



The UUCG beacon

February 2005

The **beacon** is published monthly
by the Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Greenville
131 Oakmont Drive
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Sunday Services—10:30 am

February 6

Simple Love, Rev. Karen Day

February 13

Relatively Simple, Roger Robbins

February 20

Charles Darwin: The Evolution Revolution,
Rev. Sally White

February 27

Simple Justice, Rev. Karen Day
(to be followed by
congregational meeting)

Sunday services begin at 10:30 am
unless otherwise noted.
Children's activities are available each
Sunday unless otherwise noted

Proud to be UU

Picture Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the Camelot years, with oversized lips, a long equine neck, and a cream turtle neck sweater, and you have a fair image of my sister-in-law, Betina, a Missouri Synod Lutheran. Now picture her finding out I had joined the UUs.

"But Unitarians are just academics who don't actually believe in anything" she stated without even trying to hide her scorn. I didn't have my elevator retort ready (I was new to UU).

Six years later, Betina spends most evenings picking up University of Washington fraternity boys at *Champs* and I am finally ready to offer my riposte.

"Betina, if your sacred beliefs promote knee-jerk castigation of a faith embraced by the woman who invented a statistical model to reform the British military health-care system and the man who wrote *Moby Dick*, then I would decline the favor of your imprimatur. I choose complexity any day over certainty that overlooks centuries of purple Kool-Aid moments. UUs embrace multiple viewpoints and, thankfully, eschew the idea that humanity's cosmic inheritance involves the avoidance of eternal damnation.

"UUs *do* know that the likelihood of our brains accurately perceiving the scope of spiritual infinity—much less codifying it with a pithy bumper sticker—is the same as my goldfish sprouting a prehensile tail.

"*Got God?* Categorically no. . .or maybe. To tell the truth, I would rather define my church practices as an evolving process, rather than a destination that features dead guys smugly complimenting each other on their matching *Member's Only* epaulets."

My retort, naturally, would grow even more elaborate.

Living our seven UU principles, Unitarians Universalists were gently revealing our earnestness even before September 11, when the decade of irony collapsed and Letterman cried.

(continued on page 7)

Reflections

. . . by Karen Day

“So where do you picture yourself in five years?” In 1990, my supervisor is staring intently at me and I have no idea how to answer. I’ve never thought that far ahead and besides, how can you predict what might come up? I’m not very good at planning, have never really set goals or imagined action plans for my own life, though I’ve done that many times with organizations.

“So, you want to have your palm read?” Here I am in 2000 in the basement at Starr King with a very gentle woman taking my hand. I don’t really believe she’ll tell me my future, but in the past couple of years I have also had a friend do tarot cards for me and paid a Yoruba practitioner to do a reading.

Think I’m a wacko?

Well, the truth is I believe there is a mystery to life that cannot be predicted or planned for, but there also resides in us a truth about who we are that can guide us.

I listen in readings for assurance of that inner authority, for what qualities I have that will be useful in the current time and will carry me into the future. While the biggest changes in my life have surprised me, they have also been consistent with who I am. While I don’t predict my exact path, I try to remain open to where I need to go, what I need to give now.

If you’ve ever looked at predictions for the future of our nation or planet, you’ll probably agree that the per-



centages don’t look very convincing.

While some individuals, organizations, and even countries can decide what they want to be, plan their strategies and then fulfill their goals, many get surprised along the way. Maybe what sets a religious organization apart is our willingness to recognize that the flow of the universe may not be revealed in our carefully laid plans. The way we move into the future may be more of a dance than a march.

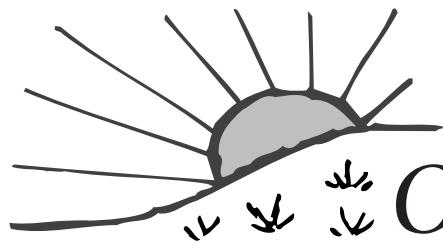
When we look ahead we can only see dreams, when we look inside we can see the shape of who we are, which can reveal who we will become.

Sure we have to plan, but our plans will involve conversation, discernment and careful listening as well as goals, strategies and action plans. Our challenge as individuals and as a congregation is to balance the mysteries of our unfolding lives with the certainties of plans to live out the dreams.

