



The Mission of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte is to inspire children, youth and adults to discover and articulate deeper spiritual meaning evidenced in lives of integrity, compassion and stewardship of the earth.

La misión de la iglesia Unitaria Universalista de Charlotte es: inspirar a los niños, jóvenes y adultos para que descubran y articulen un significado espiritual profundo, evidente en una vida de integridad, compasión y en el manejo de los recursos de la tierra.

A MILESTONE FOR JOHN HERRICK

As I write this I've just completed recommending to the UUA that John receive Music Leader Credentialing. I'm making this recommendation as his sponsor in the credentialing program. The stated purpose of this program is to help music leaders "develop a foundational understanding of three main areas of knowledge: Music Skills and Resources, UU Heritage and Values, (and) Leadership and Interpersonal Skills." Completing the program has been a 3 year journey for John involving, among other things, the successful completion of several courses taught by members of the UU Musicians Network and the completion of several off-line projects. His studies included such diverse topics as choral rehearsal techniques, multicultural competence, working within governance structures, and the history of Unitarian Universalist theology. In addition his development plans and progress were formally reviewed twice a year by a peer advisor and myself.

John's participation in the credentialing program has provided him with additional tools to use as he continues to develop our music program. I believe the results of his efforts speak for themselves.

John will formally receive his credentialing at the Service of the Living Tradition to be held as part of General Assembly. This service includes the honoring of fellowshipped and credentialed religious leaders; and welcoming those who have received fellowship or credentialed status in the past year. It is open to the public (GA registration is not required) and will be held at the Convention Center at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 23rd. Please come and help honor John and the other religious leaders and their accomplishments.

Jim Alexander

More Music News Inside on page 3

SOCIAL JUSTICE AUCTION: \$17,000

Well, folks, despite the hailstorm, tornado warnings and sideways rain at "go-time", the Social Justice Auction has come and gone, leaving in its wake a few downed trees, a few tired volunteers and over \$17,000 to go towards our Social Justice efforts!

Thanks to everyone who participated – to the multitude who donated goods and services; to the intrepid who volunteered dozens of hours and called up donors, set up tables, cleaned up messes and rang up payments; to Scott Whitesell, John Herrick, Sheila Lay and King Kazoo, who donated their time and talent to fill the evening with music; to Catherine Barnes and Sandy Vermillion, who made it all come together so beautifully.

Most of all, big thanks to everyone who came out into the storms and bid – leading us all to another successful Social Justice Auction.

TUNA, TURKEY AND HAM – OH MY!



A group of 45 children, teens, and adults met on Sunday, May 1 to hear Caroline Chambre, the Director of Moore Place and Homeless to Homes (both programs of the Urban Ministry Center), speak about the need in Charlotte for helping our homeless neighbors. Participants then rolled up their sleeves and made sandwiches which were donated to the Urban Ministry Center.

(Continued on page 5)

FROM THE MINISTER

In a May 10, 1852 journal entry, Henry David Thoreau observed: “We remember autumn to best advantage in the spring; the finest aroma of it reaches us then.” With that in mind, our “Reading Transcendentalism” class (a monthly reading and discussion group I lead on the second Tuesday of each month) recently read Thoreau’s essay “Autumnal Tints.”

Like much of what Thoreau wrote, this essay developed from Thoreau’s daily journal entries. It also took the form of a lyceum lecture he delivered on a few occasions. Late in his short life, aware that he was dying, Thoreau prepared the essay for publication. After his death in May 1862, it was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in October of that year.

At one level, the essay seems simply to offer a walk through the kaleidoscopic splendor of New England from late August into November. Thoreau paints vivid pictures of various plants and trees as they transform from green into the “brilliant tints” in fall. Taken that way, it offers a sort of vibrant visual nature walk that one might enjoy as a reminder in any season of nature’s splendor.

But, there’s much more to be had there, deeper levels at which we can take the words of this essay. In part it sounds Thoreau’s relentless summons to pay attention, to notice, to be aware. He’d elsewhere insisted that what is important is not what you look at but you see. Here he makes that point yet again. As we make our ways through our days, we have a choice about how intentional we will be in noticing. In fact, in the essay Thoreau even uses the curious phrase “intention of the eye” as a reminder that what we actually see has a great deal to do with how intentionally we go about noticing.

