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TO THE GLORY OF LIFE

Dear Friends,

By now most of you have probably heard the news that I will conclude my ministry here at UUMAN and return with Liz to California to be closer to my family. You probably heard by letter—or email or a recorded message. I apologize for that. The need to convey the news quickly and broadly, I’m afraid, meant that it had to be disseminated rather impersonally. It would have been nicer to sit down and have a chance to talk all of you individually but, of course, that was not possible.

Since this past weekend, when the news came out, I have had a chance to talk with some of you about what needs went into the decision—and what feelings come out of it as well. I am finding these conversations surprisingly helpful; and powerful; and important. Here are some of the things that are coming up in these conversations.

Some of what I’ve heard from others is sadness. Or surprise. Or disappointment. I have heard about some uncertainty or anxiety about what happens next. I also appreciate those who have come to me with other feelings: hurt or anger or feelings of betrayal.

I understand these feelings—especially some of the latter ones I mentioned. Those were the kind of feelings I had when my minister announced he was leaving the church I attended when I was ten. I wasn’t able to tell him about my upset because I didn’t have the words—or the clarity. And I didn’t know how to

take the risk. And so I carried it with me until I could let it go. Which was a long time. And in that time, I missed out on a lot of other relationships that had something to offer me. I couldn’t take what they were wanting to give, because I was already holding on to something else.

But there are other reasons these conversations are important—that is to share with you the feelings I hold as a result of the time I’ve spent here - to let you know how you have affected me.

I am tremendously sad to be leaving. I will miss this place—and I will miss the people who have made this place what it is—very much. I am very happy and proud of some of the things we have done. But sometimes I am also plagued with sadness about leaving things undone. Sorting through unrealized hopes. Or connections that didn’t go as deep I was expecting. There are parts of the work here where I don’t feel like I did my best—parts where I ran into things I didn’t know how, or what, to do. There are places where I am afraid I disappointed people I admire or fell short of expectations. I am not looking to be reassured. But to be clear. To be honest. And connect on levels of honesty that elude those who simply reassure.

I would also say that I am excited about going to a new church and all the possibilities that arise from that. But, to be honest, I am also sometimes worried that this new church will not measure up—that the people won’t be as warm or the energy won’t be as strong or the potential be as great. Of course, the only way to find out is if I go there with an



Happenings

Our “Grounds for Celebration” Plant Sale April 21 & 22

Come scope out a copious variety of perennials, bulbs, and vines, with proceeds to benefit UUMAN's grounds.

Along with the sale will be demonstrations including how-tos for:

- Composting
- Organic vegetable garden
- Butterfly & herb garden
- Xeriscaping

Sat. **April 21**, 9am-noon

Sun. **April 22**, after services

Smart Gardener's Tip:
Come early for the best selection.

Potluck Dinners

Every Thursday evening at around 6-6:30 people arrive at UUMAN's Fellowship Hall for a weekly pot luck, fun and fellowship. Come and indulge!

if u kn rd ths

You may have had communication skilz in search of an outlet. A new UUMAN Communications Committee is forming. To learn more, email us at: communications@uuman.org

open heart and open mind. And, I suspect, that the only way to welcome the best of what happens at UUMAN after I'm gone is if you have an open heart and open mind. That means me letting go of what I have been holding. It means being willing to receive from you what you've been holding. It means taking time to exchange what we have shared. Or what we didn't always share.

I am grateful that there is another three months where we will be together. In that time I will be doing a lot less work on where we're going and focus much more on where we've been. It is my hope that by so doing, we will both find ourselves that much closer to where we've always been headed.

To the Glory of Life.

Frequently (and Not-so Frequently) Asked Questions about Greg leaving

Q. AHHHHHHHHKKK! Greg is leaving! What does this mean?

A. It means that you belong to a normal church. This is the normal ebb and flow of church life. The average length of a UU called ministry is nine years (<http://www.uua.org/interconnections/leadership/vol4-4-leadership.html>). Greg has been with us eight years. This does not mean that we've done anything wrong. It doesn't mean that we're bad. It doesn't mean that Greg doesn't love us anymore. It means that life is change, and we are changing.

Q. So, what's next?

A. Because of scheduling, the board will appoint an Interim Task Force to put together and submit to the UUA a request for an Interim Minister. On April 22, we will have a congregational meeting and vote.