I imagine asking ourselves questions like, “Where am I?” or “Are we being called?” and “What can I/we give?” — and living in the tension created when we have many answers or no answers.

Maybe, like looking at the lines on the palm, there is something to be learned by careful attention. Maybe by muddling along, listening to each other and to the still, small voice within, plans emerge.

Who knows?



On the Horizon

Sunday Morning Fare

February 6

Simple Love, Rev. Karen Day

In this series on simple things, we'll look at how to incorporate love and respect into our interactions. The educator, Parker Palmer, provides a guide in his work on listening and building circles of trust.

February 13

Relatively Simple, Roger Robbins

2005 is the World Year of Physics to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Albert Einstein's *miracle year* in which his famous equation $E=MC^2$ was only part of his output. What does this equation actually mean? What else did Einstein do that year and afterwards? What do DVDs, GPS and the Big Bang all have in common? As physicists start to close in on the Unified Theory that eluded Einstein, will theology be ready?

February 20, *Charles Darwin: The Evolution Revolution*, Rev. Sally White, guest minister

Born 196 years ago this month, Charles Darwin was descended from Unitarians on both sides of his family. His clear-eyed observations of plant and animal populations led him to propose a theory of evolutionary adaptation and change that sent shock-waves through the scientific world of his day. Nearly 150 years after *The Origin of Species*, those shock-waves continue to reverberate through our own community.

February 27

Simple Justice, Rev. Karen Day

James Luther Adams was a Unitarian Universalist scholar and theologian who expected each of us to live our ethic of justice. We'll talk about how to incorporate ethics into our daily lives.

Book Club Meets Feb. 20

The book club meets the third Sunday, February 20, at 9:30 am. The book this month is *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, by Azar Nafisi. It is available from Barnes and Noble (or *Amazon.com* of course) as a paperback. As always, you don't have to read the book to enjoy the discussions.

~Paul Alston, Tina Baldrige

Newcomer Orientation

On Sunday, February 27 we will hold a Newcomer's Orientation before the worship service. If you want to know more about who we are, please join us at 9:00 am. We'll have coffee and munchies.

The JOY of Sandwich Making

Karen will make sandwiches for the JOY Soup Kitchen again on Wednesday morning, February 23. If you can help make and serve sandwiches, please meet at the congregation at 9:45. Please let Karen know if you can bring bread and/or lunch meat.



News, Notes and Other Stuff

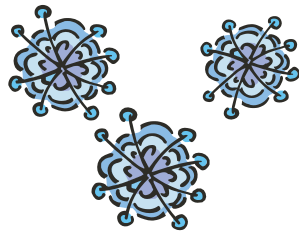
First Born Update

Our church traditionally volunteers to help with the food distribution at First Born Church in Grimesland on the last Saturday of the month, which is the 26th in February.

The distribution starts at 10:00 am. Come around 9:30 if you want to carry boxes. Come earlier, around 9:00, if you want to volunteer at the desk or help fill the boxes. If possible, let me know that you're volunteering, so I can tell them how many people to expect from our congregation. First Born also has a distribution on Saturday, February 12, and you're welcome to volunteer then, too.

A special distribution for diabetics is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22. It's hard for them to find volunteers on a Tuesday, and they're getting more people. So, if you want to volunteer on Tuesday, contact Mike Grizzard at mgrizzard@coxnews.com. He's in charge and he can tell you when to come and what there is to do.

If you have any questions, contact Tracy Donohue, 758 -0693.



Beacon Deadline

The deadline for the March issue is noon, Tuesday, February 22. Please submit articles and announcements by email to: beacon@uugreenvillenc.org.

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee is up and running in preparation for the Annual Canvass 2005-2006 church year.

During the coming weeks you will be hearing more about upcoming events. If you are interested in helping with the kick-off celebration scheduled for March 19, please contact Susan Foreman, Toni Britt or Karen Day. The committee will meet on February 16 and March 16 at 7:00 pm.

Greeters Needed

The sign up sheet for greeters for February has been posted on the bulletin board. We need two greeters for each Sunday, so please check your calendars and sign up for one of the easiest and most enjoyable volunteer jobs offered.

Earth Covenant Group to Meet

The Earth Based Spirituality Covenant Group will have its next meeting on February 10 at 7:00 pm. Our meetings are held in the RE rooms at church. We are meeting twice monthly, so those of you who can not make it to one meeting, feel free to come to the second.

