

DECEMBER 2015

# SOUNDINGS



Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Charlotte

DISCOVER DEEPER SPIRITUAL MEANING

*Depth through reflection*

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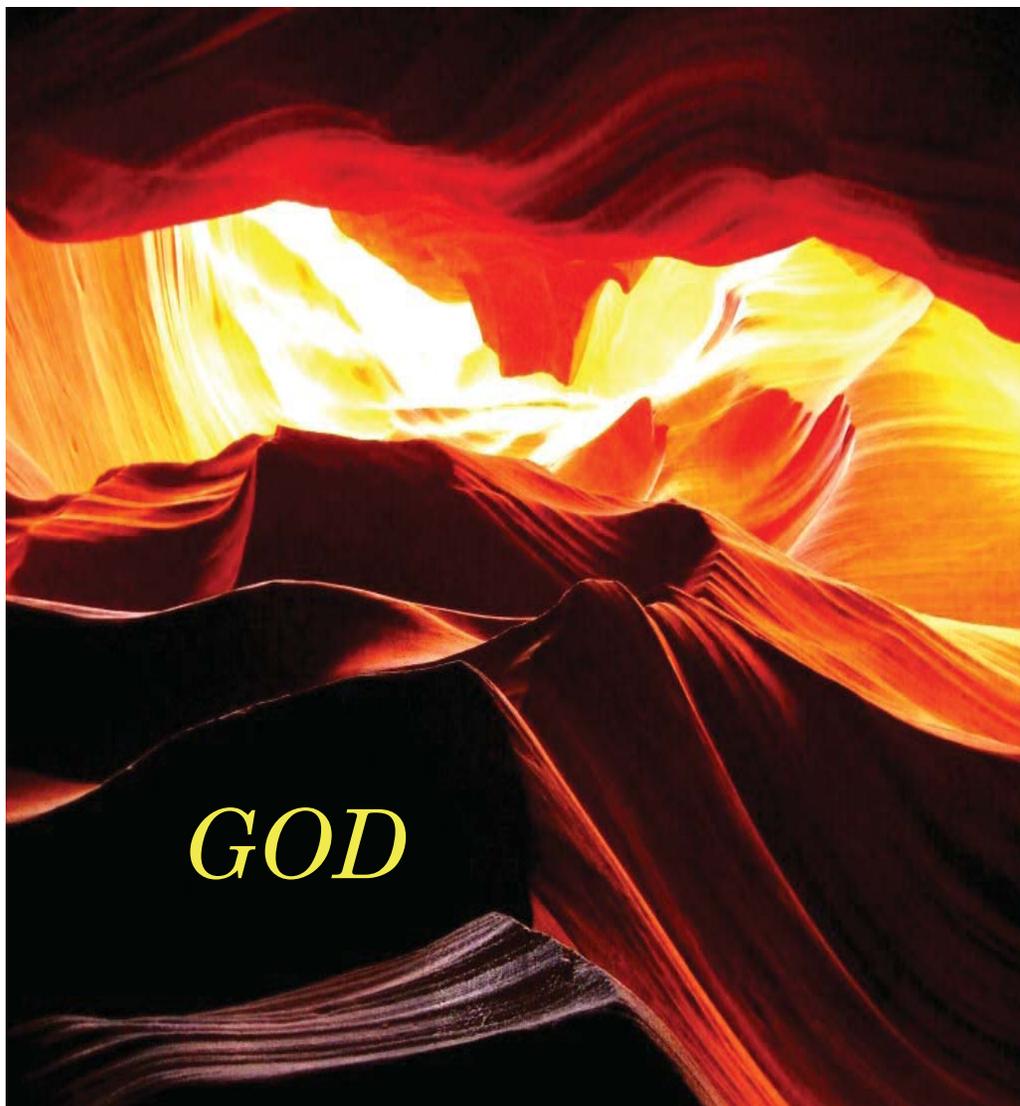
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*Upper Antelope Canyon, photo by Elsa Lafferty*

*...there is no objective view of "God": each generation has to create the image of God that works for it. The same is true of atheism. The statement "I do not believe in God" has meant something slightly different at each period of history.*

— KAREN ARMSTRONG, *A HISTORY OF GOD*



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

## THE BEAUTY OF POSSIBILITY



Pete Moore

In a 1977 episode of *M\*A\*S\*H*, B.J. Hunnicut invites a convalescing soldier to talk to the chaplain, Father Mulcahy. “Okay,” the soldier agrees, “but I’m an atheist.” “Really?” a surprised B.J. asks. “Swear to God,” the soldier replies.

