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TO THE GLORY OF LIFE

Dear Friends,

It is a tough time for love. A tough time to care deeply about things – our own lives and the lives of those around us. With all the fear, suspicion, betrayal, doubt, aggression and disregard in the world, it's hard to keep love alive. And yet that is what we are called to do.

I've been reading the paper lately – a perilous hobby for optimists - and the hurt and distress that is recycled in our world feels daunting. After wading through a good dose of war and greed on the front page I need reminding why it is I shouldn't just give up on the world and live my life for my own narrow interests Like everyone here at UUMAN, however, I have always been able to tap into a deeper part of my consciousness and believe in something more. Something bigger than small-mindedness. More compelling than competition and fighting for my own little lot in the world. There's a deeper part in me that won't give up on love. I'm stubborn that way. So, I have noticed, are most of us at UUMAN.

What distinguishes us as religious human beings, I believe, is not a knowledge of scripture or church history or doctrine. Any heartless bully can know those forwards and backwards. What distinguishes us as religious human beings is two things – a desire to listen for the call to love and the willingness to bring it into practice – especially when and where it is needed the most. All the scripture and doctrine in the world is useless if it doesn't help you do these two things. I am quite confident that in the final count, the world will not be saved by ancient words or religious symbols. It's love that saves. I know there are those who will peek out of their hole now and again (maybe read the front page) – like Puxatawny Phil, the infamous groundhog – see an enormous shadow and be frightened enough to go back in hiding for another six

weeks. But that's not any way to live. It strikes me as a superstitious life, not a religious one.

To counter the despair I've found from reading the paper, I've picked up a book called, "Leadership and the Force of Love" by John Hoyle. In it, he notes that although the world struggles with malevolent politics, hostility, greed, selfishness and violence - - there is another way. The way to overcome these obstacles is not through skill or cunning or might or forging an advantage. It's overcome by leadership built on love. Hoyle advocates for greater visioning, communicating, mentoring, team-building, evaluating and empowering – all skills requiring love. And all things we aim for in this church.

Here's where I imagine the cynical Puxatawny Phil might start hearing the Beatles music cue up in his head – 'All you need is love...' and his eyes begin to roll at the thought of such naïve simplicity; and he turns to climb back into his hole and go back in hiding. And I know some in the world choose cynicism and hiding. But I pursued further when I discovered that some agencies as tough as the US Pentagon have chosen to use some of Hoyle's work in training military leaders. I also discovered Hoyle is talking about a very different form of love. Not the 'I want you, baby,' kind of love. Or the soft hearted, sentimental kind. But the honest, thoughtful and sacrificial kind. The kind that changes things. The ancient Greeks knew the difference. They understood that the first kind of love – that makes us want someone or something – called Eros, can be compelling. And beyond that is Philia – love that is based in equality and mutuality, which is more powerful still. But there is a third kind of love, one of a whole different order, known as Agape – that was generous, altruistic and sacrificial. The kind that would prompt people to save lives without reward. That was the love,



Happenings

UUMANDRUMS

UUMAN'S Drum Choir usually meets the first and third Sunday's of each month, from 1:30 for beginners and warm-up, 2:00-3:30 class.

But due to our teacher attending master classes out of town, we will meet the 2nd & 3rd Sunday's, February 12th & 19th from 1:30-3:30.

Classes are \$15 and are taught by renowned drum teacher Tom Harris, Director of the Excel Drummers and counselor at InnerHarbour. Loaner drums are available. If you are interested in making your own drum, contact Tom for information and to schedule a drum making workshop. For questions or information contact Pamela Reich uumandrums@uuman.org

they knew, would change lives. Change the world. And change us – for the better – in the process.

The first two kinds of love can be practiced by virtually anyone. But the third kind of love – agape – requires real leaders. It requires people who incorporate love into their vision, into their communication, their mentoring, team-building, evaluating and empowering. In such capacity, love becomes like psychologist Eric Fromm describes – “an active power which breaks through the walls which separate people. Love overcomes the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits you, ultimately, to be yourself.”