Thoreau is concerned with his awareness that “Our appetites have commonly confined our views . . .” To what extent do we focus on what we want, what we think we need in order to be happy, satisfied, in order to have what we regard to be “enough?” Our Transcendentalist forebear is challenging us to look beyond simple self-interest lest we miss what the world really has to offer.

In that regard he observes: “A man shall perhaps rush by and trample down plants as high as his head, and cannot be said to know that they exist . . . if he ever favorably attends to them, he may be overcome by their beauty.” Here too is Thoreau’s familiar counsel to slow down, to take time, to

make an intentional choice to step back so we can pay closer attention.

An early testifier to what we now call the “interdependent web of all being,” Thoreau speaks of aspects of nature—grasses, bushes and trees—in endearing terms. They are “contemporaries” and even “friends.” Do we see ourselves as a part of nature or as apart from it? He invites us into what Jewish philosopher/theologian Martin Buber famously called an “I-Thou” relationship with nature.

Of the autumnal leaves, Henry David Thoreau writes: “they teach us how to die.” Life, as the Buddhists remind us, is defined by impermanence. They call us to note that so much of our suffering, our unhappiness, is caused by our kidding ourselves into thinking that life is fundamentally about permanence, lack of change, about

things staying the same. Thoreau, in chorus with the Buddha summons us to learn from the leaves how both to live and die.

Having laid out the autumn landscape before us, Thoreau, toward the end of “Autumnal Tints,” offers a compelling invitation: “All this you will surely see, and much more, if you are prepared to see it,—if you look for it.” And advises: “There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate,—not a grain more.”

When we here talk about discovering “deeper spiritual meaning” we need not think of this as some otherworldly, highly mystical, process set apart from our daily lives. Those of us in the “Reading Transcendentalism” class are reading some of the writings of the American Transcendentalists asking: “Were this to offer me some guidance in my own spiritual journey, what might it be?” We’re looking for clues to guide us here and now.

From “Autumnal Tints” come these possible questions for those in pursuit of a deeper spiritual life:

1. What might it mean to pay attention? How might you be more intentional about taking note of the beauty that is right before you?
2. Ask yourself: how much of my time is consumed in pursuit of what I think I need? How much is enough? To what extent does “appetite” confine my view of things?
3. Do you ever intentionally slow down? Is there some part of each day when you pause to pay attention, to reflect more deeply on what matters most to you?

It is the mark of a superior mind that it can see the grounds or germs of its own superiority in all—can see what is noblest in itself universally diffused,—can see signs, promises, which escape others’ eyes.

William Ellery Channing from *Note-Book*.

4. How do you regard “nature?” Are you a part of “nature,” in relationship with “nature?” Or is “nature” something outside of you that you have to go visit or make a special trip to go see?
5. Can you accept impermanence, the fact that, like leaves in the fall, everything is in a state of flux? How invested is your energy in trying to keep things from changing?

If you'd like to read it for yourself, the essay “Autumnal Tints” is available in various places on the web. See, for example <http://www.thoreau-online.org/autumnal-tints.html>.

Peace, Jay

CONGREGATIONAL CARE ITEMS

Issues of Joy or Concern may be expressed by filling out a yellow card or by contacting Becky Whittington, Congregational Care Coordinator, at becky@uuccharlotte.org or at (704) 996-9228.

MUSIC NEWS

Thank You Music Program Participants



To all of our music program participants, guest brass players and Scott Whitesell, thank you for a beautiful and inspirational Music Sunday. Thank you Adult Choir, Chamber Choir, Chime Ensemble, Children's Choir--with Director Donna Fisher-- and Scott for your year-round contributions of time, talent and dedication that bring so much

to the life of this congregation. Through your music, you remind us what it means to be fully human and alive. Thank you helping UCC make a difference in the lives of our members and in the greater community. —With love and appreciation, John Herrick, Director of Music.