Q. What's the vote about?

A. The board will put forth a recommendation about getting an interim minister and the congregation will vote yes or no. If the recommendation passes, we will continue the interim process and welcome an interim minister by September. If the recommendation doesn't pass, we'll begin the conversation about what we want our interim period to be.

Q. What are our chances of getting a good interim minister?

A. Eunice Benton, Mid-South District Executive, has said that UUMAN has a "good reputation". She is working for UUMAN in getting the best interim minister we can get.

Q. How can we enhance our attractiveness in getting an interim minister?

A. We can keep ourselves in good standing by keeping our programs going.

Q. Are there things we should avoid doing that would damage our reputation?

A. The things that would send "minister unfriendly" signals to the professional minister circles are not getting an interim minister, and reducing our minister compensation from what we currently offer.

(Continues next page)



FAQs about Greg (cont.)

- Q. How long would we have an interim minister?
- A. The suggested interim period is two years. A settled minister search is difficult to do well in one year. Also, UUMAN is just beginning its visioning process. We will be much better positioned to decide who will be best to get us where we're going, after we figure out where we want to go. Another factor is budgeting for a settled search. It will probably cost us \$15,000 for the settled search. We'll be in better shape financially if we can budget that over two years.
- Q. How does all this impact this year's canvass?
- A. The greatest impact on this year's canvass is, again, scheduling. We need all members and friends to pledge promptly. This will assist us in knowing our financial status, regardless of the path we take through the interim period.

For additional information on Interim Ministry, visit <http://www.25.uua.org/programs/ministry/settlement/interim.html>

—Marty Harvey, UUMAN President

YOGA with Lisa @ UUMAN

On-going yoga classes in our beautiful sanctuary. Develop strength, flexibility and balance in mind and body. Learn poses, breathing & relaxation techniques & meditation to reduce stress, calm your mind, strengthen your immune system, and find more joy in life! Beginners & intermediates; men, women & teens.

Newcomers welcome anytime.

Wednesday 10-11:15 a.m., Sunday 4:45-6 p.m. Buy a class card for the number of classes you'd like to take: 10 for \$100; 5 for \$65; 1 for \$15 or 1 month unlimited \$65. Contact lisa@uuman.org or 770-395-7166

Coming to UUMAN: “Because We have Daughters”

Five questions that probably matter a great deal to your daughter:

1. Do you know that young women are more susceptible to violence and oppression than almost anyone else in society?
2. Do you ever worry about your daughter or feel angry that the violence she has to deal with escalates unchallenged?
3. Do you ever wish you could protect her by ensuring she has an ally who understands what she goes through, and sees the world through her eyes? Someone who she can open up to? Someone who she knows will always listen and care?
4. Do you ever wish *you* could be that ally?
5. Do you have a couple of hours to give to your daughter?

Five answers that your daughter will thank you for: “Yes.”

At 1 pm on May 12th at UUMAN, Men Stopping Violence will offer its program, “**Because We Have Daughters.**” It is a program designed for fathers and daughters (between the ages of 7 and 18) who want to spend some intentional time with their daughters learning to communicate and connect on a deeper level. Some fathers and daughters in the congregation (Dan Ben-David and Rebecca, Dominic and Zoe Read, Gary and Clarisse Wilkins, Arnie Barnes-Schwartz and Shara) have been part of the program. It is a 2½ hour opportunity for you to learn a little more about how your daughter sees the world and what she thinks about growing up in these times. And you will learn about how you can help her and let her know you care. We will offer some simple exercises with some big results.

In a little bit of time you can help change a big part of your daughter’s life. And, who knows, a significant piece of the world as well.

For more information visit the website www.Menstoppingviolence.org

or call Rev. Greg Ward (770) 992-3949, or Dick Bathrick (404) 270-9897 (Director, Men Stopping Violence.)

Summer RE Position at Northwest UU Congregation

Northwest UU Congregation is seeking a coordinator of their summer religious education program (June-August). Candidate should have good organizational skills and some religious education or education background. The Summer Coordinator is the "in charge" person most Sundays, and is supported by DRE and RE Committee.

Please indicate your interest by contacting Director of Religious Education Karen LoBracco at reddept@nwwuc.org; or 770-955-1408.



