

MARCH 2016

SOUNDINGS



Unitarian Universalist
Church of Charlotte

DISCOVER DEEPER SPIRITUAL MEANING

Depth through reflection

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stoneware pottery by Jim Lay (photo by Elsa Lafferty)

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

– by Mary Oliver “Wild Geese” in *Dream Work*



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

SOULCRAFTING

by Jarod Brown



Jarod Brown

Years ago a finely-crafted product was more important than profits. Some of the most famous names of the industrial age earned their reputations through pursuit of quality. My love of vintage cars and my passion for restoring objects of artistic craftsmanship come partly from watching my father attempt repairs. As a

child, I took apart a lot of the household appliances. Sometimes, I even put them back together. I damaged my father's lawnmower on an old iron sprinkler head. While repairing it with the help of a mentor, I became fascinated by the relationship of the moving parts within the engine. My knowledge base grew through many jobs, many years, and many mentors.

My Unitarian Universalist parents believed that we are born unlimited. They helped me to see that I can decide my own limitations. It seems I have spent my life testing those limitations. My father said "find something you love to do, find a way to make money doing it, and you'll never work a day in your life."

Richard Bach said, "The master in the art of living draws little distinction between his work and his play."

My passion for working with my hands led me (at the age of 15) to purchase and restore a 1940 Ford pickup truck. After five years of work on the truck, I spent over seven and a half years traveling North America living out of the small wooden house on the back of that truck. I learned many trades and met many mentors along the way. In 1986 I wandered into Charlotte and eventually co-founded Automotive



stoneware pottery by Jim Lay (photo by Elsa Lafferty)

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A VETERAN WITHOUT A COMPASS

by Dana Draa

What can I say? I'm a late bloomer. It took me many years to realize my passion for helping others, especially veterans with disabilities. I have always felt a strong sense of community and the desire to give back in a way that was meaningful, but this inclination lacked direction and focus. About eleven years ago, I had an opportunity to change careers. I had been working in the IT industry, and while fixing people's computer troubles is helping people, it wasn't the fulfilling job I desperately yearned for.



Dana Draa

Then, the North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind hired me as an Assistive Technology Consultant for the Blind and Visually Impaired. In my new job, I was able to take all my previously-learned computer and electronic skills and use those skills to help blind and visually impaired individuals get jobs using assistive technology. It was a win-win. It was also eye-opening. I wasn't prepared for the amazing

lack of understanding from potential employers and the public in general regarding the abilities of individuals with vision loss or persons with disabilities in general. I immediately confronted an unacceptable amount of – mostly unintended – discrimination towards these folks. And I became determined to dispel the notion that persons with disabilities could not be valuable contributors to our society and workforce. After all, I had come to know many of the people that I worked with as some of the most insightful, talented and intelligent people I have had the privilege of interacting with.

continued on pg 7



Jay Leach

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Ann Parker was the president of the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California when my wife Melissa and I were there. Rebecca has a rare combination of heart and head, intellect and compassion, contemplative reflection and courageous activism.

Holding dual ordination both as a United Methodist and a Unitarian Universalist, Rebecca is recognized as one of our finest theologians while also being acclaimed for her keen pastoral sensitivity. She has written with raw honesty about her own deep wounds (see the disturbing book *Proverbs of Ashes* she coauthored with Rita Nakashima Brock) and in the process has called us to "hold each other in benediction and blessing."

Rebecca Parker is convinced that we are all gifted. "Gifted" for her is not a category signaling those who are exceptional – each of us is gifted. Each of us is endowed with certain capacities: tools, as it were, at our disposal.

Rebecca poetically names a few of our possible gifts:

The mind's power,
The strength of hands,
The reaches of the heart,
The gift of speaking, listening, imagining, seeing,
waiting . . .

These things in and of themselves are, Rebecca believes, neutral. Having a soaring intellect, a strong and healthy body, a great capacity for emotion. Being articulate or imaginative, visionary or patient. These are simply the raw materials of a life.

So, she writes:

Your gifts
Whatever you discover them to be
Can be used to bless or curse the world.
Any of these can serve to feed the hungry,
Bind up wounds,
Welcome the stranger,
Praise what is sacred,
Do the work of justice or offer love.

And any of these can draw down the prison door
Hoard bread
Abandon the poor,
Obscure what is holy,
Comply with injustice
Or withhold love.

Such radical polarities! Imagine: the same personal capacity used to "do the work of justice" or "comply with injustice"; to "praise what is sacred" or "obscure what is holy"; to "abandon the poor" or "welcome the stranger".

For Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, it comes down to this:

You must answer this question:

What will you do with your gifts?

And then she invites, urges even:

Choose to bless the world.

* * * * *



sasaki haise, digital art by Liza Parks

In succinct poetic fashion, Rebecca Parker has raised two of Life's most pressing queries. First: what do you have to offer? When you reflect, deeply – on who you are, on what engages you, on where things feel most natural, on when you feel most alive, on what

people around you affirm about you – what would you name as your "gifts"?

We ritualize that question every Sunday in our services. Passing a basket up and down each row is more than just a way to take a collection. Touching the basket, pausing to look into it, making a symbolic monetary contribution to it – these are ways we ritualize our awareness that each of us has something to offer.

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

We light our chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism. Ours is a faith that reminds us to follow our hearts in making decisions about what we will do with our lives. Let this flame symbolize the fire within each of us that calls us to certain tasks.

THIS NEVER FEELS LIKE WORK

by Belinda Saling Parry

I lean on the windowsill in my grandparents' front room. If I press my cheek to the glass, I can just see the corner where my granddad will turn to come home. The stop sign begins to brighten as a car approaches.

I jump up and call to my grandma, "He's coming!" Grandma calls back, "You'd better get ready, then."

I run down the short hallway to the room that was my uncle's. It's mine tonight. I pull a button-up shirt off a hanger and put it on over my clothes. It's too big for me, which is perfect. In the living room, I hear Grandma greeting Granddad at the front door. I sneak down the hallway, buttoning my smock, and peek around the corner.

Granddad has caught Grandma in a big hug. Kissing her cheek he asks, "How was work today?"

"Wonderful," she replies. Grandma never has a bad day at the preschool where she spends her morning with toddlers. "And you?"

"It was long," Granddad says, catching sight of me spying on them, "but it went a lot faster when I remembered Ashley was going to be my assistant at art class tomorrow." He smiles at me, and I come out of my hiding place.

The first time I helped Granddad with his Saturday art classes, my parents had left me with my grandparents for the weekend. That day, Granddad said I did such a good job that he'd like to bring me on as his assistant. Of course I said yes. I love to watch my grandfather sculpting or painting or teaching other people to do those things. I've learned a lot watching his classes and now, in addition to helping the older students find paint and choose palettes, sometimes I help the little kids paint clouds in the sky like Granddad does.

"I'm ready, Granddad!" I say, showing off my smock. Granddad says, "I see that."

Grandma says, "Dinner first." We sit in the kitchen and eat Grandma's famous fried pork chops with apples and homemade donuts for dessert.

I'm so full after dinner, but Granddad says, "Come on!" and I am ready to go. Together we tromp down the stairs to get Granddad's studio ready for tomorrow. In the big basement room that is Granddad's studio, I breathe in the scent of wood pulp clay and oil paints, scents that always remind me of watching Granddad do what he loves. "Let's get to work!" he says, switching on the lights, illuminating the half-finished paintings and drying sculptures his students have made. I smile at Granddad because this never feels like work.



Landscape, by Belinda Saling Parry (painted when she was 8)

- I wonder why Ashley likes to help her Granddad.
- I wonder what Granddad does for his day job.
- I wonder what vocation means.
- I wonder what Granddad's vocation is.
- I wonder if someone's vocation and day job have to be the same thing.
- I wonder what you love to do and how you can make it more a part of your life.

VOCATION

by Sage Brook



Sage Brook

Vocation is derived from the Latin word *vocare*, to call. How does one recognize the voice that calls us individually, or collectively as a congregation?

How did I personally recognize it? It started with a birth experience, which eventually inspired me to empower women to give birth in a gentler,

healthier way. Several years of exploring – through silence and writing in a journal – finally resulted in an idea of how I might bring this to fruition. What followed was years of schooling, support by my family and friends, and lots of hard work. All of this led to a more than thirty-year career in nurse-midwifery that has brought me incredible joy, occasional sadness, but always a sense of awe surrounding the great mystery of birth. Along the way, I hope I have empowered women of all ages to care for themselves and their families in positive, life-affirming ways.

A second voice seems to be calling me in a different direction: caring for those in need in our own congregation. At first the voice calling me to do this was over the telephone, another member asking me to join the Congregational Care Team. I accepted and this opened my eyes to the need here at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte (UUC). I have never been comfortable meeting new people, but I realize that often we need a “nudge” to go beyond our comfort zones and to explore the possibility of

transforming ourselves and others. As a result, I have met many incredible people through visiting them in their homes. I have also been made aware of the importance of staying connected to our growing number of elderly members. Often I have felt that there is a connection between attending the beginning of life and attending those who are nearing the end of their lives.