BOARD UPDATE : NEW PLANS COMING

Envisioning Plan, Sabbatical and Annual Meeting

The Board has taken your feedback collected over the last several months and has held a series of discussions in regards to prioritizing our ENDS and Strategic Outcomes. Prioritizing the ENDS will help guide the Coordinating Team as it works toward a new Envisioning Plan. Based on your feedback and Board discussions, we have found that the ENDS prioritized last year still hold true. To that end, the ENDS we will focus on in the upcoming Envisioning Plan are:

- ENDS Statement #1 – We are a joyful, dynamic community of people who care about and are connected to each other. Here people are welcomed, heard, included and respected.
- ENDS Statement #2 – We are a sanctuary for those on a liberal religious path and a beacon of progressive thought and action in the larger Charlotte community.

The next step in the process is to discuss and confirm the Strategic Outcomes that are associated with ENDS Statement #1 and #2. We will discuss this in our upcoming Board Meeting. Thank you again for all of your input and effort in our Vision!

One other item the Board would like to communicate is the change in policy on the timing of sabbatical. It cannot be said with enough emphasis that the planning and execution during the sabbatical by everyone involved was simply outstanding. It is a true testament to the staff and volunteers of just how well everything continued to run during the sabbatical. The many positive benefits that a sabbatical brings to a congregation was equally as evident .

In evaluating the sabbatical process, it was also apparent the amount of effort required to plan a sabbatical of that length. The purpose for the new sabbatical policy is an effort to reduce some of the effort entailed in planning and preparation, and for the Minister and congregation to experience more frequent renewal benefits of sabbatical. To that end, future sabbatical leave will be three months available every four years. This means a shorter cycle between sabbaticals for a shorter length of time. It is our hope to make the sabbatical an even greater source of benefit for all, and at the same time lessen the effort required for preparation and planning.

We also want to remind everyone of the upcoming Annual Meeting that will be held on May 22nd. We are encouraging everyone to attend. More details will be coming soon. Here is to a year of Living Generously,

Colleen Beale, UCC Board Chair

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

For more information or to register for any of these courses email aresd@uuccharlotte.org or visit the ARES table in Freeman Hall after services on Sundays.

Documentary Film Series

Second Fridays at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary

Friday, May 13

"Crips and Bloods: Made in America"

Join us at 6:30 pm in Freeman Hall for a dessert potluck followed by the showing of "Crips and Bloods: Made in America" in the Sanctuary at 7:00 pm. In the film ex-gang members, gang intervention experts, writers, activists and academics analyze many of the issues that contribute to South LA's malaise: the erosion of identity that fuels the self-perpetuating legacy of black self-hatred, the disappearance of the African-American father and an almost pervasive prison culture in which today one out of every four black men will be imprisoned at some point in his life. Childcare will be provided.

What Is Religion?

May 17 and 24 at 7:00 pm in the Chapel.

What is Religion? Jay Leach, will continue to present a two-part offering designed to invite participants to think more deeply about the meaning of religion. Participants should be able to commit to both sessions as the second will be a more dialogical experience, reflecting on what is presented in the first session. Seven openings remain.

Mystics and Metaphysics

Tuesday, May 17th at 7:00pm in Schweitzer

At our next meeting on Tuesday, May 17 we respond to a request for information on UFOs. We are fortunate to have with us Arthur Small, who was the Mecklenburg County investigator associated with the largest international UFO organization during its most active time period. North Carolina, he states, ranks as the fourth highest state in close encounters. Science fiction or not?

"The Mathematics of My Religion"

Sunday, May 22nd

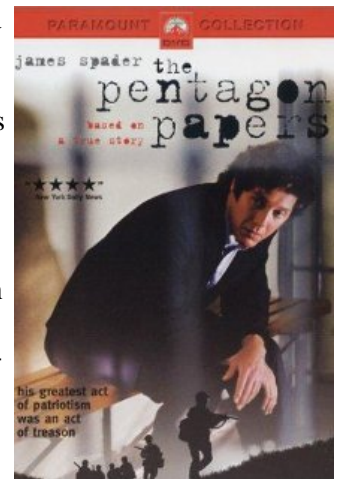
Join Richard Kushmaul on Sunday, May 22 for the "Mathematics of My Religion" at 10:30 am in the Chapel. In this thirty minute session Richard will speak about his personal religious/spiritual beliefs and regular religious/spiritual practices and how it relates to mathematics.