When we think about all the great leaders in the world, Hoyle reminds us, “they are remembered not for their wealth or position but for their unconditional love for others. Jesus of Nazareth, St. Francis of Assisi, Clara Barton, Albert Schweitzer, Frederick Douglass, Mahatma Gandhi, César Chávez, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, the Dali Lama, and Nelson Mandela stand out among world leaders who stressed love and nonviolence to bring justice and hope to marginalized people.”

Groundhog day is not the only day worth paying attention to this month. There is also Valentine's day and President's day – days which talk about love and leadership. If we are going to become the people we have always wanted to be – if we are going to build the kind of world worth living in – we are going to be leaders of love. Not people who hide from their shadows.

And when we answer such a call, no matter what theological stripe we claim, no matter what – if any – scripture, what – if any – doctrine, what – if any – God – we choose, we will know the meaning and the power of being religious people on a holy path.

To the Glory of Life.
Rev. Greg Ward

Happenings

UUMANSINGLES

The singles group meets for a monthly potluck, the second Saturday of every month. E-mail Craig Kaufman or Carolyn Bommarito for more details craigk@uuman.org & carolyn@uuman.org
Bring your family's book

UUMAN Hearts Desire Goods and Services Auction

Back by popular demand...the UUMAN Hearts Desire Good and Services Auction! Join us on Saturday evening, March 25th for an evening of dream fulfillment as we all have the opportunity to bid on our heart's desire – someone to do our yard work (if only for a day), someone to cook us a fabulous meal, a chance to buy an amazing objet d'art...let your imagination soar! And then, let me know what you came up with so we can be sure to bring you the donations you covet the most! This is one of our largest annual fundraising efforts, so please plan to participate by volunteering, donating, bidding – or all of the above! See Beth Olsson for more information. Betho@uuman.org

Happenings

Joan's Office Hours

Joan Armstrong (our tireless DRE) is available in the office on Monday, Wednesday (afternoon through evening) and Thursday, but can meet at other times by appointment.

Membership Corner

We would like to welcome our newest UUMAN members, who completed the membership process and officially joined us on December 4th. They are: Millard Berman; Eric and Erika Fulmer along with their daughters Alexandra, Meredith & Kennedy; Margie Jacobs; Whitney Lamb and John Barone; and Eizabeth Woodard. We encourage you to get to know them by reading about their backgrounds, interests and beliefs on our New Member board in Fellowship Hall, looking for them after service and helping them feel comfortable in their new church home.



A Piece of UUMAN for HUMAN Peace

March 20th marks the 3rd anniversary of the Iraq war and April 4th marks the 38th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. On Saturday, April 1st, some advocates for peace and justice are marching to register their concerns in the larger forum of US opinion.

This march is being sponsored by the Peace and Justice Coalitions of Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina and Tennessee, American Friends Service Committee (Southeast Region), Atlanta Friends Meeting (Quaker), Concerned Black Clergy, Druid Hills United Methodist Church Outreach Committee, Grady High School Social Action Club (Atlanta), Peace Network at UUCA (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta), PAX Paideia (Atlanta), Peacemaking Committee of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Women's Action for New Directions (Atlanta), U.S. Representative John Conyers, Michigan, U.S. Representative Cynthia McKinney, Georgia, and many, many others.

The march will focus on several issues: a concrete plan towards withdrawal of troops from Iraq, justice at home and an exploration into the ethics of unlimited surveillance domestically, and an examination of government spending on military efforts and reductions of social services.

Some at UUMAN would like to participate in this march. They would like to participate as people informed by their Unitarian Universalist principles. And they would like to participate as UUMANites. The UUMAN board, who is charged with caring for and protecting UUMAN's name and considering the concerns of UUMAN members, is looking into approving the use of UUMAN's name among the list of sponsors and/or participants. But before any decisions, it is vitally important for everyone to know that there are many informed, caring, thoughtful UUMANites who would not agree with everything being said at this event. It is not that they do not believe in peace or are not willing to work for it. It is that they believe in other means and other strategies for achieving peace.

To lend UUMAN's name as a supporter of this event might give the connotation that all UUMANs are in agreement and we are not. But to only lend UUMANs name to events where everyone is in agreement would mean that we would rarely weigh in on any vital, controversial issue – we would never take a stand when lives are on the line, and that would belie hundreds of years of Unitarian and Universalist historical precedent that we are so proud of where we changed the world because of our courage and willingness to speak out.