The UUC, guided by its Board of Trustees, is giving birth to new ways of encouraging spiritual growth, fostering social justice for all people, and caring for our environment. Our vocation as members of this congregation is certainly broader than my vocation as a midwife or any of our individual vocations. We are in the business of transformation – and this includes each of us personally as well as all of us collectively. What would our congregation look like if we were transformed into a people who genuinely cared not only for each other but were reaching beyond our comfort zones to care more deeply about those beyond our walls, our city, our nation? This requires time to “hear the call” – from someone among us or the spirit within – nudging us to become a more dynamic, loving force moving toward our collective vision for our congregation.



Junkyard, digital art by Liza Parks

VINEY PARKER'S SONG

Her house stands abandoned now.
Deserted, but not forgotten:
at the end of the drive, piles of river stones
show someone plans to brace the foundation.
Great-great-great grandchildren,
generations from those she rocked to sleep,
keep Viney's place alive.

If we turned and crossed the road,
climbed the hill on the log-strewn path,
we would come to her grave.
A husband, five or six of her sixteen children,
and perhaps an old hunting dog or two
lie with her beneath the piney brush.
Rattlers guard their resting place.

She lived long in these mountains.
Out on the Silversteen road, the congregation
she founded and nursed till they sang her to sleep.
All along the cove, descendants of those
she treated with herbs and poultices
live to speak her name. Viney Parker,
they say, lived a long life. They nod to
emphasize:

Hers was a good life as well. Few remember
much about her father; all that remains
from his house, a pile of sticks left where they fell.
Like all our forebears, he escaped something.
What, no one will say. In the mountains,
neighbors forget what doesn't bear repeating,
repeat what holds the honey to the comb.

Some people and some stories brace us
beyond their time. No one alive knew Lavinia,
but in each house along the cove they tell her tale:
How she rode a mule for miles over ridges
to nurse her neighbors, singing hymns that echoed back,
reassuring the little ones she left behind.

Surely it's enough, on a cold winter eve,
watching your own baby sleep in a
moon-blanketed room, to hum a song
that echoed over ridges and passed down to you.
To feel around you, breathing into the bowl of night,
folks who remember one who birthed, and nursed, and sang.
To know that thread's unbroken, stretches
like a lanyard, tethered to a baby's breath,
strung along the hills to the stone at Viney's grave.

— Glenda Bailey-Mershon



*Knitting hands, Quechua man in Pisac, Peru,
photo by Phyllis Bertke*

UUCC

ENDS Statements

AS A CONGREGATION, WE COURAGEOUSLY NAME
THESE ENDS TO WHICH WE ASPIRE:

- 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.
- We are a sanctuary for those on a liberal religious path and a beacon of progressive thought and action in the larger Charlotte community.
- We cultivate lives of generosity and responsibility, sharing our personal abundance.
- We are intentionally growing in our diversity as a congregation, each of us working with others to overcome the barriers that divide the human family.
- We strive for peace, justice and equity in our hearts, our interpersonal relationships, our community and our world.

International. We quickly became known for high-quality old-world craftsmanship and the repair and restoration of Rolls Royce, Bentley, Ferrari, and other special-interest automobiles. Along with a partner, I assembled and trained twelve craftsmen who all put soul into their work. Author Matthew Crawford in his book *Shop Class as Soulcraft* speaks of what is possible when “mastery allies with the spirit of inquiry.” He says, “Without genuine fascination with a medium, the artist’s spirit will not enter the work.”

My fascination with soulcraft and hand skills has led me along many paths. I currently have four metal public art pieces in the uptown Charlotte loop. The sale of my automotive restoration company allowed me more time and the opportunity to create art without consideration of compensation.

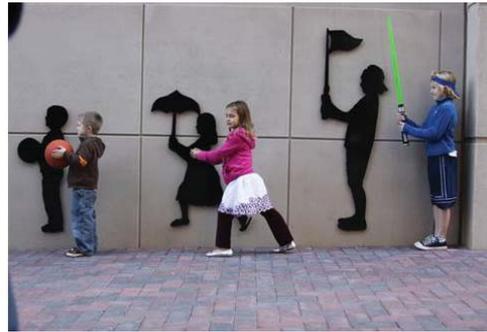
It seems an awakening of sorts is occurring within our public education system. The value of hand skills and the need for mentors to inspire young people has led the school system to recreate some shop classes shuttered three decades ago. Last year I was offered and accepted a position as the automotive technology teacher at North Mecklenburg High.