This minor moment resonates with me. Beyond the humor,

I’m intrigued by the notion of a non-believer voluntarily engaging in dialogue with a Catholic priest. What will the avowed atheist and the devout clergyman talk about? Will either of them get anything out of it?

Although I’m not an atheist, I can identify with that fictional soldier: wary of subscribing to a personal belief in “God,” but willing to explore various ideas about God with those for whom such faith is a cornerstone of their existence.

I wasn’t always so willing. When I came to Unitarian Universalism 23 years ago, I was disconnected from and disillusioned with both the particular form of Christianity in which I was raised, and “God”-centric faith traditions in general. My distaste for anything remotely resembling my Christian past had hardened into a formal curmudgeonliness with rituals of its own. For example, I deliberately skipped the word “God” in every UU hymn, prayer, or reading from which it hadn’t already been excised or replaced by a more secular substitute.

I was still struggling with the “G” word upon moving to Charlotte in 1997 and joining the UUCU. Gradually, though, my resistance to God language – and God concepts – began to soften. I realized that I’d become a UU stereotype, attracted more by the absence of things I didn’t like about my former religion than by the presence of new ideas,

*continued on pg 7*

## AUTHORSHIP UNKNOWN

I love many things: the New York Times crossword puzzle, a perfect peach, my family. Some of what I love was made by someone with a name: a maker. The NY Times Crossword, for example, has been edited by Will Shortz since I was a young adult. I know this because I have been a fan of his since I was a child and he edited *Games* magazine. His fans know that any game he authors will reflect a combination of wit, nerd knowledge, and strategy.



Debbie Rubenstein

Other loves of mine have a more complicated relationship with a maker. Who made that perfect peach? One answer would be the farmer who grew the tree – but that feels incomplete. The farmer simply prepared the ground to allow the peach seed to reach its full potential. Who made the seed? Who made the sun and the water that

the tree uses? Who is the ultimate author?

For me, the question of ultimate authorship is the question of G-d – what made us and to what purpose. And for me, any answer feels beyond words. When I look at a Will Shortz crossword, I can deduce certain things about the author. He is educated, has a goofy sense of humor and is fond of opera. The Author of our world, however, is hidden to me. The possible Author feels beyond our – or at least my – ability to describe in words or comprehend in thought. The Author is simply ineffable.

With no answer to the question of G-d, I focus my wonder and awe on Creation. Looking at the Creation reveals scientific complexities that require a faith not dissimilar to religious faith: parallel

*continued on pg 7*





Jay Leach

Purvis Young was a teenager on Overton's tough streets in Miami. Arrested for breaking and entering, Young was serving a three year prison sentence when he had a mystical experience.

"I was in my cell one night," Young says, "I woke up and the angels came to me and I told 'em, you know, hey man this is not my

life – and they said they were gonna make a way for me."

The way, for Purvis Young, was through art. Upon his release he went to the Overton library where he discovered Rembrandt and Van Gogh. Using discarded library books as his first sketch pads, he began painting. And painting. And painting.

For over thirty years Young painted in abandoned warehouses in Overton. Using found material – cardboard, newspaper, scraps of fabric, table tops, even refrigerator doors – he created distinctly recognizable images, some of which ended up in the Smithsonian, Corcoran, and other museums.

A few years ago I acquired a Purvis Young painting. Bold black strokes on an asymmetrical piece of newspaper depict one human figure walking before another human figure on a horse. It offers a Don Quixote sort of image or perhaps a simple rendering of the classic "Flight into Egypt" scene. I see in it Purvis Young's struggle and inspiration, his mystical imagination and gritty determination. I find it . . . beautiful.

Many might view this raw painting on newsprint and find it crude, uninteresting . . . not very beautiful.

Isn't that how it is with beauty? If I asked you about a piece of art you find beautiful, you might describe a Renaissance masterpiece or a grandchild's crayon

drawing adorning your refrigerator. You might mention a cherished photograph or a museum's image that captivated you. What occurs to you today – that special Romare Bearden collage – may be different next week when you recall a glorious Gertrude Stein painting you once studied.

If I said I have a beautiful piece of art, you might make all kinds of assumptions about what that means. But, unless you know me really well, you'd not likely imagine anything like that particular Purvis Young painting. Even then, you still might not understand why I find it beautiful.



When you describe something as beautiful, I may accept that. But, unless you say more, I'm left to wonder what you mean. And, of course, you and I could stand before your object of beauty and draw very different conclusions.

So it is with "God". If I say that word, you don't really know what I mean by it. You may use or avoid that word and I can't really know what you are either embracing or rejecting.