Still in the midst of thoughtful consideration, the UUMAN board wants to encourage people to exercise their voice through the church at the march – BUT not necessarily claim exclusive rights to that voice. Thus the board is considering (like many other groups do) sanctioning a committee, as a subset of whole church, to use the name. This is what many other churches (see above) do. In other words, something like “UUMANs for Peaceful Ends Committee,” or the “Peace Network of UUMAN” (as UUCA has done). If that consideration were followed, the board would also consider sanctioning a different committee who wanted to use UUMAN's voice in a different way at the march.

The board will place this issue on its February board agenda and welcome people's presence to discuss the issue. I believe it is important for people who have concerns about this issue to meet and listen and understand where their fellow UUMANites are at. In the spirit of openness and learning, Greg will facilitate two opportunities for people of any perspective on this position to get together and share views on the topic. One will be Tuesday February 7th at 12:00 (bring a lunch discussion) and another on Wednesday February 8th at 7:00 p.m.

Hope to see you there.

Happenings

YOGA with Lisa

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.

Happenings

Hungry Ear Coffeehouse at Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation

1025 Mt Vernon Hwy., NW. On Saturday, March 4th, the show will include: Katherine and Tom Godfrey, Veronika Jackson, Dead Respect Band and feature Anthony Z'sler. Show Starts at 8pm- a \$5.00 donation is requested and refreshments will be available. BYOB. For directions go to nwuuc.org.



Soul work with pay

Most people would never equate spirituality with a veterinarian's office; but that's just where I've found my soul deepening. I started working at an animal hospital in November and it has been an amazing lesson in growth, strength and love.

You see both the best and worst in people. There are days when I go home, red eyed and hating humanity for the cruelty it is capable of. When I see animals that have been abused or neglected of proper care; it is difficult to comprehend the nature of life's balance. Yet most days, I head for home knowing that I have been a part of something great; a link in a chain of healing that has saved a life or at least made it better.

I've received the gift of an owner's grateful smile when their pet pulls through an emergency or illness. And the privilege of listening to their memories of Fluffy, as they prepare to say goodbye.

When a client checks in, I sense the urgency in their eyes. The pleading look that begs me to help their loved one and treat him with the same love as if he were my own dog/cat/hamster/ferret/parakeet. And I try my best to honor that.

I find myself whispering little prayers for every animal that passes through the clinic. I hope for miracles and pray for the owners when they are not forthcoming.

I have had the joy of viewing newborn puppies. And watching rescued cats get ready for brand new lives and homes. I've even seen the gory wonders of surgery and the delicate matters that lie beneath fur and bone.

I have witnessed the powerful connection between man and animal-knowing that man is a much better creature for it.

And I am a much better creature for being there along the path.

"Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened."- Anatole France

patty@uuman.org

Wrestling with God

Starting in March Greg will be offering a four session course on "Wrestling with God." This is based on a fantastic book by Unitarian Univesalist minister, Tom Owen Towle. Tom speaks of himself as a theological hybrid whose journey has traveled much ground and has landed somewhere between questioning believer and trustful agnostic. "Do I contradict myself?" Tom asks. "Yes, like Walt Whitman, I believe I contain multitudes." In that light, the book also takes time to say much for and about atheism. The purpose of this course is not prescriptive – to say where someone should end up thinking or believing. It is really an opportunity for us to trace our reasons for our fashioning the theological understandings we have come to and re-invite those leanings into conversation with new ideas and perspectives. The class will explore a little bit about philosophy of religion (evidence and argument that goes into any belief and makes it useful or reliable), the notion of atheism, agnosticism and the various different ways that God has been considered. All theological perspectives are encouraged and invited to wrestle with God.

Wednesday evenings: March 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd. Starting at 7:15, ending at 9:15

If you are interested, contact Greg or sign up on the minister's bulletin board.

Save the Date: Spiritual Retreat

The UU Clergy of Metro Atlanta are offering a UU spiritual retreat at the Ignatius House Spiritual Retreat Center in Sandy Springs on Friday, May 19 – Sunday May 21st. Through exposure to various spiritual practices (sitting and walking meditation, journaling, creative process reflection, small group reflection, yoga, dream work and silence) the retreat is designed to help participants reflect more deeply on a question of their own choosing, central to their own personal or spiritual development. There will also be some time for play, conversation and one on one processing. The cost of the retreat will be \$175.00. A few scholarships will be available.



