



Thermal Belt UU Fellowship News

February 2015

Sunday, February 8

Building Authentic Community in a Congregation

Joy McConnell, Guest Speaker, Ethical Culture Leader and Member of the UU Congregation of Asheville

It is so easy, when one belongs to a congregation of “like minded people” to believe that we have all the answers, that we are right. Do we *really*? Are we *really*? How do we live in community in a way that honors diversity of opinions, of theologies or philosophies of life, or political/social stances? Referring to Parker Palmer’s book, [A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life](#), Joy will share her commitment to Compassionate Communication as well as some thoughts on how to create community in small groups.

Can we build enough trust to be our authentic selves, as well as share our capital “T” Truths and our profound wonderings with each other? Can we be both vulnerable and nonjudgmental with each other? How would such a group be?

Monika Gross and Bruce Larson, UUCA members, will assist with acting during parts of the service.

Sunday, February 22

Faith of the Universalists and Unitarians

Historically, Unitarians and Universalists professed a number of faith beliefs thru their history, as evidenced by historical covenants and confession statements. Today, as people living in the post-modern era, it seems that people are reluctant to place faith in anything, especially in established religion; yet as Unitarian Universalists we are called to be more than just cynics. We are charged to find a faith and cultivate it for our own and the world's benefit. This morning we look at the faith statements of our religious forebears, seeking guidance for us about where to find or create a faith that serves our lives.

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Sunday Themes



Dear Friends,

TBUUF is embarking on an experiment. We have joined some 50 UU Congregations around the country that are part of the "Soul Matters Sharing Circle." Each month, members of the circle are offered a packet of materials for contemplation and discussion pertaining to a particular theme. Using these materials and the monthly theme gives us a common point for reference and exploration with other congregations, including the Asheville and Hendersonville Congregations.

This project originated and is still administered by the UU Church of Rochester, New York. It began as a collection of material for small group ministry, but participating groups have found the themes to be centering for other types of explorations, including worship. There is also the opportunity to add our voices to the call for materials for future months. Upcoming monthly themes are:

February: Faith

March: Resilience

April: Revelation

Below is an excerpt from the "What does it mean to be People of Faith?"

Unitarian Universalism calls us to be faithful doubters. Be cautious, says our tradition. Do not automatically believe what you've been told, especially when someone asks you to believe it based on their authority. Test it. Put it through the fire of your own experience; your precious power to reason and the gift of the scientific method. Yes, be cautious, bravely so.

But be reckless, as well. This, too, is what our tradition equally lifts up when it comes to faith. Faithfully doubt, but right alongside that push yourself to faithfully leap. And leap again, bravely so. This second meaning of being a people of faith is what we lean into this month.

I invite you to think about what faith means to you this month. Do you have faith? Faith in what? I will post some of the theme packet materials on our website, if you would like to explore "What it means to be a people of Faith" in more depth.

Sally Beth

“Odd Sunday” Discussion Group

At our last meeting on January 18 the topic was race relations in America 50 years after the Selma march. The discussion was loosely based on two articles in the current “UU World”. I’m not sure we reached a consensus, but I’ll share some of what I took away from the meeting.

- The perception of the police in the minority community is very different from the way we (white Anglo-Saxons) perceive law enforcement. This is an area where work can be done at the local level.
- While all of the Jim Crow laws have been repealed, we need to keep a vigilance that progress does not slip back. Some of the recent changes in voting laws are an example.
- One of the better, if not the best, way to improve relations between the different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups is to develop one-on-one relationships. A good way to do that is involvement in various local community groups that bring people of different backgrounds together.
- People at the meeting were aware of various organizations that provide an opportunity for service and community-building but many were new to other group participants. As a newcomer to the area, I was particularly at a loss about what the various organizations were doing. Even organizations that were of interest to me, I did not know who to contact and how to get involved.

With that in mind, the charge for the next meeting is to bring information on community groups with which you are familiar. Include their purpose, activities, meeting times, and contact information including names and phone numbers. I will develop a final list to share. Based upon this week’s discussion, the group may choose to adopt an organization with which we as a group (or Fellowship) can get involved.

Also, people are asked to bring topics for future discussion that they would be willing to facilitate. I would like to schedule topics several weeks ahead.

Our next meeting is February 1 at 10:00 at Tryon Estates. If you need more information, please contact me, Phil Nungesser, at 828 625 3060 or barnun1225@gmail.com

In Memoriam

Nancy Worsnop

January 12, 2015

TBUUF ACTIVITIES

COFFEE MEET UP

The new activities groups are forming. For those looking for an informal coffee meet up, the first one was held January 16th at Open Road. We had some old and new faces. Since Open Road is very crowded and the noise level is high, we've decided to try holding the next Coffee Meet Up at "Southern Delights". If you haven't been there, it's a lovely coffee shop in downtown Landrum, located mid-block, kitty-corner from Hare and Hound. The next meeting will be Friday, January 30, followed by February 13 and 27 at 10:00 a.m. at the new location.