It's Not Just Chicken Scratch

Because of your contributions to the Social Action Can, we were able to buy three flocks of chickens from Heifer International for three needy families.

~Joan Sachtjen

Women's Covenant Group

The Women's Group will meet for an hour, beginning at 10:00 am, on Tuesday, Feb. 15, in the large RE room.

Congregation Ponders Children's Issues

Some serious brainstorming was added to the menu of a pot luck lunch on January 23 when members of our congregation considered ways to make our children's programs more appealing and more relevant.

By the time the dessert was polished off, several working groups had come up with a list of suggestions for ways to increase youth interest and participation in the life of this congregation. And before they left, participants completed a survey form that included questions about how we are willing to contribute our time and talents to our children and to our congregation. If you have not completed one of the forms, please ask Randi or another member of the board to provide you with a copy.

The work also included a discussion of ways we can bring adult gifts of interest, concern and caring to our children. The following folks made commitments to our children:

Sue Farris will present information to children and youth to hear their ideas, Karen Day will interview a youth for a Kid's Column in next newsletter, Cindy Fanning will prepare a survey to find out what people bring to RE and Randi Finley will help get that on a database.

Listed here are some suggestions that came out of the brainstorming sessions

- Ask children to help with Sunday services by making announcements, acting out stories, leading services and greeting.
- Include a youth representative or appoint a youth liaison to the board.
- Ask the youth how they want to participate.
- Have more social events for youth and provide transportation.
- Provide leadership opportunities.
- Have teens interview members.
- Hold retreats and include trust building, physical activities.
- Choose relevant issues to discuss; allow youth to do some of the teaching.
- Make cards for members, write notes, go to First Born.
- Invite expert speakers; organize a choir; name rooms in RE area.
- Share information about the RE curriculum with the congregation.
- Develop a scouting program.
- Have the children put on a play.
- Revive mentoring program.
- Include a kids' column in the Beacon.
- Encourage children to take the lead in some social action projects.
- Get everyone involved in the garden project.
- Have an annual blessing of the animals ceremony.
- Have a worship service in which kids talk about their interests.
- Organize an interfaith youth alliance.



On a Personal Note . . .

Roger Robbins' two lizards, left to their own devices, turned into eight.

Juanita Boyd's little tummy tuck hopefully will end her surgeries for a long time to come.

Those of us who are sick or whose relatives are sick include **Sienie Postma**, who is still recovering from her recent illness. We hope to see her in church again soon. **Tracy Donohue's** mother, who is 92 and living in Florida, is recovering from surgery. **Sondra Haynes**, who has had a number of serious health problems, fell and broke her shoulder. **Judy Hepler**, also in Florida, is doing better and her transplanted kidney is functioning well.

There's another car in **Charles Nolan's** family, which will make it easier for him to get to meeting on Sundays.

Peace activist, **Joe Vittitow**, has had a recurrence of colon cancer that required major surgery. Get well, Joe!

Bruce Maxwell's family had a reunion in Patagonia, evidently in Ushuaia. Can anyone match that for an exotic locale for a reunion? The Maxwells have also sold their house in Arizona, much to everyone's relief.

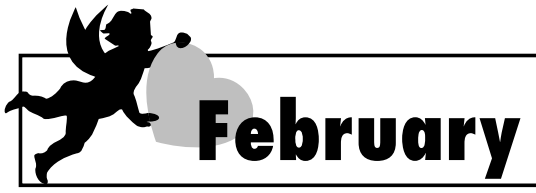
Toni Britt's Aunt Ruby Luttrell died on 12/30/04. She was 84 years old and was loved dearly by her family. Toni was named for her aunt—Toni Eleanor Britt/Ruby Eleanor Britt Luttrell.

Marli Baker's mother died on January 11.

My notes are often incomplete. There's an intriguing one on the order of worship for December 26 (when Carroll and I were on the train en route to Spokane and the memorial service for his mother). On the same line I had written "Martha Stewart" and "made cranes." I think there was an ice storm when we were gone, the service was postponed, and so, the service originally scheduled for December 26, 2004, happened on January 1, 2005, when, by taking a taxi from the bus station, I was able to get to church, pick up an order of service and write that enigmatic note. Now, the cranes were surely peace cranes, but what did Martha Stewart have to do with them? If the famous Martha Stewart was so well employed, bully for her. If the credit rightly belongs to someone closer to us, anyone with light, please shine it on the case.