4th Friday Film Series

Showings are at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary and free-of-charge.

May 27 (Truth) – *The Pentagon Papers* (US, 2003)

Starring James Spader. Directed by Rod Holcomb. A fictionalized account of Daniel Ellsberg's decision to expose the lies underlying America's decades-long involvement in the Vietnam. A national hero to some, a traitor to others, Ellsberg's release of the top-secret "Pentagon Papers" led directly to the Watergate break-in, the fall of Richard Nixon, and an eventual end to the war. Rated R for war scenes and brief sexuality.



UU History: Joseph Priestly

Our Rich, Colorful, Spiritual Heritage with Loyd Dillon; Sunday May 29

Join Loyd Dillon as he takes a look at famous Unitarians, Universalists, and "Para" UUs who have shaped our faith and the world. On Sunday, May 29th at 10:30 am in the Chapel, Loyd will explore the life of Joseph Priestley.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH (CYRE)

Are you Passionate about the Arts?

Do they feed your Spirit?



If so, and you'd like to share that passion with our children, consider signing up for a Sunday this summer in our "Spirituality and the Arts" class. Each summer, our elementary children's summer class focuses on a different topic with a focus on "discovering deeper spiritual meaning." Our goal is to have guest speakers/performers every Sunday who can bring the excitement of personal experience or expertise to the classroom.

Each visitor will share why their art touches their spirit. We welcome all ages and stages of presenters, especially non-parents and parents with grown children and teenagers. Contact Kathleen Carpenter kathleen@uuccharlotte.org.

. . . even to form the intention to enter a new awareness is already to be transformed.

Jane Hirschfield in "Kingfisher's Catching Fire: Seeing with Poetry's Eyes."

("Tuna, Turkey and Ham" Continued from page 1)

"I loved seeing members of all ages inside for an hour and a half on a sunny day working to feed their spirits as they worked to feed our homeless neighbors in Freeman Hall," said CYRE Team member, Erica Welzenbach. It took very little of our time to put together 400 sandwiches. Many hands truly make light work."

New member, Katie Shaughnessy, commented: "Both my girls (Sarah, 6 and Meghan, 4) were struck by what (Caroline) shared about people not having a place to sleep and having to find shelter under bridges. The girls were amazed by the number of sandwiches that were made; that each of those will go to a person. This visual impact spurred a discussion on the way home about the need for people to come together to help the homeless so that someday they have a safe place to live. We are really looking forward to doing something like that again!"

And finally, from Melissa Schropp who was joined by her two daughters, Phoebe (7) and Nora (5): "Phoebe has done the sandwich-making event twice with her class. Perhaps because of that, we honestly didn't have a lot of prior discussion about it. Afterward, we talked a bit about how many sandwiches could get made so fast when so many work together, and how nice it will be for the recipients to enjoy a healthy, delicious sandwich for lunch, when they don't have the luxury of just opening their fridge and making one themselves. I also think they both liked being able to refine their own sandwich-making skills."

With events like this, our regular contributions to the food bank and having our kids witness what we frequently do in terms of giving back, we hope to simply expose them over time by our actions to a basic idea: that people who have more should share resources with people who have less, with the goal that gratitude and giving back become hard-wired into who they are, without a lot of analysis.

I was very impressed with the all the children's willingness to pitch in and I thought they all enjoyed being a part of that process. I also liked the timing of it right after our picnic, which hopefully helped send the message of "we just enjoyed some great food, now let's make sure others can, too."

Summer CYRE Program

Volunteer Sign-Up's begin Sunday, May 6



Stories and creative play (preschool), spirituality through the arts (elementary), and watching excerpts from movies with identified ethical value (youth) – your kids will get something of value this summer in our program. This will be our fifth year of offering classes at both service times during the summer.

There will be a preschool – K class and a class for our elementary children at both service times. There will also be a class for our youth, 6th-9th grades during the second service. Don't stay home this summer thinking your children will only have childcare!

You can help, too. We need more volunteers to take 1-3 Sundays each. So check your summer plans and sign up for one of the five classes offered. Sign-up sheets are in the bulletin board in the CYRE hall.

