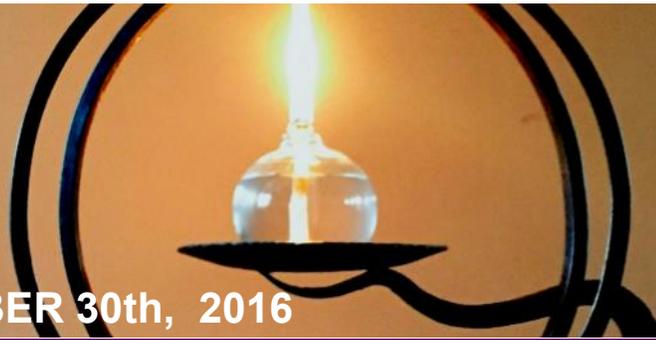


UUTC UPDATE

DECEMBER 30th, 2016



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY

A WELCOMING CONGREGATION

CO-CREATORS TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT

by Rev. Ian White Maher

Sunday, January 1st at 11:00am

In a post-secular culture—that is, a culture that has embraced secularism, but is now in search of its spiritual voice—our familiarity with particular theological ideas has been degraded. And some topics, like grace, particularly in progressive religious communities, have almost disappeared. But maybe our problem with grace, as we understand it, has to do with a misunderstanding of God.

Join us for coffee at 10:30am before the service.

Our UUTC Mitten Tree gathered 47 hats, 45 pairs of socks, 11 items of underwear, 37 gloves and mittens and 25 scarves. These 165 items were donated to The Sharing House, Bread of Life and El Centro. Thank you for your generosity!

I do not at all understand
the mystery of grace –
only that it meets us where we are
but does not leave us where it found us.

ANNE LAMOTT

NEXT WEEK at UUTC

Growing Younger — Mon 1/2 @ 11:00am

Men's Group – Tues 1/3 @ 9:00am

Eclectics Jam — Wed 1/4 @ 9:30am

Team Meeting Night — Wed 1/4 @ 5:00pm

Women's Group — Thurs 1/5 @ 12:30pm

Drum Circle — Thurs 1/5 @ 7:00pm

Living the Tao — Fri 1/6 @ 10:30am

MEMBERSHIP MENU 2017

- January 1st: **Happy New Year! Souper Sunday on Hiatus. Returns Feb 5th.**
- January 15th: Welcoming Ceremony for Fall 2016 New Members during first service.
- January 21st: Members and Friends Photo Session with Mark and Barbi. A Saturday morning in the Sanctuary. **Contact Barbi: 910.392.7045**
- April 1st (No Joke) Spring Prospective Member Class, a Saturday with Ian, staff, and UUTC leaders. Lunch and Childcare. Contact membership@uutc.org. Fall class date is October 7th.
- April 16th: Easter and Spring Signings and Welcoming Ceremony. Contact membership@uutc.org. Fall date is October 15th.

JAN. WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY FOCUSES ON WORLDWIDE REFUGEE CRISIS

Wednesday, January 11th—5:30pm dinner, 6:30pm program: With global conflicts raging, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, the world is experiencing the displacement and migration of millions of people on a scale not seen since World War II. With many European countries closing their borders, thousands of these migrants have made their way to northern France in hopes of gaining asylum in the United Kingdom.

Our own Bobby King has just returned from a one month volunteer stint working with migrants in the Calais-Dunkirk region of northern France. At the January 11th Wonderful Wednesday dinner and program, he will give a presentation that will include an overview of the events that led to this crisis and what is being done by France and other European nations to deal with it. His focus will be on the grassroots efforts to alleviate the suffering of homeless migrants in Calais and those living in a temporary refugee camp in Dunkirk.

Bobby King is a former Executive Director of Refugee Family Services, providing social services, employment opportunities, health education, women's services and youth services to refugees living in the metropolitan Atlanta area. He also worked with Georgia Piedmont Technical College, where he served as an English as a Second Language instructor. Since his retirement in 2008, Bobby has worked as a fulltime volunteer with The International Rescue Committee.