Robin Edgar will be leading a Memoir Writing Group, "Life writing Thru The Senses" starting January 27 at 2:30 p.m. at Oak Hill Wellness Center. This will be a monthly writing group. For more information contact Robin at 864-457-7557.

Movie/Events

The Movie Group enjoyed a second outing, this time to Spartanburg to see "Selma". Afterwards they enjoyed treats at Starbucks. The viewers highly recommend the movie saying it brought back the events of the time, acting was excellent, especially the portrayal of Dr. King. A Unitarian minister from Boston, James Reed was murdered during the days of the march, which was depicted in the film. Robbie ter Kuile and Annie Ewing are working with this group.

Knitting Group could use a few more knitters, or quilters. So let Linda List (864-457-2292) know if you're interested. Also, that group needs a leader.

We hope to start the Lunch Group in February and the Dinner Group in March or April, so if you're interested, please sign up for those groups. The sign up sheet is always on the back table after the service.



Robbie Rambles

In January, Dan Dworkin informed the UU board of directors of his resignation from the board and that he was taking a six months sabbatical from any responsibilities with our Fellowship.

For the last ten years, Dan has served our Fellowship in various capacities. He's been the board president and he's been the brains and brawn for creating a worship space for our UU Fellowship. Most recently, Dan has served our board as first vice-president and has been the one who sent in notices to the Tryon Daily Bulletin regarding our worship services. He will be greatly missed but we understand his need to take a break. Thanks for all the time you've devoted our Fellowship, Dan. Robbie

Taking Action - Helping Robin to Reunite The Mastaki Family

At last Sunday's UU Fellowship, Robin Edgar told us a shorter version of the following story during our Joys & Sorrows Time. UU's were touched by her Joy story and the years of work she has done. A decision was made to offer TBUUF the opportunity to help her with the effort to reunite this family. Make your tax-deductible donation to: TBUUA Mastaki Family Fund. Mail to TBUUF P. O. Box 653, Tryon, NC 28782 or give to Gretchen Boyd at fellowship.-Editor

In the wake of all the press about illegal immigration, many may not understand the onerous process to become a legal immigrant. The following story is about my friend Riziki Mastaki, a political refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has been an eye-opening experience to walk alongside her as she struggles to help family members that have fled to Kenya as refugees as well as to bring her parents over as legal immigrants. Her family's story adds color and humanity to the black and white facts as it illustrates the daunting bureaucratic roadblocks and debilitating lack of support for those attempting to immigrate legally.

I met Riziki in 2005 when I was living in Charlotte, North Carolina and was immediately taken with her integrity and optimism, in spite of experiencing near-death violence in her hometown of Goma and nearby Rwanda. We soon became friends and I was there to celebrate when she was sworn in as a US citizen in 2009. She was so happy to be able to live and work in America and that her citizenship would get her the passport she needed to visit her family after a ten-year separation.

Unfortunately, any hope of visiting her family was crushed when her village became embroiled in yet another conflict that threw her family into daily economic and physical jeopardy. One of her siblings, who had previously been kidnapped and forced to be a child soldier in the previous war was chased by rebels and shot in the leg. Another brother, who was living with him at the time, was strangled in his bed. Although two of Riziki's siblings have successfully found refuge in France, others still live in Goma and another sister and her husband, former high school teachers who were shot when they tried to thwart rebels from raping her, fled with their children, to Kenya.

As refugees, they are not allowed to legally work to support themselves and depend, in part, on the help from Riziki and donations and sales of hand made scarves from Knit Together in Peace. They recently have been approved to immigrate to the U.S., but until final arrangements are made, there is little or no support for refugees, other than overcrowded camps, while they wait for their paperwork to be processed. Their savings have been depleted in an effort to feed their family as well as the children they care for who have been orphaned during the recent war.

Because she is a citizen, Riziki's parents have the opportunity to join their daughter in the United States as legal immigrants. In October 2010, Riziki paid an immigration lawyer with funds from working two or three jobs to bring her father here as a legal immigrant so he can help her work to support the family in Goma, Paris, and Nairobi. Through donations and other fund raising efforts to augment her minimum wage, she had the over \$4,500 in legal fees, applications for passport and visa, affidavit of support, transcontinental postage, genetic testing, required medical check-ups, birth certificate fees, transportation, and more.

Mr. Mastaki, arrived in Charlotte in May of 2013 and immediately went to school to learn English to become more employable. Although he can repair many electronics and appliances, he has only been able to acquire temporary minimum wage jobs. With those funds, he is able to wire money to his wife to pay their food, medical, electric, and water bills.

The good news, Immigration finally approved her mother's application to immigrate to the U.S. to be reunited with her husband and daughter. Some of you have already given me your generous financial support to help to make that happen. Phil has been kind enough to arrange a TBUUA Mastaki Family Fund to make donations through our fellowship for tax deduction purposes. If you have questions, please contact me. 2robinedgar@gmail.com-or call 864-457-7557.