brass ring and get to play again. Yet sometimes my heart is heavy and I so miss Mama and Lucy that it tears my insides apart. Then I pray for life to be over and a judgment and then to hold them in my arms.

What is at the heart of my fear is the pain of dying. I am scared stiff of suffering. Pain and I do not dance well. We have entirely different agendas, for pain demands continuous center stage. You can mask it, but that is as good as a lobotomy using pain meds. With help of professionals to help me decide, I want the right, how and when, to pull the plug. Then I want a huge party with live music, great food, stories, me giving people what I want them to have of my stuff, jokes, funny things we have shared, tears, a doggie to cuddle and surrounded by friends, love and care, receive an injection and softly sail into the future with a smile on my face waiting for the adventure to begin.

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NOTE: FYI: \*G/D is the traditional Orthodox Jewish way of writing out the name "God", which according to Jewish law, should not be spoken or spelled out. Myrna follows this tradition. She is a raconteur, motivational speaker, and writer, among many other good things! (i.e. Ask for her Passover recipes!!)

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(\*See page 8 for individual committee Chairs.)

**Newsletter Deadline for the April issue is March 20th.** Please send articles, letters, announcements and other submissions to [heidisong@nctv.com](mailto:heidisong@nctv.com).

Want to know what's going on at UUFC between newsletters? Subscribe to the electronic announcement list and you'll receive one or two messages each week keeping you up to date on fellowship activities and people. To subscribe, send an email to [uufcadm@yahoo.com](mailto:uufcadm@yahoo.com) and ask to be signed up or call the Fellowship office at 654-5959.

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We affirm and promote:

- the inherent dignity and worth of all people
- justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- a free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- the right of conscience and use of the democratic process
- a goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all
- acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth
- respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.