There are those who value broad ideas above all, who prefer panoramas and historical frescoes, whereas others appreciate the affinities and contrasts between small brush strokes.

José Saramago in *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis*.

A Teachable Moment

On Sunday, May 22, the CYRE team will prepare breakfast receptions before each service for our wonderful teachers and youth advisors. They would also like to present each teaching team with a box of thank you notes from the children and the parents of the children in their class. To accomplish this, class boxes are sitting on the table in the CYRE hall through May 22. Notes of appreciation can be dropped in the appropriate box. The teachable moment? What better time to talk about gratitude AND about your commitment to your children's religious education?

Teens not speaking for 25 hours?

Talk about a challenge!

Our Middle School youth led a service on the Invisible Children (IC) and then sought sponsors for their participation in IC's 2011 fundraiser, "Break the Silence." Their challenge: to not speak for 25 hours on April 25 to bring attention to 25 years of war in Uganda. The really good news is that they raised over \$2,000 for Invisible Children. They met for a Break the Silence celebration. Almost everyone who participated and their families attended and broke the silence at 7:00 pm by all yelling at once. Thanks to everyone who participated.

**These things, these things were here and but
the beholder
wanting**

**Gerard Manley Hopkins in "Hurrahing in
Harvest"**

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Summer Camp for UU Youth

Registration Extended

Come join other UU youth for one fun-filled week of workshops, games, music, campfires, outings, and more. . . the perfect setting in which to be silly, make lasting friends, and learn what makes UU youth so awesome! This summer, Shelter Neck will bring back its celebrated summer camp program for UU youth, connecting youth from small, mid-size and large congregations across Eastern and Central NC. Youth aged 12-14 (rising 7th – 9th graders) are invited to join us July 10-16th at Shelter Neck UU camp in Burgaw, NC. To register please contact our 2011 Director, Agatha Buell, youthcamps@shelterneckuucamp.org, (415) 240-6638. www.shelterneckuucamp.org/2011/youthcamp.htm.

What are your GA Plans?

UUCC's visibility at General Assembly (GA) this year!

We already know about some of the workshop leaders, volunteer coordinators, and music involvement of our congregation. We would like to compile a log of everything we are doing-both to celebrate and to help coordinate. Please contact Cindy Fox or Kathleen Carpenter to be sure we know how you will be representing us. This means registrants, youth caucus, etc. Thanks for your participation in our wider faith!

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING . . .

Financially speaking, things have been pretty good around here for the last 10 months. Our bills are paid, our contributions to our denomination are being made and, although it creates a bit of anxiety sometimes, our members are paying their pledges and keeping us solvent.



According to some people who have been here a lot longer than I have, things were not always this way. "I've heard stories of our posting utility bills on the bulletin board," says Nancy G. Cook. "Members were asked to take one of those bills and pay it since the church could not." This, according to Nancy, was not that long ago. Others in the congregation echoed the same sentiment. "There were a lot of times

when things got really scary around here," said Randy Whitt, another longtime member. "But we all pulled together to keep things going."

Posting those utility bills today might be a great deal more intimidating. With more activity here our costs for water, trash removal, telephone and Internet, gas and electric have risen substantially. In April alone we paid over \$1,600 for these services. In this fiscal year we have paid almost \$24,000. These are numbers too big for one individual but which are made achievable by your pledges and by our all pulling together.

Keeping the lights on is only part of the story. Maintaining what we have and repairing what breaks have called for over \$20,000 so far. Altogether, we have spent almost \$600,000 this year to provide programs and services for our members and guests. By the end of the year we expect to spend about \$750,000.

Next year, the pace will be even quicker. Thanks to a pledge campaign which produced over \$700,000 in pledges for the next fiscal year, the Congregation will be asked to approve a budget of what is estimated to be just over \$800,000 at its annual meeting on May 22 (our total revenue includes both pledges and other income.)

None of this is possible without your pledges and your support. We have come a long way since 1947 and we still have a long way to go. The goals established by the congregation and the board are lofty and inspirational. And, thanks to you, getting there is half the fun.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS



Ice Cream Social

Have Ice Cream with the Memorial Endowment Trust
Sunday, May 15th at 2:30pm

The UCC Memorial Endowment Trustees invite you and your children to join them for an afternoon of ice cream and blue grass music in the beautiful garden at the home of Lib Jones and Tom Nunnenkamp on Sunday, May 15 from 2:30 - 5:00 PM. If poor weather forces a cancellation, you'll receive an email to let you know.

