



THE BEACON

A Voice for Liberal Religion in Southeastern North Carolina



Embrace the soul of winter solstice

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Office Hours

MINISTER

REV. CHERYL M. WALKER

TUESDAY 11AM – 4PM

WEDNESDAY 11AM – 4PM

THURSDAY 11AM – 4PM

AND BY APPOINTMENT

DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

LESLIE O’CONNOR

MONDAY 10:30AM - 3:30PM

WEDNESDAY 10:30AM - 3:30PM

THURSDAY 10:30AM - 3:30PM

ADMINISTRATOR

JULIE BURCHAM

TUESDAY 9AM – 2PM

WEDNESDAY 9AM – 2PM

THURSDAY 9AM – 2PM

FRIDAY 9AM – 2PM

December Worship Schedule	
Dec. 6	Rev. Cheryl
Dec. 13	Rev. Cheryl
Dec. 20	Rev. Cheryl
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Service
Dec. 27	Worship Team



*Subject to change - please call ahead

GOODBYE AND GOOD RIDDANCE – REV. CHERYL M. WALKER

I've never been more happy to say goodbye to a year than I am to see this one go. Overall, it was pretty horrible. Not everything was bad, but the things that were bad were so bad they overshadowed any of the good things. Years from now when I look back on 2020 the first thing that will pop into my head will not be the fact that Elizabeth and I got married; that's how bad it is. We are still in the midst of a pandemic that has, so far, killed over a 1.5 million people worldwide, and over a quarter of a million people in the United States. Because of the pandemic we were forced to stay at home, and we could not gather in groups of more than ten people, which meant we had to go on-line for our worship. We have had to reinvent the church, and so much of the personal nature of congregational life has been lost. Zoom is a poor substitute for 3-dimensional physical contact with other human beings.

The pandemic has also meant economic hardships for so many people who lost their employment. We see long lines of people waiting hours for food because they have no other choice. And the economic hardship hit members of our congregation. We are not immune. It also meant that our budget will reflect a deficit for the first time in a long time. Fortunately, we saved over the years for a rainy day, so we have an umbrella, and it's pouring. We will get through this moment as a congregation, but so many people will keep struggling to get through daily living.

If the pandemic were the only thing we remember about 2020 it would be enough. But there was more. The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others sparked demonstrations and unrest across the land. That people took to the streets to demand change was a good thing, that it took the deaths of more Black people at the hands of the police was not. Perhaps there is still hope that 2020 was the beginning of the end of white supremacy culture in the United States, but for now 2020 will be remembered for white supremacy culture being starkly exhibited and supported by so many people, including the current-but-not-for-long occupant of the White House. We are a divided nation and our divisions go deep.

And this year, we said goodbye to some dear friends: Gary Dunton, Tim Gugan, Max Feinbloom, Terri Mawson, Tom Stibbe and Barbara VanDuyne and Charlie West. And because of the pandemic we were not able to celebrate their lives in person, instead we gathered together with people far and wide to pay our final respects. And in a year with so much heartache our hearts broke more.

So, I say goodbye and good riddance to 2020 and hope that 2021 will be a better year. I hope that next year will see an end to the restrictions of the pandemic and we will be back together again in person in our church home. I hope that we will have learned many lessons from this year and will begin to repair the breach in our country. I hope that the economy will recover and the millions of people who lost their jobs will find gainful employment. I hope that this time next year we will remember 2021 as the year we recovered from the nightmare of 2020. We will remember 2020 as the year that our faith was tested, and we remained faithful to the beliefs that we hold true. That we can build a better world, that there is goodness in humanity, that we are resilient, that we can evolve, and that love is still the most powerful force in the universe.

Love, Rev. Cheryl

INAUGURATION DAY

Thanksgiving is over and we now reset our focus to Christmas and to the new year that promises so much hope and relief. We will be observing our national thanksgiving on January 20th, Inauguration Day. We will celebrate a change in national leadership in a ceremony that has been practiced for over 200 years. By most definitions, that would make the presidential inauguration a national *ritual*. We Americans have a few of those, and we have watched over the past four years with increasing concern as each one has been threatened in some fundamental way by the current administration.

Yes, January 20th will be a day of hope, but that hope will be fulfilled only if we are diligent and work tirelessly to renew the unwritten social contract that supports the values of our nation. It was not enough to just *vote*. We will not wake up on January 21st with everything *fixed*, as if the last four years were simply a bad dream and never really happened. We must dedicate ourselves to the necessary work of democracy to move our country and ourselves closer to justice and peace. The presidential race was a close one; it was not a landslide win for Biden as many of us assumed or hoped it would be. We must never lose sight of the fact that fully half of our fellow citizens *actually supported the values and actions of the current administration*, and we must double down on our efforts of outreach and education.

So, as we approach the waning days of this administration, we are tempted to sprint to the finish line and then heave a great sigh of relief. But we must pace ourselves in the coming weeks, practice self-care and focus thoughts on the tasks ahead. January 20th is the end of this administration. But it is also the beginning of our work to make the future a better one for everyone. So, rest up. We are going to be busy.