I've stood at the Western Wall in Jerusalem and listened to an Orthodox Jew intoning fervent prayers to God. I've made my way through a dense jungle in India to a clearing where an ecstatic young man embodied his prayer to God before a small carved image. What

experiences, commitments, hopes, concerns, memories inform how each of them imagine God? Only through careful, curious, respectful engagement could I even begin to know what God means in their lives.

Our minister emeritus of blessed memory, Sidney Freeman, often prayed before us with the words "Oh God of all people . . ." Sid once said to me with a twinkle in his eye: "When people ask me if I believe in God, I usually invite them to describe the God they have in mind. Only then can I then tell them whether or not I believe in that God."

*Our spiritual journey begins at birth and continues throughout our lives. We invite parents to use the material presented in LET'S DIVE IN! to engage their children in this journey.*

**Chalice Lighting**



*There is mystery all around us. Some people call it God, some call it spirit, some call it nature – and some say it has no name. May this chalice light show the way as we seek to understand this mystery.*



Kathleen Carpenter

**GOD'S HAT**

by Christopher Buice

Once upon a time, there was a village with a road that went straight through the center of town. One day, something strange happened. God walked down the

road . . . and she was beautiful! She wore a long flowing robe and on top of her head there was a wonderful hat. All the people stopped to stare at God as she walked by . . . .

“Boy, God sure was beautiful!” said one man. “And what a beautiful blue hat she had on.”

“Yes, God was beautiful,” said a woman from the other side of the street, “but it wasn’t a blue hat she was wearing. It was a red hat!”

“You are wrong,” said the man. “It was definitely a blue hat!”

“No, you are wrong,” said the woman. “It was definitely a red hat.”

As the two argued, others joined in the dispute. Soon the whole village was arguing. All the people on one side of the road were certain that God was wearing a blue hat. All the people on the other side of the road were certain that God was wearing a red hat. People got mad and started screaming at each other. Finally, the people got so angry that they decided to build a wall that went straight down the center of town. From that point on, the people on one side of the wall were enemies with the people who lived on the other side of the wall, and they never spoke to each other.



*The Old One's Stones*  
mixed media art by Tannah Murphy

Many years passed, and the people were still enemies. Then one day, God came walking back through the village. She was smiling and balancing on top of the wall that the people had built many years ago. This time she was wearing no hat at all. All the people ran to the wall and cried, “You must settle our argument!”

“Yes,” said one man. “The people on that side of the street say that when you walked through the village many years ago, you were wearing a blue hat! But we know better. We know you were wearing a red hat. So tell us, God, what color was your hat?”

God looked puzzled for a moment and began to scratch her head in thought.

“I think I remember walking through this village many years ago,” said God. “And on that day, I believe I was wearing my hat that is blue on one side and red on the other.”

And saying nothing more, God continued walking down the wall until she disappeared off in the distance.

It was very quiet for a moment. Suddenly there was the sound of one child laughing. Then another child started laughing, and another. Soon the whole village was roaring with laughter.

Everyone was laughing because they realized how foolish they had been.

- Does everyone in the world believe the same things about God?
- Where do people get their ideas about God?
- When people ask you what you believe about God, what do you say?

Visit the blog of Kathleen Carpenter, Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth at <http://www.ucccharlotte.org/get-involved/cyre/cyre-director/>

## “GOD”

by Tom Nunnenkamp, UUC Charlotte Board of Trustees



Tom Nunnenkamp

As Unitarian Universalists we are often asked, “Do you believe in god?” (Most of the time I think they are referring to the capitalized proper noun, God.) Our minister emeritus, Dr. Sidney Freeman, would often return, “Tell me about your god and then I will tell you whether or not I believe in him.”

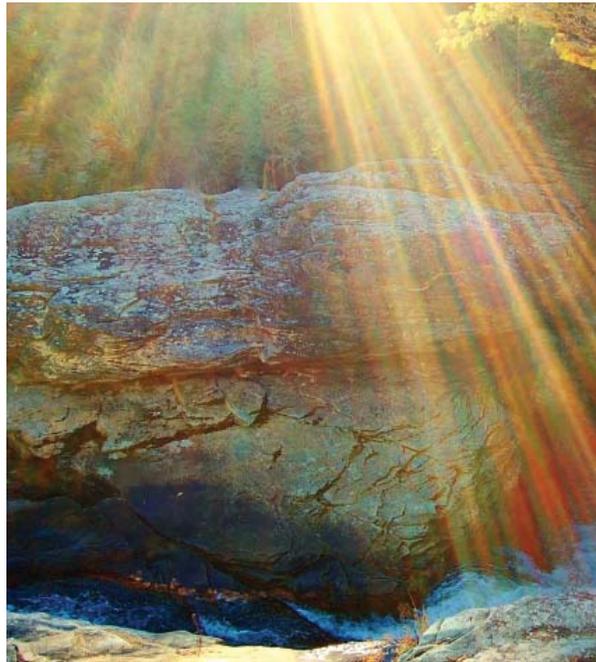
How do you respond to that question? What language accurately reflects not only your personal perspective, but also conveys the diversity that is our movement? Maybe even more important than trying to define “the indefinable,” is a statement that says something about what your life is about as result of your personal understanding of the ultimate.