“Gratitude and Generosity” Mid-South District Annual Assembly to be held May 4 – 6

June Bryant and our Mid-South officers have informed of a few reasons to be a part of this assembly of liberal religious folks from across our district, including:

1. Keynote Address from Rev. Terry Sweetser, Vice President for Stewardship and Development and Senior Advisor to President Sinkford: “ From Scarcity to Abundance: The Journey of Living Fully.”
2. Megan Dowdell is the co-convenor of the Taskforce of the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth, along with UUA President Bill Sinkford, and she will be leading a presentation/ discussion on how to transform and strengthen our district’s programs and services in order to empower and support local youth ministries.
3. The Service of the Lively Tradition is a joyful evening of good news from the choir led by Rev. Jason Shelton, to the good news from the congregations of the MidSouth represented at the assembly, to the good news from our “neighbor” Rev. Burton Carly of the Church of the River in Memphis, TN. as he delivers the homily.
4. More opportunities to attend service together. At Matins on Saturday morning, service is courtesy of the folks from the host congregation, the UU Fellowship of Montgomery. The Closing service at 4:00pm. will include a Bridging Ceremony for our older Youth.
5. The Breakout Sessions promise to be interesting, diverse and meaningful again this year.
6. Rhonda Thomason of the UU Fellowship of Montgomery has arranged for a special tour of the Civil Rights Memorial Center immediately following the closing worship on Saturday at 5:00pm.
7. For entertainment, the Montgomery Fellowship is really going to jazz up the Coffee House on Saturday evening with a special performance by the Charlie Suhor’s Jazz Trio along with the open mike performers from around the district.

More information, including registration details, at <http://www.msd.uua.org>

Our Rights, Your Rights, Human Rights

The Atlanta Pride Festival is a celebration of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) community. This year the theme of the Pride Festival is “Our Rights, Your Rights, Human Rights” and will take place at Piedmont Park June 22-24, 2007.

Unitarian Universalists value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and thus we will be at the Pride Festival to let everyone know that our congregations provide a safe place for spiritual and personal growth.

UUs will have a market booth at the festival and a float in the parade on Sunday. There are various ways that you can help by making rainbow bead bracelets to be given away, by working a shift at the booth, by marching in the parade or by fund raising through bucket brigade.

There will be more volunteer information forthcoming, or you can contact Michelle Liebergesell mlicheberg@bellsouth.net or (770) 641-9454

UUMAN TIMES

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We welcome all types of newsletter submissions. Please send us your articles, editorials, announcements, poetry, rants, creative writing, or anything else! Please send an email to our newsletter editor, at newsletter@uuman.org



UUMANTIMES is the monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North Congregation.

Minister's Office Hours

Greg wants a chance to speak with everyone at UUMAN. Although he doesn't have specific office hours, he is available to meet with people every day of the week, except Mondays and Fridays, at a wide variety of times. You are welcome to call him between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. at 770.754.5848 to make an appointment. (In case of emergency, you are encouraged to call 678.849.4844 any time of day or night).

We're online!

at:

www.uuman.org

Worship Schedule

April 1st Rev. Greg Ward and Randy Blasch

“The Cotton Patch Gospels”

What if Jesus were around in our time? What if, for Palm Sunday, he made his triumphant entry into Atlanta, instead of into Jerusalem. Would that help us recognize his religious message? Would that help him make more sense or be more relevant today. Clarence Jordan had exactly this in mind when he wrote The Cotton Patch Gospels.

April 8th Rev. Greg Ward and Lars Olsson

“The Great Story”

There is much about the Easter story that is hard for religious liberals. But the hardest thing is believing that life comes out of death. Yet this very transition is exactly what has been happening in the universe for billions of years. The Easter story is merely the most recent version of this cosmological truth.

April 15th Rev. Greg Ward, Julie Lepp and Don Rizzo

“Planting Seeds – Harvesting Hope”

What kind of seeds do we plant for spiritual growth? For the growth of understanding? The growth of justice? Through story and music and ritual we will look at what this community is planting for the future.

April 22nd Dave Hudson, Randy Blasch

“Living in Place”

We all affirm our respect for the interdependent web of all existence. What does that mean? If it is a value we hold dear, how does it affect our lives? How can we make it more real? We explore these ideas through the lens of one life-long journey toward environmental awareness.

April 29th Randy Blasch, Suzanne Rezelman

“What's Love Got to Do With It?”

Our religion(s) today have become less and less about lessons and more and more about the people. What do we need to do to get back on the path of love?



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