You are cordially invited to attend the January 11th Wonderful Wednesday event. The dinner opens at 5:30, followed by the program at 6:30. **Dinner reservations are necessary and may be made through the church office or the sign-up sheet at the office desk.** There is no charge for the dinner, but donations are gratefully received.

END OF YEAR GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

The Social Action Team is not presenting UUTC with a specific December organization to support; instead, we are suggesting three agencies to which you might wish to contribute. The first is local; the others are national and international.

[Free Rein](#) - uses horses in therapeutic riding in Transylvania County for children and adults with autism, ADHD, physical limitations, and other disabilities. Local Contact: [Peg Hall](#) 828-553-7541

Oxford Picture Dictionary for Refugees. (\$20-25/dictionary, but contributions of any amount are welcome). The sponsoring organization is **Friends of Refugees**. **RFL - books** can be written in the memo line. Checks can be mailed to: Bobby King , 235 Little Egypt Rd., Brevard, NC 28712

[Free Wheelchair Mission](#) - provides wheelchairs for the impoverished disabled in developing nations. Local Contact: [Jim Hardy](#) 828-862-6969

WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

The mid-day Women's Group will meet **Thursday January 5** in the social hall at 12:30 pm to enjoy a bag lunch and socialize. Discussion begins at 1:00 pm. The topic this month will center around current events and areas of concern as we move into the new year. All UU women, friends and especially newcomers are welcome.

If you have questions contact JoAnn Crawford at 877-5344.



THE ART OF BEING—NEW CLASS FORMING

UUTC Adult Religious Exploration is pleased to announce the re-launch of “The Art of Being” under the leadership of Hilly Bernard. “The Art of Being” is a course designed to help participants create a life of peace and passion by doing such things as resolving internal conflict, improving relationships, increasing personal power and enhancing joy. **This guided conversation is open to newcomers and prior participants and is limited to 12 participants.** “The Art of Being” will meet on Wednesday afternoons from 2-4:00PM beginning on January 11, 2017.

A sign-up sheet is available at the front desk at UUTC.

AMAZING GRACE

When I arrived, almost four months ago now, I said I was here to offer you two things:

- To serve as a mirror to help you better see your behaviors and patterns in order to help you get ready for your next minister
- To provide high-quality worship

Next week, I have a mirror piece for you. But this week I want to talk about worship.

For the month of January we will be exploring the spiritual competency of Grace. This is one of my favorite theological concepts to wrestle with, in no small part, because UUs often dismiss it out of hand. Having given up (and rightly so) on the Calvinist notions of sin and election, we also tossed out grace. After all, why would we need it if we no longer believed in ourselves as undeserving sinners? And, in short, we don't. We don't need that kind of grace anyway. But is there another understanding of grace that might be worth exploring? And is it possible for us to admit that we might not be able solve all of our problems, particularly our spiritual problems, on our own? Is there another opportunity to explore what grace might mean here?

One of the ways we'll explore grace as a spiritual competency is through the well worn hymn *Amazing Grace*. Many of you know this hymn by heart. Most of you probably have a warm feeling towards the hymn in general, but get a theological hiccup when it comes to singing the word 'wretch.' The grey hymnal goes so far as to offer 'soul' as an alternative to 'wretch.' But this month we will sing the wretch version not because we are unrepentant and unredeemable (aside from grace) but because I think there is something equally wrong with pretending there is no sin in the world.

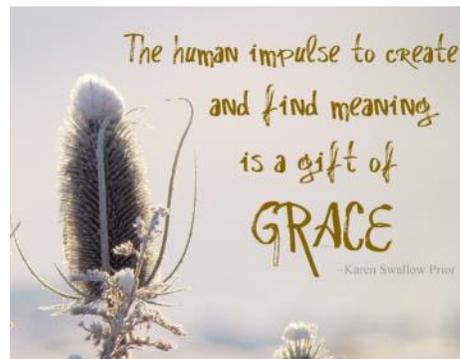
I don't believe we are born sinners due to Adam and Eve's transgressions, but neither do I look at the mountains of plastic, the racism, sexism, and homophobia, the endless war and military industrial complexes, the...list goes on....and not see sin. Nor am I able to look over my life and not recognize times when I have, indeed, been a wretch. I am not perfect. There have been times I have hurt others. I'm not proud of this, but I don't find benefit in denying it either.