Shalom,

Leslie O'Connor

Lifespan Religious Education Director



TIS JUST WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

by Cornelia Maxted
Secretary, Board of Trustees

As we near the end of 2020, I've been thinking back about this very odd year with all of its difficulties, but also recognizing we've squeezed some lemons to make lemonade.



Our congregation hums along with doors virtually wide open and two busy Zoom rooms full of activities. The Board of Trustees has six new members and at least that many topics are being worked on. Kudos to Reverend Cheryl and the extended worship team who quickly learned a whole new way of doing. And once they mastered the basics got going on making Sunday service experiences even more engaging with beautiful imagery, music, uplifting videos, chatting, and coffee time. Then they added on technology that allows us to again reach beyond our doors through Share the Plate.

While many of us are on hiatus from volunteering time in the old familiar ways, we haven't stopped sharing and caring and participating in the community by generously contributing from our wallets. Please take a small moment to read some huge thanks that show how important our contributions are to so many.

“Because of your generosity, we were able to purchase tents, bus passes, supplies for meal sharing, and offset prescription costs for our friends experiencing poverty.” – Walking Tall Wilmington

“Support such as yours is incredibly important to our work protecting and restoring the coastal environment. Thank you for helping us ensure a healthy and sustainable North Carolina coast.” - North Carolina Coastal Federation

“Your generous donation will ensure that we can care for the most vulnerable in our community.” -Cape Fear Clinic

“Please know that you are making a difference in the lives of survivors, as they start lives free of violence and fear.” -Domestic Violence Shelter and Services

“First Book has an audacious goal: to ensure that all children have the essential resources they need to succeed. We won't stop until that happens. With your generous help, we're one step closer toward making that dream a reality.” -First Book

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I wish you many happy tidings as we find creative ways to stay connected and relevant. So glad to be with y'all for this wild ride!

COMPASSION IN ACTION

By Betsy Randall-David

Compassion has long been a central value for me. But what does compassion actually mean? This definition really resonated: “To be compassionate is to feel deeply for another person as they experience the ups and downs associated with life. To be compassionate is not just to tell someone you care but also show them that you care by being there before they even ask for it. “

As members of the caring committee, we try to live by that definition. During non-pandemic times, the caring committee often gave rides to church or doctor’s appointments, visited people in assisted living facilities and nursing homes, and assisted with shopping for those with mobility concerns. During the pandemic many of us haven’t been comfortable being in cars with others or visiting people inside homes (and many of the facilities we once visited are off-limits to visitors). Yet, we have still remained connected to others through a variety of activities. Caring committee members send condolence cards to those experiencing a loss, recovery cards to those post-surgery/hospitalization and make calls and send cards to those experiencing isolation during this difficult time. Compassion is also expressed through meal brigades (i.e. preparing and delivering food) for those going through treatment or otherwise unable to prepare their own meals during a health crisis.

A lovely addition this month was the organizing and participation in serenades to Don and Thea. These uplifting events demonstrated our love and support for them as they make their difficult journey together. Thank you, Diane and Jill for putting these events together.

Another example of compassionate care is the selfless work that Dan and Karen Gottovi have modeled over many years. They have been the backbone of our congregation and provided decades of dedication to the larger Cape Fear region. A recent Star News article (11/18/20) described their contribution to the establishment of the Lower Cape Fear Life Care (formerly known as hospice) “Both Dr. and Mrs. Gottovi were among the group that helped form a steering committee and then an incorporated non-profit to bring hospice care to the Cape Fear region in 1980. (Cheryl Whitaker, Star News reporter). “They are a team working together to better the community. Whatever they do, they think of the community before themselves. They’re committed to making things better for everyone. They rarely think of what they do as being unusual or praiseworthy; its just part of being a good citizen.” (Jean Rosenberg who funded a statue of a blue heron as a tribute to the vision and work of the Gottovis). The blue heron symbolizes how their vision for hospice care took flight in the community. Thank you, Dan and Karen for modeling compassion in action. We’re glad you are a cornerstone of our UU congregation!

May we all show compassion in our own special ways.



If you need support or assistance, please contact us at caring@uucwnc.org. Kami O’Keeffe is the Caring Committee Chair for December

OUR UU STORY



by Heidi Kaufman, Operations Wellness and Support Team

The Beacon Newsletter is adding something new this year, an opportunity to connect to one another about our path to becoming UUs, what we believe and where that journey has taken us as we live our beliefs in the world.

Many of you have shared these stories with other congregants in groups like QUEST, Chalice Circles and classes like This I Believe. Now is a wonderful opportunity to share them with the whole congregation. During this time of social isolation and distancing we are looking for safe and meaningful ways to connect. This is one wonderful way to do that.

If your story is about *What You Believe* please consider one or more of the following questions:

What were your early religious and other influences?

What informs or influences what you believe now?

Was there a change in your beliefs over time, what were they?

What is it that you believe?

If your story is about *Your Path to UU* please consider one or more of the following questions:

What were your early religious or spiritual influences?

How did you find out about UU?

What or who inspired you on your path to UU?

Were there changes in your spiritual or religious beliefs over time?