As I tell my stories and see the sparks of interest in the eyes of my students, it is very clear to me that I am where I’m supposed to be. As my students get their hands greasy and learn about the cars of their dreams, it fills me. It is a feeling that is hard to describe. I think it’s about becoming an elder instead of an older. As a mentor and high school teacher, I can share my fascination with machines and give young people the opportunity that my early mentors gave me. I am hopeful that I can pass on my knowledge and experience to a new generation, giving them a glimpse of what it means to see your work as a craft, something to put your soul into. It is about being a Soulcrafter.



Metal Art from *Artworks Charlotte* created by Jarod Brown

After working for the State of North Carolina, an opportunity in a closely related field with the Veterans Administration surfaced and I threw my hat in the ring. After a few months of working at the VA, and despite the considerable bureaucracy, a fire had been lit inside of me. I was focused and ready to be a champion for these selfless servants to our country. What I would discover after a few years of working in the position and some reflection on my personal journey is that my passion resonated across generations – was possibly even genetic! My maternal grandmother was an intelligence officer in the Marines during WWII where she met my grandfather, a Navy Yeoman. My paternal grandfather was in the Army during WWII. My father, an Army mechanic, was stationed in Vietnam during that controversial campaign. Sadly, my paternal grandfather died when my father was ten and my maternal



grandfather died when I was three. Although I missed the opportunity to know some of these relatives personally, when interacting

with my charges, I often think of my own family members and the treatment I would want them to have. This helps to shape the manner in which I conduct my services.

I’ve also learned that along with inheriting a strong sense of patriotism, I’ve developed the most incredibly stubborn streak known to (wo)man. I compromise when needed, but I never give up because there is so much work that needs to be done. Of course, I’ve had to build rapport with people such that they will follow me into the unknown waters of change knowing I have their best interests in mind. Each day is a new adventure and an opportunity to give back to individuals who have sacrificed so much for our freedom.

Vocation

(lyrics written to the tune of "Vacation" as performed by the Go-Gos)

Can't seem to make my mind up, it's true
I need direction, something to do
Should I go to school
To develop more tools
The future lies ahead
I sit here filled with dread

My resume is flimsy
More substance it needs
Perhaps I should spin the wheel
See where it leads

But what if I'm wrong
And I'm not all that strong
Guess I've known all along
That I don't know at all

Unsure, without goals
None have been met
School starts in two weeks
And I haven't made my mind up yet

Vocation, all I've ever wanted
Vocation, hard to find my way
Vocation, I'm in a twilight zone
Vocation, all I've ever wanted
Vocation, have to find my way
Vocation, floundering on my own

—by Mic Elvenstar



stoneware pottery by Jim Lay (photo by Elsa Lafferty)

"Fathoming" *continued from page 3*

Having assessed our gifts, Rebecca Parker poses the second and more significant of Life's big questions. She challenges us not just to say who we are, what engages us, what gifts we possess—but then to decide "What will you do with your gifts?"

Here she acknowledges possibility, or potential, only has value if particular choices are made, particular steps are taken, unique gifts are enacted in the name of something more expansive, more just, more loving.

"What will you do with your gifts?" Recognizing that it is possible to make narrow, repressive, even oppressive choices, Rebecca Parker offers our liberating religion's compelling call: "Choose to bless the world."

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: April - Stewardship of the Earth; May - Beacon/Witness; June - Religion. 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 UCC professional staff – will review all submissions and contact the authors regarding suitability for publication.

Please send submissions to
uucc@uuccharlotte.org

Craig Miller

When he joined our congregation, Craig Miller knew just one person. He found volunteering a great way to get to know other members, make friends and build bonds while working for a common cause. And he thinks that as members, we need to support our congregation with whatever talent or calling we have and find a way to get involved. You get back what you give, he says. It might not be obvious, but you do.



Craig Miller

One of the reasons Craig joined the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte was to be part of a community committed to social justice work. Right away, he volunteered with Room in the Inn, the Urban Ministry program through which our congregation houses and feeds homeless neighbors. Not long after, Craig decided he wanted to give more. He became our congregation's Coordinator for the program. Though no longer Coordinator, Craig continues to volunteer with Room in the Inn.