And there is a lot more in this hymn than just that one word, even if it is what gets most of the attention.

Because *Amazing Grace* is so well known to us, we often fall into a familiar pattern and don't think too deeply about what we are singing. For this reason, we'll be using some of the tools Ignatius developed using [*lectio divina*](#), the process of listening for the sacred in scripture.

continued from page 4

Some of you may be wondering if I have lost my mind recommending a practice used for reading the Bible. But what I'm really recommending is a practice for sacred listening. Can you hear the living word? Can you hear the Divine coming through text in new and perhaps surprising ways?

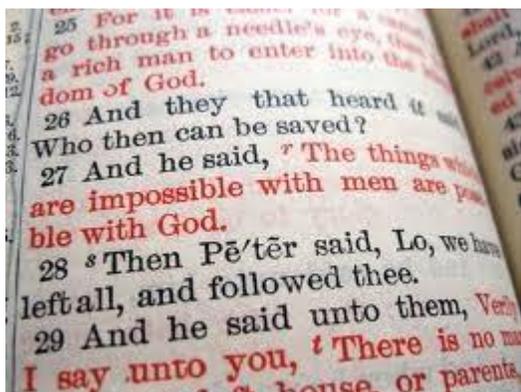


Now, *Amazing Grace* is not scripture, not in the traditional sense anyway, but it has plenty for us to wrestle with and our challenge will be to see if we might be able to hear something new. For this reason we are going to sing it five different ways over the month of January. Your challenge is to listen and discern what it is you are really hearing. Is this just an old familiar hymn? Is there a new lesson revealing itself to you?

I am excited to explore the spiritual competency of grace with you this month. Let's see what shows up.

Peace, Ian

FOLLOWING JESUS IS THE THEME FOR UUTC CHRISTIANS IN EXILE



UUTC has a unique group for any who seek to be followers of Jesus. Many of us (but not all) grew up in traditional Christianity but no longer find it to be adequate for our personal growth. We call ourselves "Christians in Exile" because we have voluntarily chosen a better route to being "followers of Jesus." Our goal is to explore the wisdom of the human being, Jesus of Nazareth, and apply that wisdom to our individual daily lives. We meet at the church the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 3:30 to 5:00. Everyone is welcome.

A new session begins Monday, January 9th. We will explore "The Jesus Textbook." It is the collected wisdom sayings of Jesus and is embedded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Over the next few months, we will examine together these wisdom sayings and discuss what they mean to us. Rev. Earle Rabb and Rev. Jean Rowe will facilitate these sessions.

There is no advance study needed to participate in exploration of "The Jesus Textbook." If you are interested in discovering what "Christians in Exile" is all about, January 9th is a good time to begin.

SOCIAL JUSTICE OUTREACH FOR JANUARY—THE HAVEN

The Haven is a shelter for homeless families and individuals. Our mission is to provide safe refuge for families and individuals experiencing homelessness, to work toward prevention of homelessness, and to provide support to individuals and families toward reaching self-sufficiency. We provide deposit support and ongoing case management for individuals and families going into permanent housing. We work with partner agencies in the community toward the goal of preventing long-term homelessness and promoting sustainable outcomes for our residents.

The Haven has two buildings: an 18-bed shelter for youth and adults and a four-bedroom house to serve families with children. The need for homeless families in this county is great, reflected in the fact that the Haven Family House always has a waiting list. In fact, the number of families on the waiting list is typically enough to fill both shelters. Thus, a goal for the future of The Haven is to expand its physical capacity to serve families.

The Haven has housed both newborns and the elderly. Our oldest resident was in his 80s! Sure, some folks we serve may fit your stereotype of the homeless, that is to say, the television image of the disheveled man on with a shopping cart and a collection of newspapers to use for warmth. The real truth is that most people we serve look like you, your kids, your parents, your friends, your loved ones... and those folks who fit that television image when they arrived do not look like that for long.