Did a change in your thinking or beliefs come from the inside or outside?

Was there anything in your life that sparked an interest in becoming a UU?

If your story is about *Living Your UU Beliefs* in the world (<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>), please consider one or more of the following questions:

What inspired or influenced you to act on your UU beliefs and principles?

How did you act on your beliefs? -taking a stand, being part of movement, actions in everyday life, demonstrating in the streets, communicating to the wider public, working to change legislation etc.

Why was it important to do what you did?

How did others respond? Did their responses matter? Did they influence you in any way?

What did you learn about the experience?

Did the experience change you or your beliefs or perspective in any way?

Submission requirements: please provide a title or theme and who you are. Word length to not exceed 500. We welcome a photograph of you to accompany your story. Please submit your story to Heidi Kaufman at heidika60@gmail.com, Operations Wellness and Support Team.



FULL MOON DECEMBER 2020

December welcomes the Cold Moon, or Long Nights Moon. December 21st is the Winter Solstice. This holiday in the Northern Hemisphere, celebrates the rebirth of the sun and the beginning of winter. It is one of the oldest winter celebrations known.



In China, this celebration is called Dong Zhi (“Winter Arrives”) and welcomes the return of longer days and an increase in positive energy in the year to come. (We can only hope!) Traditional food in Southern China is rice balls known as tang yuan, often brightly colored and cooked in broth. In Northern China, plain or meat-stuffed dumplings are preferred for this celebration. (Information from Sarah Pruitt)

Join us at our December Full Moon Gathering on Tuesday, December 29th at 7:00 pm on Zoom. Kami O will lead our ritual. A Zoom invitation will be sent out prior to that date.

All women of any age are welcomed to these gatherings. If you would like to attend and are not on the mailing list, please contact fullmoon@uucwnc.org for additional information.

UUCWNC YOUTH GROUP

Youth in grades 5-8 are welcome to attend our Youth Group. We meet on Sundays at 11:30 am via zoom. We use the curriculum that is described below, but also we just sit and talk sometimes. Contact your Lifespan Religious Education Director, Leslie O’Connor at leslie@uucwnc.org for more information.



Principled Music takes the student on an overview of songs based around specific themes, like bullying, racism and war. Listening sessions will transition into discussion sessions, and homework will be enjoyable as students search for songs that they like around the same theme. Interspersed with Principled Music will be the 5th Dimension, where students will view classic Twilight Zone episodes and then discuss the philosophical themes as they relate to Unitarian Universalist principles and sources. The sessions will be coherent and build on each other as the songs and Twilight Zone episode selected will share the same theme.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 9:30 AM Worship Rehearsals (Z2) 10:30 AM Sunday Worship (Z2) 11:20 AM UUCWNC Youth Group (Z1)	30 4:00 PM Spiritual Practice (Z1)	1 5:00 PM Congregational Meeting Rehearsal (Z2) 5:30 PM SJAG (O)	2 5:15 PM OW&S (Z1)	3	4 9:00 AM Weekly Cleaning	5 10:00 AM SSC - Parking Lot 4:00 PM Worship Rehearsals (Z2)
6 9:30 AM Worship Rehearsals (Z2) 10:30 AM Sunday Worship (Z2) 11:20 AM UUCWNC Youth Group (Z1)	7 4:00 PM Spiritual Practice (Z1) 5:00 PM Program Council (Z2)	8 1:00 PM ROMEO Lunch (O) 5:30 PM GLT (Z1)	9 6:00 PM Worship Team Meeting (Z1)	10	11 9:00 AM Weekly Cleaning	12 4:00 PM Worship Rehearsals (Z2)
13 9:30 AM Worship Rehearsals (Z2) 10:30 AM Sunday Worship (Z2) 11:20 AM UUCWNC Youth Group (Z1) 12:00 PM Quest (Z2)	14 4:00 PM Spiritual Practice (Z1)	15 4:00 PM Exec Committee Meeting (Z1) 5:30 PM SJAG (O)	16 5:00 PM Connections (Z1)	17 4:00 PM Connections (Z1)	18 9:00 AM Weekly Cleaning 1:00 PM JUULIETs Lunch (Z)	19 4:00 PM Worship Rehearsals (Z2)
20 9:30 AM Worship Rehearsals (Z2) 10:30 AM Sunday Worship (Z2) 11:20 AM UUCWNC Youth Group (Z1) 12:00 PM Quest (Z2)	21 2:00 PM Poetry Group (Z1) 4:00 PM Spiritual Practice (Z1)	22 1:00 PM ROMEO Lunch (O) 5:00 PM BOT (Z1)	23	24 8:00 AM Weekly Cleaning 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 OFFICE CLOSED	26 4:00 PM Worship Rehearsals (Z2)
27 9:30 AM Worship Rehearsals (Z2) 10:30 AM Sunday Worship (Z2) 11:20 AM UUCWNC Youth Group (Z1) 12:00 PM Quest (Z2)	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30 OFFICE CLOSED	31 OFFICE CLOSED	1 OFFICE CLOSED 9:00 AM Weekly Cleaning	2 4:00 PM Worship Rehearsals (Z2)

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