Please let me know, in writing or email (candetwo@clis.com), if possible, about what's going on in your life. It's hard for me to keep up with the joys and concerns as they are announced, and not all the events are announced

~Edie Webber



Church Calendar

- 2 6:00 pm—Dine out, Lone Star
7:00 pm, Committee Council
- 6 10:30 am—Worship Service,
Rev. Karen Day
2:00 pm—Mid-year board retreat
- 8 1:00 pm—Greenville Clergy Group
7:00 pm—Committee on Ministry
- 9 6:00 pm—Dine out, Red Lobster
- 10 7:00 pm—Earth-based spirituality
covenant group
- 12 9:00 am—Building & Grounds
work day
- 13 10:30 am—Worship Service,
Roger Robbins
- 15 10:00 am—Women’s Group
- 16 6:00 pm—Dine-out, Plum Tree
7:00 pm—Stewardship Committee
- 20 9:30 am—Book Club
10:30 am—Worship Service,
Rev. Sally White
- 21 7:00 pm—Board Meeting
- 23 9:45 am—Sandwiches for JOY
6:00 pm—Dine-out, Mongolian
House
- 26 9:00 am—Noon, food
distribution, First Born
- 27 9:00 am—Newcomer’s orientation
10:30 am—Worship Service,
Rev. Karen Day
Noon—Congregational meeting
4:00 pm— Interfaith Women’s
Dialogue, UUCG
- 28 7:00 pm— Interfaith Alliance,
Winterville Christian Church

Youth Group Off to A Great Start

The UUCG Youth Group had its first meeting of the new year on January 7. Even though only two teens came to the meeting, we are making good progress. At this time we have four teens active in our group, with a fifth out of town. I am happy to report that the teens who were unable to come did contact me. Our teens are proving to be very responsible young adults when it comes to letting April or me know whether they can or can not attend a meeting.

The main goal of the youth group is to help our teens grow as Unitarian Universalists. We are doing this in two ways. First, we are working on our new curriculum, neighboring faiths, so we can learn how to understand and accept the faiths of others. Next, we will encourage growth through social action.

Although these projects are still in the planing stages, we would like to provide service not only to our local community, but to the global community also. We are very interested in tsunami relief efforts on. The youth group feels that it is important to help those whose lives have been shattered by this tragic event in the Indian Ocean. However, we are also interested in other projects and are always open to suggestions.

Overall we have had a good start, and I feel confident that our group will continue to grow. The key will be to provide our teens with an environment that is not only fun but educational and nurturing. April and I would like to invite any teens in the congregation to join us. Feel free to contact us at (252) 902-9347 or Weir0376@yahoo.com.

~Richard Weir

Proud to be UU (from page 1)

In my fantasy, my impromptu response would end with one last admonition (unless there were other people in the room that I wanted to impress): “Do not mistake our questioning nature as waffling, Betina. Only fearless searchers touch the face of truth.”

Here now, is my plain truth. In 1990, a couple of dozen UUs bought this building. Experts and the best wisdom of our board tell us that 88 members in a building of this size will repel newcomers. My hope is that you will embrace a vision for change with the same fearlessness that brought you to our congregation in the first place.

~Randi Finley

Interfaith News

On Monday, February 28, the Interfaith Alliance will meet for Prayers for Peace at 7:00 pm at the Winterville Christian Church. A short planning meeting will follow and is open to all. We continue to enjoy this meaningful sharing every fourth Monday from Christians, Jews, Sufis, UUs and others.

On Sunday, February 27, at 4:00 pm, the Interfaith Women's Dialogue will meet in our space to hear Lama Kathy Wesley on *Women's Roles in Tibetan Buddhism*. A discussion will follow with various faith traditions represented. We'll share refreshments afterward and end by 5:30.

Watch for *Spirituality and Environment* in April.



Dine Out Schedule*

Feb.	2	Lone Star, Greenville Boulevard
	9	Red Lobster, Memorial Drive
	16	Plum Tree, in shopping center, off Red Banks Rd.
	23	Mongolian House, Greenville Boulevard

*Starts at 6:00 pm

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