So perhaps a more interesting statistic would not be the ages of people The Haven has served, but the variety of walks of life they have come from. The Haven has served an investment banker, a registered nurse, and people with PhDs and GEDs. One of the hardest things we must overcome is the shame proud people feel for coming to this place... but the fact is, proven by the stock market crash that led to the Great Recession, we are all one event away from homelessness. So we praise our residents for their courage to overcome their pride and ask for help.

Your gift this month will enable The Haven to serve our fellow citizens in Transylvania County - individuals and families with children who have no warm bed or place to call home. If you would like to help in a more personal way, please consider volunteering for an occasional shift at The Haven or offering to donate prepared or non-perishable food and supplies.

Thank You,

Mark Fields, Director

The Haven of Transylvania County, admin@HavenofTC.org



2016. WHAT. A. YEAR!

In **January**, Peg Hall was President of the Board of Trustees, and she reminded us to “Aim with your heart....Adjust your mind....Be honest in your endeavors” as we moved through some of the changes instituted by our new governing structure. Our Governance/Ministry Advisory Council (GMAC) formed in January. We voted in our Settled Ministerial Search Task Force. 36% (now 42%!) of our newsletter readers were accessing the newsletter from a mobile device. A building use



Rev. Ian White Maher and Rev. Jean Rowe with Rev. William Barber at Moral Monday in Raleigh.



survey was completed by a ton of folks. Cadence Catherine Renner was dedicated! We amended our Bylaws to permit us to host revenue-generating events. Our Congregational Meeting drew 60 Members (WAY over Quorum), but our alarm system was misbehaving. If only our technology was as well-behaved as our membership.

In **February**, we heard from Carol Moore after her journey on the Camino De Santiago. A new Stewardship Team launched. Mission & Vision kicked off with a workshop with the UUA's Marguerite Mills. Drew Maciula made us notice that it was awkward for fathers to change diapers in the women's restroom. We installed our “live stream” of services to the front office. Our average website audience size was 332 —a number that has grown to 562. Pretty Little Goat brought the kids and the potluck to a hugely successful young families evening!

In **March**, Wonderful Wednesdays returned, and Fellowship on Tap debuted! The carpets were cleaned. (*That shouldn't be news, but it was!*) GMAC suggested TEAM MEETING NIGHT. Interim Minister Paula Gable emphasized the importance of sending members annually to SUULE, and we initiated CPR & First Aid Training for our childcare staff.

Our first Team Meeting Night kicked off in **April**. Softball recruitments began for church league softball, and CRE programming grew by leaps and bounds. At Fellowship on Tap, with the ChubWagon out of action, it took us an hour to figure out we could order pizza. (*Not one of our more enlightened moments...*) Our Living Wage Employer Certification was renewed. Mountain Sun &

UUTC *continued from page 7...*

hosted a positive parenting class.

In **May**, UUTC hosted a VERY well attended Day of Mindfulness. We played our first softball game of the season (*and lost, but is that really important?*), and we voted on Social Action agencies to support with our gifts for the fiscal year. We held a budget forum and a Congregational Meeting (passing a balanced budget of \$234,886), and found—and then lost—an Interim Minister to follow Paula.

Our final month of the fiscal year, **June**, saw long-time CRE Teacher Emily Atkinson stepping back from her duties to pursue National Board Certification. The annual Sunday Youth-Led service played to a packed house as we bid adieu to graduate Emily Holshouser and NC School of Science and Math recruit Sara Rain Tree. Incoming Board President Gary Kendrick encouraged the establishment of a Sponsored Projects Fund to assist with some of the capital investments we needed to make. On June 20th, in church league softball, WE WON A GAME.

