



Thermal Belt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

December, 2016

Services: 1st & 3rd Sundays 10:30 A. M.

Location: 835 N. Trade St., Tryon, NC

Phone: 828-513-0570 Website: TBUUF.org

Address: P.O. Box 653, Tryon, NC 28782



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Upcoming Services

December 4th 10:30 A.M. U-Yule Celebration

Deck the halls, turn on the ovens and fire up the crock pots! Potluck, music, fun and fellowship for a unique first Sunday this December—a change of pace for peaceful holiday fun. “Bring Your Light, Share Your Light, Live your Light.”

Please bring:

- An unwrapped Christmas candle as a *gift of light exchange*. Draw a picture, or write a line and attach it to your candle if you wish.
- A favorite holiday dish to share.
- A favorite holiday poem, song, dance, saying, joke, or quote, to share orally if you wish.
- YOUR SPIRIT of fun and fellowship and a good appetite!

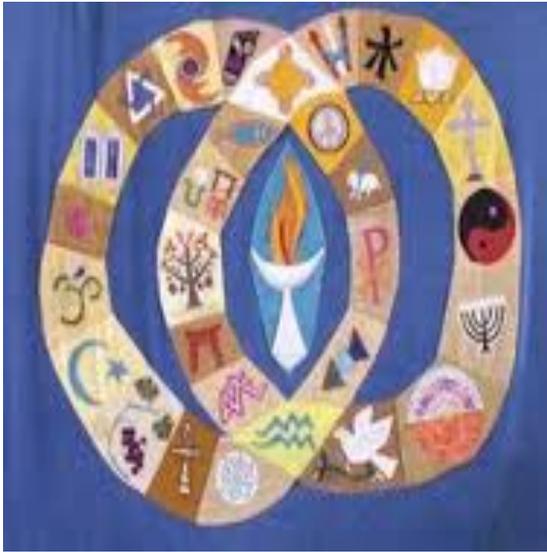
Reverend Ernie Mills will lead us in a short service, and be our U-Yule Minister of Ceremonies.

Questions? Please call Barbara Moffitt any time before 3:00 P. M. 828-894-8695.

December 18, 2016 Has Anyone Seen Mary?

Reverend Michael Carter’s talk will focus on the woman we know as Mary in the Greek Translation (or Miriam in the Hebrew), who was the mother of Yeshua Ben Yoseff (Jesus, son of Joseph, Greek). It appears she knew much about expectation, and seemingly unfulfilled dreams. She lost not one, but two sons, James and Jesus, who were murdered by the Roman Empire as enemies of the state.

She has been called, “The Feminine Face of God.” Not much is really know about this Jewish maiden, but her influence on Christianity, especially among Catholics cannot be underestimated or denied. Yet there are many non-Christians who revere her as well for Mary is mentioned 34 times in the Quran! What is the attraction? How has her symbolism both hurt and advanced the role of women in Christianity and Catholicism in particular? Finally, what can she mean for Unitarian Universalism? Let’s explore.



The Gift of Acceptance

Dear Friends,

Well, here we are again in the month of December. Whether you celebrate, The Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, or Bodhi Day, most likely some type of gift will be exchanged between you and someone else during this season. Now, I can't speak for you, but at times I have a difficult time accepting gifts. This may be because I do not feel in control when given a gift, or somehow unworthy. I really do not know. It usually manifests in this way for me: I immediately have to return the gift in some way, shape or form. That is to say that if I accept a gift, I must immediately give a gift in return. I am intentionally working on this as I am worthy to receive the good that comes my way and at times it is a struggle for me. Let's face it, some people do give with no strings attached and my not being able to accept affects other areas of my life, especially around prosperity and abundance, and those gifts the Universe sends me. It's a process.

This is a difficult time of year for many. People suffer from depression and family issues can sometimes loom large. December can be a challenge for many because of the holiday season. But I want to talk about another kind of acceptance now. This kind of acceptance is not just for the holiday season but it is for all of the seasons of our lives.

Accept difficult people! Don't try to change them (as if you could really change anybody in the first place). Don't *tolerate* them. Just accept them. This is not to say that you do not maintain your personal boundaries. No one is saying that you should let people walk all over you). Accept those people who truly get on your last nerve. Accept those people who seem to be totally unaware of the fact that what they do has an impact on others. Acceptance is the gift you give to yourself but also to those people who have no qualms about demonstrating in word or deed that they do not want to be where they are or doing what they are doing—Those people who speak harshly, roll their eyes, suck their teeth and show up late without any explanation. Just be *willing* to see things differently. Remember, the world doesn't have to change; only the way you *see* the world needs to change.

Try not to believe that their behavior has anything to do with you. Try not to be impatient or give them a hard time. Take the high road this holiday season and just accept them. When you accept difficult people, it's a shift in perception. Accept them in your heart because you know the truth; every human being is a spark of the divine, with inherent worth and dignity. Some folks forget this about themselves. Others don't know it because no one has ever told them so or treated them like the precious person that they are. Some people build walls around themselves because of past wounds and will cleverly hide their fear with nasty dispositions, surliness or an attitude of indifference.

The greatest gift you can offer someone is the gift of acceptance. Love is seeing without judgment. For all you know, your acceptance may be just what that difficult person needs to open their heart and to renew their faith in who they are and to encourage them in what they are doing. Accept people for there may come a day when you are having a difficult time and will need acceptance by someone else. Don't expect them to change, but change your perspective about who they are and who you are, as well.



Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays,
Michael

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart.

— Dr. Howard Thurman

Things balance out. They usually do if you give them time. We have to think in longer terms than one season at a time. There are bad years as well as good. Bad days too, and good...

Right now... I'd make a holiday of solitude, with that clear view the loss of leaves allows, and with faith that in its time, my life, like that of the earth, is balanced. If I have patience enough to see, and if I make a time to touch the earth again; and see the sense it makes of seasons and of me.

—Max Coor

Announcements:

- Take your angel tree gifts to the 4-H Center in Columbus on Wed., December 30th between the hours of 9 AM and 4:30 PM.
- Recently in Tryon, some 40 people met for a day to explore the roots of racism, the reasons why it continues to dog us, and ways that we can individually and collectively fight to dismantle racism. In an effort to continue the dialogue that began that day, a number of attendees have chosen to read Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult. You are invited to read the book and join a discussion at Black Coffee in Tryon on January 6th at 7 p.m. Small Great Things is available at the Book Shelf in Tryon with the book club discount rate. If you'd like more information, call Robbie ter Kuile, 828-817-0382.