While it is obviously not the Board’s place to determine what any individual should accept or reject, it is our role to try to cast an inspiring vision for who we are collectively. In that regard, you have asked me and fellow board members to provide leadership. One of the ways that I choose to that is to embrace the word “god,” not just tolerate it. I would suggest that part of our liberating religion is being able to adapt religious language to our personal spiritual journey. The concept of god is too important to let others define it. Harkening back to Dr. Freeman’s quote many years ago, I believe that he was doing just that. I believe we honor his leadership by actively engaging in conversations about the nature of the universe.

Like many others, my understanding of deity has

continued to evolve. I do believe there is some sort of ultimate force in the universe that is far beyond my comprehension and I am fine with calling that force “god.” Trying to define and quantify it seems futile. Religion seems to be humankind’s attempt to make sense of those basic questions: why am I here, what happens after I die, etc. To a large extent, I feel that humans have made god in their image, not the other way around. The vengeful, petty god that is depicted in much of the world’s literature is inconsistent with any concept I have about a force that might permeate all that is.

An image of this ultimate reality that works for me, it one based on science. I have no idea how the universe started, but I do believe that I am made of the same basic molecular building blocks that are part of everything we know to exist. So it seems to me that because I am a piece of this interconnected web, part of my responsibility is to try to live in harmony with both flora and fauna.



Linville Gorge, photo by Elsa Lafferty

My vegetarianism, animal rescue, support of public and private gardens, and educational efforts around plants and soils all reflect my attempt to live in harmony with nature. My wife, Lib, and I have created a much visited garden, MapleWalk, where we endeavor to live in accord with all the creatures (even the deer) that are attracted to our habitat. My neighbors know to call me if they spot an unwanted snake, as I will relocate it to our property.

If you believe as I do, that there is an ultimate reality or creative force in the universe, how is your understanding of that concept reflected in your individual life. Who are you “called” to be? What are you “called” to do? I would suggest that part of what we as a Board should be doing is to challenge each of us to answer those questions. As I get older, these seem to be the most important questions of all.

## “GOD IS LOVE”: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

by Jim Lay



Jim Lay

Our family wasn't much for going to church – mostly just Christmas and Easter. My father was career military, so moving around as much as we did, we weren't able to put down church roots. And even if we would stay in one place for a couple of years, church wasn't a family priority. Sporadically attending Sunday

School as a child, I remember my first definition of God: “God Is Love”. Simple – concise – easy for a child to comprehend.

As a young man, God became a confusing concept. I was told something was “God's will”, usually something really bad, like a death or serious illness. I was told to fear God because he – always a he – would punish me if I didn't do something the “Godly” way. I was told that God didn't like it when people didn't adhere to Biblical teachings.

The older I got the more spiritually disillusioned I became. I tried atheism, but I still had a nagging thought in my mind – that simple concept that “God Is Love”. This wasn't an atheist concept, so I balanced precariously between being an agnostic and a theist. I gave up on finding a church that could support my very personal, continually changing search for spiritual meaning.

A church that would support a continually changing spiritual journey – tell me it's OK to not have all the answers, that the grey areas of life are just as important as the black and white ones . . . .

Hmm, where can I find a church like that?

While first attending the UUCC in 1994, I realized I'd been a Unitarian Universalist all my life and didn't know it. It was such a relief to find a church that said I was OK just the way I am, and would help me to grow my personal spirituality in the company of other seekers, who would support me, and I them.

With my wonderful wife Sheila, a member of UUCC before we married, we have been active in the growth and leadership of this church. UUCC has been such an important, integral part of our lives that it has been natural to want to give back and help make it even better.

As a member of the Stewardship Team, I want to thank our members who have consistently and generously supported our goals. Over the last six years our membership has grown by just 4%, but our income from contributions has grown more than 30%. Your support has allowed our professional staff to grow to a total of eight, with a search underway for a second minister. Programming has been greatly expanded because of your generosity. Many physical improvements to our facility have been made recently due to your strong financial commitment. Your church is in its strongest financial condition ever because of you!