Craig's next leadership role was serving on the Social Justice Team, and chairing the Team for two years. He enjoyed collaborating with other team members and with our minister, Jay Leach, considering how we can have the greatest impact. While on the Team, he co-chaired our most recent Social Justice Auction. Craig concedes it was a ton of work – and that it was all worth it to see the money raised then donated to organizations making a real difference in our community. Meeting lots of different people while organizing the event was fun, Craig says. He also expresses appreciation for the many volunteers and attendees who contributed to the event's success.

During his 5 ½ years of membership, Craig has provided Men's Shelter meals and worked on Habitat for Humanity builds as well. He occasionally assists the current Social Justice Team. Within the past year, he started a new role as a member

of our Security Patrol, helping to ensure our safety on Sunday mornings. He's also thinking about what other ways he can volunteer next.

Craig thinks of himself as someone who has been afforded many privileges. It is important to him to use his life for good, to work to leave the world better. For him, it's not just about how other people benefit from his volunteering; these efforts bring fulfillment for Craig too. Social justice work in particular gives him a different perspective, leaves him with gratitude and reminds him how much he has. It is important to step out of our comfort zones and challenge ourselves in that way, Craig thinks.



Jane Goodall ink drawing, by Beth Mussay

Above & Beyond

Barry Ahrendt played the role of editor-in-chief when we were developing the new UUC Charlotte website, and continues to provide assistance on website-related issues. Most recently he wrote the "Baking Up the Budget Pie" video, with assistance from Loyd Dillon, and then he directed and recorded it. (Belinda Saling Parry did the editing.) Barry has served as the chair of the Communications Team for the last two years and in that role has made major contributions to other projects as well as keeping the team well-supplied with chocolate, his very successful strategy to keep both attendance and morale high at team meetings.



Barry Ahrendt

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS



Margaret Howe-Soper

Margaret Howe-Soper

“I was born and raised in Massachusetts, lived all over the United States and moved to Charlotte in 2013 to be near my grandchildren. I retired from being in municipal management and a librarian. I like to read, travel, sail and do needlework.”



Lorraine & Emma Miller

Emma Miller

“I am the mother of an amazing three year old, Lorraine. I teach high school special education. I am also from Charlotte and went to Open Door School in the 1980s.”



Erin MacNab



Rob MacNab

Rob & Erin MacNab

“We live in Oakhurst with our two beautiful boys, Sam and Eli. We enjoy all types of outdoor activities,

cooking, and meeting new people. We are very much looking forward to connecting and branching out among this church.”

Anne & Evan Magnuson

“We moved here from Louisiana in late 2015. Evan, originally from Iowa, is a retired engineer and scoutmaster who enjoys Spanish and astronomy, and is currently rebuilding strength following lymphoma stem cell transplant treatment. Anne worked in policy planning and funding for disadvantaged communities and the homeless, served as a Presbyterian deacon, and has for many years been immersed in mystical spiritual studies. We are most grateful to find a church that unites our family and so deeply blesses its congregation and community.”



Evan & Anne Magnuson

Brenda Nixon

“I have been a resident of Charlotte for 16 years and divorced for 20 years. I have a daughter who got married last year and they have two children. I work for Deloitte as an Administrative Assistant.”



Brenda Nixon



David Reynolds

David Reynolds

“I am from Mint Hill, North Carolina. I grew up in the True Light Church of Christ and left after the world didn't end in 2001. I draw inspiration from eastern religions and have traveled to every continent except Antarctica.”

Danny & Rebecca Rose

“We recently moved from Pearl, Mississippi to Rock Hill, South Carolina due to a job relocation. Neither of us has a background in Unitarian Universalism, but have found a home here.”



Rebecca & Danny Rose

FOR FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

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

BOOKS:

Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation, by Parker Palmer, 1999
Widening Circles, by Joanna Macy, 2001
What Should I Do with My Life, by Po Bronson, 2005
What Should I Do With the Rest of My Life, by Bruce Frankel, 2010
Your Life on Purpose, by Matthew McKay, John P. Forsyth, George H. Eifert, 2010
Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good, by Steven Garber, 2014
My Life on the Road, by Gloria Steinem, 2015

4 Years-Grade 4

To Be an Artist, by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko, 2004
What Is My Song?, by Dennis Linn, 2005
Barnum Brown - Dinosaur Hunter, by David Sheldon, 2006
Snowflake Bentley, by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, 2009
Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World, by Laurie Lawlor, 2014

Grades 4-7

Amelia to Zora: Twenty-Six Women Who Changed the World, by Cynthia Chin-Lee, 2008