No Valentine? Love the One You're With

by Jemille Williams

This can be a lonely time of year for those who feel they don't have someone to love. Some say never compare yourself, for you will always be found wanting or better than someone else. Well, duh! I contend, however, that a little comparison can help get you out of the dumps and put yourself more in a position to attract that special someone your heart is desiring. And those of you who already have someone needn't stop reading here, for we all can feel like we're not getting all the love we want and deserve. (Again with the comparing!)

It's so easy to think "I'll be happy when I find someone," but turn the tables on yourself. Are you looking for some down in the mouth person? Get real! You want to find someone whose smile will light up your life and warm the cockles of your heart! Well, go out and warm someone else's cockles! When tempted to wallow in self-pity, play Pollyanna and take stock of the incredible riches and great fortune that are already yours – at this very moment!

Whatever your take on the political and economic climate of our country, you have to admit, it's still a pretty darn fine place to live! Yes, our freedoms are being impinged, but we're still free to mouth off about our administration and not disappear into the night - as is still happening every day somewhere on our home planet. Not living in the McMansion of your dreams? Well, are you sleeping in your car? In a cardboard box? Can't afford new clothes and shoes? Are you covered up right now? Are you cold and shivering?

'Nuff said?

UUMANDRUMS Performance

UUMANS official music percussion ambassadors, UUMANDRUMS, performed for the Marietta UU Congregation at their holiday/winter solstice service on December 18, 2005.

And with all due modesty.....WE ROCKED! May I take this opportunity to give a tip of the drumstick to: our intrepid leader Tom Harris and mascot extraordinaire Sada Harris, Alice Caldwell, Bev Jordan, Claire Stien, Jim Ritter, Lyn Miles, Stephen Shanahan, and yours truly. I would also like to light a "candle of joy" with a drumroll to Jim Ritter for his gesture of warmth, kindness and generosity, making the day truly special and a wonderful way to kick off the holiday's. XO

We made you proud -Pamela.

Resolve to be the person you'd like to hook up with. Make somebody's day with a witty or complimentary remark while you're bogged down waiting on line in your daily grind. Let someone in front of you in traffic, slow down to allow someone to make a left turn. Kindness is contagious. Be an infectious agent in an epidemic of nicety.

Stephen Covey makes an excellent point in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* about writing a eulogy from several of your nearest and dearest. What will they say about you when you're gone? If there's no partner on that short list, who would you have to be to attract that paragon of love, support, and butterflies in the stomach?

And, here's the best advice yet - rather than moping that no one gave you flowers or candy for Valentine's Day, hit the store on the 15th and make the merchant's day by picking up a little something for your own sweet self, take it home, throw your arms around yourself and tell yourself just how wonderful you are – role play your dream lover saying it you if you want, but get yourself happy in your own skin. Try to make others happy in theirs, and see what happens. Never forget the immortal words of eminent philosopher Whitney Houston – the greatest love of all is learning to love yourself. (And as she also said – no one could take away her dignity. She's done a real fine job of that all by herself!)

Maybe Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young didn't have *The Greatest Love of All* in mind when they wrote their song, but I think the shoe fits. Will you find true love and live happily ever after? Maybe yes, maybe no, but I will promise you this - you will live happier ever after.



GPB Volunteer Opportunity

Georgia Public Broadcasting needs volunteers to answer telephones during its next pledge drive in March. A group of Unitarian Universalists is being organized to participate on Saturday, March 11th. Shift times have not been set as of yet, but they generally run five hours. Food and training will be provided. If we come as a group of twenty-four, we'll be allowed to bring a banner, wear UU t-shirts, and have a spokesperson briefly describe on air (television, in this case) what Unitarian Universalism is all about. Most importantly, we'll be supporting one of America's greatest resources, public television. If you would like to participate, please e-mail Ian Davis at esperance@mindspring.com.