As we approach the end of another year, take time to count and appreciate the many blessings in your lives. Be sure to appreciate what our congregation means to you.

*As I walk on the beach on an usually warm November day, I am welcomed and amused by a life often hidden. The small pools of water are empty of children splashing and running, they are still today, reflecting the bluest sky and housing the tiniest creatures. The sand is not contorted into castles or makeshift wells; it is large and smooth, dotted only with footprints and shells. The waves are void of surfers and swimmers, they have the shore to themselves and roar relentlessly. The birds are no longer beach beggars, they fly close to the top of the water displaying their ancient knowledge of aerodynamics. These small blessings of life are God. Each time I notice this quiet life, I am blessed in return.*

*Today I am unhidden as well. I have left my life noise of have-to's and need-to's and abandoned the racing panic of fulfilling my wants versus needs – if only for a few hours. These amazing, tangible works of God are my reminder to pay attention to nature, people, the world and my stiller self.*

— Courtney McLaughlin

possibilities, and opportunities for worship, social action, and spiritual growth.

This idea of absence and presence is key. The absence is the absence of certitude. If we’re going to use labels, then I am an agnostic – typically defined as someone who believes it’s impossible to know with certainty whether or not there is a God.

Because perceptions of agnosticism can be negative, implying a fundamental emptiness, wishy-washiness, or worse, I prefer to think of my own spiritual worldview as “positive agnosticism.”

As a “posnostic,” I believe it is impossible for me to “know” definitively whether “God” exists, and if so, what his, her, or its “true” nature is. Nonetheless, I’m convinced I can find affirming principles, perspectives, and meaning in my spiritual life by exploring and considering the ennobling, creative aspects of religions that do provide such certainty to their followers.

Ultimately, the question isn’t one of specific knowledge or belief regarding a deity. That’s not the purpose of religion, and certainly not liberal religion, as I see it. The real question is how and why these beliefs – so disparate and contradictory if taken literally – might inspire, challenge, or even comfort me?

Must I reject views of God that I don’t “agree” with? Or is my absence of certitude an invitation – a call to action to engage with ideas different from my own, to exercise my mind and expand my heart, to spark my creativity, to prod me out of complacency?

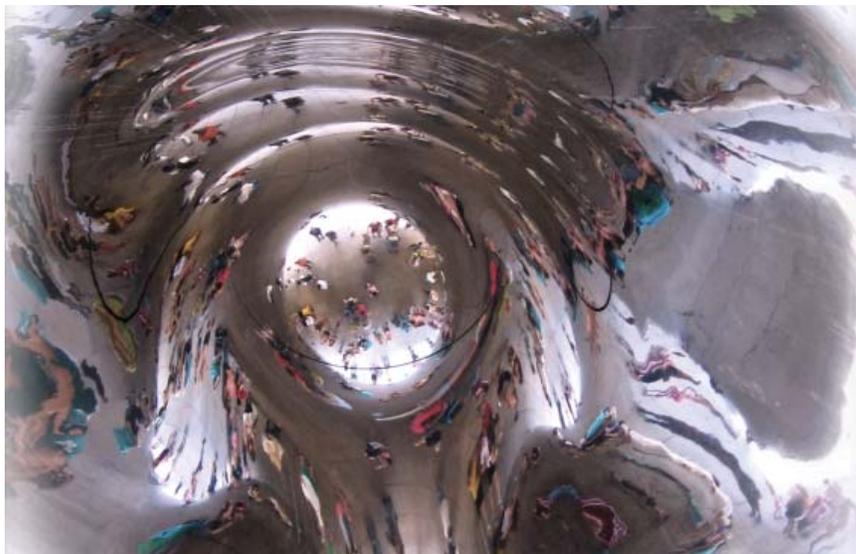
For me, that’s the value of positive agnosticism: a chance to welcome the mystery of what can’t be known and to embrace the beauty of what might be possible.

It’s a sentiment echoed in the words of one of my favorite writers, Jorge Luis Borges. “Being an agnostic,” Borges once said, “makes me live in a larger, a more fantastic kind of world. This world is so strange that anything may happen, or may not happen. Being an agnostic means all things are possible . . . even God.”

universes, dark energy and quantum entanglement are as antithetical to everyday experience as a virgin birth or a burning yet unconsumed bush. My spiritual life is fed by the marvels of the everyday: a scientific article on the process that turned stardust into us, the images of the cosmos captured by the Hubble Space Telescope, or the miracle of love. All these can fill me with religious feelings of connection and awe.