Grades 6+

The Hunger Games Trilogy, by Suzanne Collins, 2010+
Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry, 2011
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, by C.S. Lewis, 1950

MOVIES:

Beat Street, 1984 (PG)
Dead Poets Society, 1989 (PG)
Glory, 1989 (R)
Hilary and Jackie, 1989 (R)
Dead Man Walking, 1995 (R)
Contact, 1997 (PG)
The Green Mile, 1999 (R)
Iqbal, 2005 (not rated)
The World's Fastest Indian, 2005 (PG-13)
The Pursuit of Happyness, 2006 (PG-13)
3 Idiots, 2009 (PG-13)

SHORT VIDEOS:

Ages 9-Adult

The High Calling: Best of 2014: Five Short Videos That Give You Hope

<http://www.onbeing.org/blog/what-would-you-be-willing-sacrifice/3749>

https://www.ted.com/talks/emilie_wapnick_why_some_of_us_don_t_have_one_true_calling

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS OF ART AND POETRY:

Glenda Bailey-Mershon

Glenda Bailey-Mershon is a poet, essayist, novelist, cultural historian, and activist from the Southern Appalachians who has explored in poetry and fiction the experience of mixed heritage. Her published works include the novel, *Eve's Garden*; *Bird Talk: Poems*; *saconige/blue smoke: Poems from the Southern Appalachians*; *A History of the American Women's Movement: A Study Guide*. She edited four volumes of the *Jane's Stories* anthologies by women writers.



Glenda Bailey-Mershon

Phyllis Bertke

Phyllis has been a passionate amateur photographer since she discovered that experiences are richer if she has a camera nearby, even if she's not taking pictures. Her camera helps keep her present in the smallest of moments.



Phyllis Bertke



Jarod Brown

Jarod Brown

"I created 'Artworks Charlotte' as a way to combine my interest in metal art with 'Automotive International'. I sold my automotive company in 2013, and retired for a brief period before accepting a position as an Automotive Technology teacher for

CMS. My wife/mentor is Justine Busto, and I have a fine son Jaden who is attending Appalachian State University. The young people in the metal silhouettes are dear neighbor friends, Justine is with our dog Bentley."

Mic Elvenstar

Though he wears the guise of a speech language pathologist in the real world, anyone familiar with the UCC Follies has seen the results of Mic's creative writing, performing and directing for the past twenty years. Mic considers himself a humorist and likes to remind audiences of the importance of laughter through the expression of his own particularly skewed take on life.



Mic Elvenstar

Jim Lay

"I started throwing pots in high school, and was an art major at Winthrop University where ceramics was my interest. I got my secondary education teaching certificate upon graduation, and taught art in the Charlotte Mecklenburg schools for five years, where I was able to share my love for ceramics with junior high students. I was also active in Clayworks, a non-profit organization dedicated to the art of ceramics through classes, studio space rental and workshops. I have been out of making pots for many years, but have always wanted to get back into 'throwing mud'."



Jim Lay

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS OF ART AND POETRY:

Beth Mussay

Beth Mussay is a painter and illustrator originally from Indianapolis. She feels proud and lucky to come from a family of compassionate, politically conscious musicians. Beth is inspired by the beauty and complexity of people and the natural world. She aspires to contribute to the global political and artistic conversation happening at this unique time in history. Beth currently lives and works in Waxhaw, North Carolina where she takes care of her kids, works on her green thumb, and does portrait commissions.



Beth Mussay

Belinda Saling Parry

Belinda was encouraged from an early age to create and continues to enjoy writing, making music, painting, baking, and sewing. Her most recent creative path has led her to take up the ukulele. The landscape seen in this issue was painted during one of her grandfather's Saturday morning art classes when Belinda was in the 2nd grade. Her grandfather was the curator of the Fine Art competition and exhibit at the Ohio State Fair and included this painting in the show.



Belinda Saling Parry, age 9

Liza Parks

"I am 14 years old and currently attend East Mecklenburg High School. I've been going to the UCC since age four, and I've been doing art since before then. It started out as a hobby, and I enjoyed doing it as a past time. I use art as an outlet for self-expression and a way to convey emotions that can't be voiced. Typically I try and create

work that illustrates a subliminal message; whether it be personal, concerning the world around me, or simply just a way to get my ideas out onto a canvas. Though I have a strong foundation with traditional art, I've been experimenting with digital art (using programs such as Photoshop, SAI, or GIMP.) Art is both a calling and a passion of mine. I hope you enjoy my work!"



Liza Parks

SOUNDINGS

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 9 AM - 5 PM

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