In **July**, we implemented the Big Check method of documenting our gifts to Social Justice Outreach agencies—Sharing House, fittingly, was the first to receive one of these Big Checks. Donations poured into the Sponsored Project fund—totaling \$23,634—allowing us to begin checking things off the deferred maintenance list. A new faucet went into the kitchen, leading to a movement that eventually replaced all our appliances with more energy efficient models. UUTC teamed up with the NAACP on a Get Out the Vote grant and secured \$500 from the Fund for UU Social Responsibility.

August unveiled our first ever Chalice Children, in addition to our regular Chalice Camp —and we had piles of children for two weeks! More people than ever were using the Church Life app on their



smartphones to reach fellow Members of UUTC. Our softball team won the Sportsmanship Trophy (unanimous decision by all teams), having demonstrated UU values the entire season. ALL the bugs got blown out of the upgraded alarm system, new furniture went into the minister's office, work began on the kitchen and the Board approved the installation of a bicycle rack.

In **September**, Rev. Ian White Maher became our second interim minister. We had a campus-cleanup day to repaint, clean tables and chairs and secure large

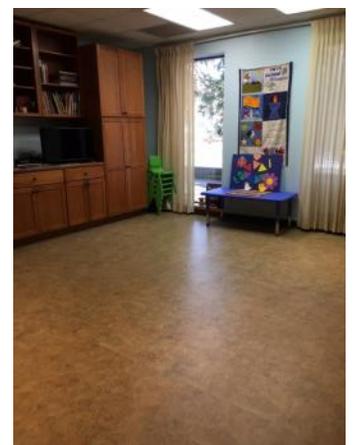


outstanding Fall Picnic, organized by Jean Bullivant, Vicki Held, Nancy Potter and Ann Rabb, with many others assisting.

In **October**, Annie Burgess joined the staff as a CRE Teacher as we expanded to two classes to accommodate all our youngsters! Our sidewalk updates/repairs were completed and we began the transition to LED bulbs for our exterior lighting.

November brought the fall Youth Cons, the installation of our large classroom cabinetry and technology updates to the classroom and the office. A certain election led to forums with our larger community to express in print our support of all people as a loving community and condemnation of hateful words and actions. A special Congregational Meeting was called to pursue the purchase of property adjoining ours. Formal discussion about our support of vulnerable populations began, with a Forum on the topic called to follow the Congregational Meeting.

In **December**, we completed installation of new flooring in the classrooms and purged years of “this could be useful” from our closets. A number of us showed up at the courthouse to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, or assisted in moving a family from their home to get them away from bullying neighbors. We voted (unanimously) to purchase property! Our parking lot lights were updated! Fellowship on Tap moved to the warmth of Magpie Meat & Three to great acclaim. The Board voted to install a rainbow element to our sign, along with less vague language of “welcoming” in the newspaper and on our website as first steps in being better allies to vulnerable populations. Our First Annual Solstice Service was held, in addition to two Christmas Eve services—good attendance at all!



An excellent, diverse, progressive year, in many respects. Happy New Year to all!



"We are the certain and the seeking, the lifers and the newcomers, the beloved and the brokenhearted, the insiders and the rejected, all of whom have found a home in the extraordinary, yet intimate, communities of Unitarian Universalism."

Melissa Harris-Perry, MSNBC Host

Our mission is to create a community that encourages free spiritual discovery and growth, celebrates personal and religious diversity, and promotes active, responsible involvement in the larger community.

Inclusive. Intentional. INVOLVED.



Read the latest UUA Southern Region Newsletter [HERE!](#)



SOUTHERN REGION

KEEP UP WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

VIEW our [church calendar](#). This is the calendar which has ALL events.

For previous issues of the UU Update, click [HERE](#).

SEND news for this newsletter by 10:00am on Wednesdays.

CONTACT US

Our Minister is Rev. Ian White Maher. Reach him at ian@uutc.org or by calling (877) 510-5603.

Church office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until noon and by appointment. The church telephone number is 828-877-6121. Our mailing address is UUTC, PO Box 918, Brevard, NC 28712. Our website is www.uutc.org. Our church is located at 24 Varsity Street, at the corner of South Broad Street in Brevard. Our email address is admin@uutc.org.