So I choose a different question: what does the wonder of Creation require of us? I answer this question by attempting to honor the work of both believers and non-believers. I strive to approach the humanity of believers like St. Francis who relinquished his worldly possessions to serve others; Julius Rosenwald who used his Sears wealth to found schools for black children in the early 1900s; and Muhammad Yunus who founded Grameen Bank to relieve Bangladeshi poverty.

And I work to achieve the visions of non-believers like Isaac Asimov and Margaret Atwood who use fiction to address questions of freedom and responsibility, and Warren Buffett who advocates fiercely for fair play and opportunity. I know that those with divergent perspectives on G-d may reach toward the same ideals, inspired and energized by a conviction that derives from their theist or atheist perspective. I respect those who answer the Authorship question differently, and I am grateful that I can meet them along the road of action.



*Cloud Gate Sculpture (Millennium Park, Chicago), photo by Laura Hamilton*

## Knowing God

A little quiver of life sits in the cup of my small hands. The soft fur warms my fingers, and I feel the thump-thump against my palms. We found her orphaned in a hole her mother created before she was born. Now my mother allows us to keep the bunny alive with watery milk in an eyedropper and a warm bed box heated by a light bulb.

Sixty years later a tiny hummingbird detours from the porch into the kitchen and cannot find the way out. I lower window shades around the room. He rests a moment on a low sill. I cup him gently in my hands and stand still, feeling the flutter, the soft feathers, the power of breath and heart and life itself.

Newborn twin grandchildren lie together in my arms watching me as I sing my eternal love to them and tell them the story of their recent birth. I whisper secrets of life and tell them how good it is.

My father-in-law lies still in our den, smaller than life, breathing slowly in and out. We look at each other. He tries to hide his discomfort; I try to hide my sadness. We both choose to be in this moment, one of our last together, breathing and looking, listening and being silent. At life's end the wonder expands just as it does at birth – the movement of air, the beating heart, the body still. So much mystery before and after.

I have always known mystery. I know the Presence in silence, the surrounding peace found by stilling movement and stepping . All my life I have held a sense of the majestic, the unknown, the indescribable, the beauty and awe that cannot be explained. Always I have felt communion, especially in nature or friendship – that little jolt of surprise, a tiny glimmer of brightness, the sudden heart smile of recognition, of knowing that something is at the heart of it all.

For decades I did not know this might be what others consider God. I did not think I knew God. But I do know the deep joy of feeling a tiny heart quiver or flutter or of holding a new or very old hand. I know a stirring at my core and am filled by the inexplicable wonder of life itself, that thump-thump against my hand.

It is this glimmer, this quiver, this warm acknowledgement that has given me joy, comfort and a sense of goodness all my life. Mystery and wonder bring me home; bring me peace and gratefulness now. I have never been away from this. I have always been accompanied by divine mystery.

– Kathleen Moloney-Tarr  
Adapted from the essay “Mystery” published in *Connections & Invitations*, by Shalem Institute of Spiritual Formation, Summer 2014.



*Diana of the Chase* (Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, SC)  
photo by George Weir

## Scott Royle

A member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte since 1986, Scott Royle started volunteering here after his daughters Abby and Devin were born. For about 10 years, Scott served as a teacher and parent assistant. He started teaching as a way to contribute to the religious education program nurturing his own children. He continued because it was “just lots of fun” working with our kids and with Kathleen Carpenter, Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth. Now that the kids Scott taught during that decade have grown into middle school and high school youth, he says he finds it gratifying to see how they have blossomed.



Abby, Devin and Scott Royle

Scott also has a great love of working with his hands and has generously shared that gift with our congregation, primarily through our Building and Grounds Team. In our sanctuary, on the wall next to the steps leading up to the chalice, is a hand rail made by Scott and his daughters. It makes our worship space more accessible and does so beautifully. The air conditioning units on the Sharon Amity side of our building now have nature-inspired covers made by the Royle family too. Scott thought the large units were not what passers-by should see, so he created and installed a solution that makes it easy to miss that those units are even there. Scott also participated in creating the sidewalk

that now goes from the parking lot to the front entrance and in getting the new lighting for our sanctuary. He says he enjoys finding solutions, making things and seeing people use them.