Open Door School's Spring Festival

Contact Amy Crew at amy.crew@opendoorschool.org or (704) 364-1521 with questions.

The ODS Annual Spring Festival will be on Saturday, May 14th from 9am-1pm. There will be face painting, a mural wall/paint zone, games, a banging wall, woodworking, science discovery, music, bubbles, raffle prizes, an arts & crafts bizarre, a lemonade stand and bake sale and a trash-to-treasure station. All proceeds will go towards our Financial Aid Fund. Come have a blast and support Open Door!

ONGOING GROUP MEETINGS

Newcomers and drop-ins are welcome! For more information about these groups please visit www.uuccharlotte.org and select "Programs/Get Involved."

Meeting	Location	Time	Contact
Bible Workbench	Library	Sundays 5 mins. after first service ends	George Weir (704) 708-4211
3 rd Saturday Dances of Universal Peace	Sanctuary	3 rd Saturday of each month; 7:00pm	Richard Kushmaul aresd@uuccharlotte.org
Economics and UU Principles	Schweitzer	7:00 pm. Wednesdays	Elizabeth Kerman (704) 846-7181
Jabberwocks	Library	10:00 am. 3 rd Friday	Doris Thomas Browder
Lotus Path	Schweitzer	8:00 am Sundays	Richard Kushmaul (see staff listing p.8)
Parabola Series	Library	7:00 pm Tuesday, May 10 th	Carl Smith (704) 951-4146
Sunday Morning Meditation	Schweitzer	8:30 am. Sundays	Rich Vreeland (704) 290-8620; Debbie George (704) 525-3252
Straight Spouse Support Group	Chapel	7:00 pm. 1 st Tuesday	Sage Brook (704) 366-7983
Women's moon Circle	Chapel	7:00 pm Tuesday, May 17 th	Lisa Walls (704) 400-8628
Women's Support Group	Priestley	7:00 pm. 2 nd Tuesday	Karen Achor (704) 847-2081
UUCS Handwork Group	Priestley	7:00 pm. 3 rd Tuesday	Kat Weisz (704) 321-9067; Vivian Brenner (704) 841-1624
Yoga	Nursery	7:30 pm. on Wednesdays	Bill Cooke (704) 364-2107

Mark Your Calendars

Sunday, May 22nd:
UUCS's Annual Meeting will take place at 12:30pm in the Sanctuary.

Monday, May 30th:
UUCS offices will be closed in observance of Memorial Day.



Open Mind Book Club (*Book Changed*)

Monday, June 6th

The Open Mind Book Club will meet Monday, June 6th at 7:30 pm in the Library. We will be discussing *Serena* by Ron Rash. Please RSVP to Gwynne Movius if you plan to attend.

Upcoming Social Justice Opportunities

Habitat for Humanity Women's Build: Our work date is Saturday, June 11th, 8-4 pm. We need 15-20 volunteers. To join the team and please contact Jennifer Embs.

Adult Day Youth Mission Trip: We'll spend Thursday, June 16 working in Hartsville, SC alongside our youth at a Habitat site and in other projects before returning that evening. There are 14 slots available. Please contact Jay Leach if you would like to be a part of this fulfilling day.

Men's Shelter's Dinners: Anyone interested in joining this worthwhile and rewarding endeavor, please contact Larry Bennett.

VOICES

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Amy Smith, Director

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Address Label

oh pray that what we want
is worth this running,
pray that what we're running
toward
is what we want.

Lucille Clifton in "we are running" from
Quilting

The deadline for the next **VOICES** is
Sunday, May 15, 2011 for the next issue which will be
published on **Wednesday, May 18, 2011**. Please include
your name and phone number on your submissions in case
there are questions. The *Voices* editor reserves the right to
edit all submissions to the newsletter for brevity, grammar,
clarity and consistency as space will allow. The preferred
submission is by email to: uucc@uuccharlotte.org