A big part of why Scott volunteers is his daughters. They've worked with him on projects and on Building and Grounds Work Days. Recently, they built garden beds at the Men's Shelter during our Social Justice Work Day last spring, helped with crafts for the summer creative classes for our kids and assisted with the installation of our new building signs. He wants his daughters to be involved and giving back instead of being concerned only about themselves. The way Scott sees it, when you volunteer you get back more than you give. While getting things done and helping others, volunteering can help develop the person doing the volunteering. Working with others to attain a goal that at first seems lofty feels rewarding to Scott. He's also found that an important 'fringe benefit' of volunteering at the UUCC is that you get to know interesting, dedicated members of our congregation. Those connections can happen in meetings, in the garden or in a classroom. Scott intends to continue volunteering and keep his fringe benefits coming.

*... when you volunteer you get back more than you give. While getting things done and helping others, volunteering can help develop the person doing the volunteering.*

## Above & Beyond

*Thank you to Dick Kistler for years of providing our information technology support. Thanks, Dick, for going Above and Beyond!*



Dick Kistler

## MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS



Elaine Camp

### **Elaine Camp**

I recently moved here from Columbia, South Carolina to be closer to my son, daughter-in-law and three granddaughters. I am happily retired and enjoying life.

Andrew and Wendy are back after a hiatus of a few years. Wendy is an acupuncturist and owner of Be Yoga in Dilworth and Carmel Village. Andrew is an IT geek. Both are 3rd generation and lifelong Unitarian Universalist and parents of Nora.

### **Andrew Diamond & Wendy Swanson**



Andrew & Nora Diamond

### **David Webb**

Dave was born in Memphis and raised in Atlanta and Charlotte. He spent 35 years in the corporate world before going back to school and becoming a teacher of business, finance and entrepreneurship at Ardrey Kell High School.

For the last three years, he's managed the Charlotte Pride Festival and has done operations and logistics for the MLK Day parade for the last two years. After not being raised in a particular religion, he attended the Atlanta Science of Mind/Spiritual Living Center for ten years. He's been attending the UUCC for the last five years. This is the first time Dave has become a member of any spiritual organization or church.



David Webb

### **Cindy Hostetler & Elizabeth Pruett**

We have been together for 14 years. We both work in healthcare information technology and in our leisure enjoy backpacking, traveling and caring for our four-legged felines. Elizabeth is originally from Alabama and came to North Carolina via Maryland and Ohio in 1986. Cindy is from southwest Pennsylvania and has been here since 1996.



Cindy Hostetler & Elizabeth Pruett

### **George & Betty Ladner**

We have lived in North Carolina since the late 1970's. We spent the first part in Winston Salem and have been in the Charlotte area for 15 years. We have two sons and four grandchildren.



Betty & George Ladner



Peggy Henderson

### **Peggy Henderson**

I look forward to continuing to sing with John Herrick's wonderful choir and helping UUCC's Green Sanctuary program fulfil our vision and covenant with our fellow Unitarian

Universalist congregations as a green sanctuary congregation using energy more sustainably.

## FOR FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

*Below you will find a list of books, reflections, movies, lectures and much more for further engagement on the subject of God.*

### BOOKS:

*The God We Never Knew*, by Marcus Borg  
*How Big is Your God?* by Paul Coutinho  
*Girl Meets God*, by Lauren Winner  
*Still*, by Lauren Winner  
*On Wearing God*, by Lauren Winner  
*The Healing Path of Prayer*, by Ron Roth  
*My Grandfather's Blessings*  
by Rachel Naomi Remen  
*Blessings of the Cosmos*, by Neil Douglas Klotz  
*The Case for God*, by Karen Armstrong  
*The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Religion to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith*  
by Marcus J. Borg  
*In the Beginning . . . Creativity*,  
by Gordon D. Kaufman  
*Who Needs God*, by Harold Kushner  
*The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*  
by Sallie McFague.  
*God: A Biography*, by Jack Miles  
*Faith Without Certainty: Liberal Theology in the 21st Century*, by Paul Rasor  
*Bridging the God Gap: Finding Common Ground among Believers, Atheists, and Agnostics*,  
by Roger Christian Schriener

### Preschool-Age 7

*God Is in the Mountain*, by Ezra Jack Keats  
*Where Does God Live?*, by August Gold  
*Because Nothing Looks Like God*  
by Lawrence Kushner  
*In God's Name, God's Paintbrush, God Inbetween, God Said Amen – all*, by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

### Ages 6-12

*What Is God?* by Etan Boritzer  
*Hide-and-Seek With God*, by Mary Ann Moore  
*Little Books About Big Stuff: About God, A Unitarian Universalist Book for Kids*  
by Betsy Hill Williams, The Reverend Jane Rzepka, The Reverend Kenneth Sawyer, Noreen Kimball  
*Religions Explained: A Beginner's Guide to World Faith*, by Anita Ganeri  
*A Faith Like Mine*, by Laura Buller

### MOVIES:

*Oh, God!*, 1977  
*Time Bandits*, 1981  
*Defending Your Life*, 1991  
*Education of Little Tree*, 1996  
*Kundun*, 1997  
*Simon Birch*, 1998  
*Bruce Almighty*, 2003

### OTHER:

UUA Pamphlet, "UU Views of God"  
edited by Paul Rasor

### Blog Posts for Adults

<http://archive.uuworld.org/2000/0900comment.html> Forest Church

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/getting-over-dualism>

### Blog Posts for Parents

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-david-wolpe/talking-to-children-about\\_b\\_611174.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-david-wolpe/talking-to-children-about_b_611174.html)

<http://blogs.uuworld.org/parenting/tag/god/>  
*Michelle Richards*

## CREATIVE SUBMISSIONS FOR SOUNDINGS

The editors of *Soundings* invite members of the congregation to submit creative written and visual material for publication. Submissions should reflect one of the congregation's upcoming Second Sunday themes: February - Sacrifice; March - Vocation; April - Stewardship of the Earth. Written pieces (poems or prose) should be no more than 150 words. Visual works can include photographs or high-quality photographs of paintings, sketches, fiber art, sculpture, etc. All submissions must be original. The editors – the UUCU professional staff – will review all submissions and contact the authors regarding suitability for publication.

Please send submissions to  
uucc@uuccharlotte.org

### Laura Hamilton

It started with my first point-and-shoot: a Kodak Baby Brownie. In the many decades since, I have enjoyed capturing pictures that are both interesting and pleasing. Transforming a 3-D vision into a 2-dimensional image is challenging and satisfying. I look for curious perspectives, different angles, unusual designs, or fun situations. For me, photos provide great memories and wonderful entertainment.



Laura Hamilton



Elsa Lafferty

### Elsa Lafferty

Upper Antelope Canyon is on Navajo land. I had dreamed of going there for a long time. For thousands of years floods have eroded and shaped the narrow passageways, smoothing edges. During the summer months the sunlight illuminates and transforms the canyons. My experience was the same as

being in a Cathedral.

The beams at the boulder were at Linville Falls. Early in the morning I was gifted with this unusual display of light. A spiritual experience that seemed to envelop me with light, I was filled with wonder.

### Courtney McLaughlin

Courtney McLaughlin's passion for writing was sparked by the gift of a typewriter she received from her mother at age 8. She has been a freelance writer and editor for over 15 years. Her world and passion grew when she joined UUCU's Writing Your Spiritual Journey group in 2011. Through their support, friendship and sharing, she is constantly challenged to explore new ways of interpreting and experiencing the world using her love of words.



Courtney McLaughlin

## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS OF ART AND POETRY:



Kathleen Moloney Tarr

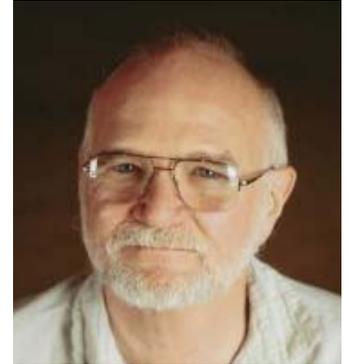
### *Kathleen Moloney-Tarr*

During more than four decades at the UUCC, Kathleen has served in a variety of leadership roles including chair of both the UUCC board and the Memorial Endowment Trust. She created the UUCC's Writing Your Spiritual Journey groups

and Healing Threads, our prayer shawl ministry. Her spiritual essays are published by Shalem Institute where she trained as a spiritual director, a contemplative relationship she shares with seekers of varied faiths. Kathleen splits her time between Charlotte and the NC mountains as she weaves, knits and plays with her three grandchildren.

### *George Weir*

George will photograph almost anything that stays still more than 1/1000 of a second, more or less depending on the light. For George photography is a useful tool to remind himself to slow down and actually look at the world around him. He finds photographing children especially challenging but gets lots of practice as camp photographer for Chameleons Journey, an overnight grief camp for children ages 7-16 who have lost someone important in their lives.



George Weir

### *Tannah Murphy*

I've been working with art for seven years and have found myself drawn to more fantasy type cartooning as my default! However I also work with gouaches and realism although nature is primarily that. Art is basically my whole life now and I plan to continue with it over my lifetime.



Tannah Murphy

# SOUNDINGS

## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 9 AM - 5 PM

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WEBSITE: [WWW.UCCCHARLOTTE.ORG](http://WWW.UCCCHARLOTTE.ORG)

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