Poor People's Day at the Capital

FEBRUARY 8-9, 2006

Trinity United Methodist Church

265 Washington St. (across from Atlanta city hall on Trinity Ave.)

Poor People's Day is an annual gathering of low-income organizations and individuals from around the state. We will gather on Wednesday, February 8 for Education Day where there will be 6 workshops about important campaigns including criminal justice, corporate accountability, health care, affordable housing, and voting rights. On Thursday, February 9 we will speak truth to power! We will march on the capital and demand justice!

For more information contact the Hunger Coalition at 404.622.7778 or at hungercoalition@mindspring.com.

Calling All UU Youth Singers Currently in Grades 4-7!

Do you have children in your congregation or family who like to sing? Don't miss the UU Children's Choir, a special choir comprised of children entering grades 5-8 in the fall of 2006, who will gather in St. Louis concurrent with the 2006 UUA General Assembly to make wonderful music together! These singers will have the chance to get to know up to 100 other talented youth singers, work with director Sandra Snow (a top-notch choral leader), and explore music and the arts while deepening their UU identity! The deadline for applying to join this choir has been extended to February 15.

Please go to <http://www.uua.org/uumn/docs/other/UUCC2006.pdf> to download the application form and submit your application for review. Questions should be directed to: Leon Burke Email: leonburke@aol.com This opportunity comes once every three years - the UU Children's Choir was a huge hit during its last two appearances! Don't miss this chance to have your child or children participate!



Reflections

Secret Friends, is an annual event at UUMAN which matches younger members with adults for the purpose of getting better acquainted.

This is the way it works. First, adults, children and youth will sign up to participate in the Secret Friends program. Then, each will be given an alias (say, a famous UU like Henry David Thoreau.) The adults will be given some information about the child. (Favorite food or color. Name of their pet. Etc.) Each week, for four consecutive weeks, the adults will write a letter to their Secret Friend using an alias. You will SNEAK your letter into the bag which has your friend’s alias written on it. The bags will be hanging on the wall in Fellowship Hall.

The best part of the entire program is the Secret Friends Celebration Party on Sunday, March 12th after the service at which time everyone’s secret friend will be revealed and small, token gifts can be exchanged. PLEASE MARK THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR.

I can’t tell you how many folks at UUMAN, both children and adults, have told me how much this program has meant to them over the years. This year we want a HUGE participation. Look for the display in Fellowship Hall, sign up and be a part of it.!

See you on Sunday!

Joan

CHURCH PIANIST POSITION

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Congregation

2799 Holly Springs Road
 Marietta, GA 30062
 770-578-1533

Proficiency as both a soloist and accompanist
 Play piano for two Sunday services (9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.), all but one Sunday per month, ten months per year
 Gathering music
 Offertory solos
 Choir accompaniment
 Accompaniments for occasional vocal or instrumental soloists
 Hymns
 Postlude music
 Accompany the choir for Wednesday night rehearsals (7:30-9:00 p.m.)

UUMAN TIMES

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



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

Ministers 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 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 on the Web!

See us at:

www.uuman.org

Worship Schedule

February 5th – From Sub-Atomic Particles to Enlightenment in Twenty Five Minutes

Speaker: Carolyn Bommarito; Worship Associate: Dave Hudson

And in the midst of all this evolution, who are you, and where are you headed? Inspired by the writings of philosopher, psychologist and all-around theorist Ken Wilber, we'll take a brief look at, well, everything.

Children and youth begin in the sanctuary.

Feb. 12 Heart Communion – An Intergenerational Examination of Love

Rev. Greg Ward, Suzanne Rezelman and a cast of thousands

If we give our hearts away, how can we ever feel safe? If we don't give our hearts away, how will we ever feel loved? If we only give a little bit of our hearts, do we only feel a little bit safe and a little bit loved? In these questions, we experience the quintessential religious query of human existence.

Children and youth begin in the sanctuary.

Feb. 19-Patriarchy, Matriarchy & Religion

Speaker: Miriam Bellamy; Worship Associate: Lars Olson

Come here Miriam's interesting and humorous take on this subject.

Children and youth begin in the sanctuary.

Feb. 26-Falling in Ruts

Rev. Greg Ward and Cliff Brown

Everyone falls down. Sometimes it is our fault. Sometimes not. We get up, end of story. Right? Well, most of us will occasionally notice that we tend to fall down in the same place, over and over. We can treat it as something that is horribly and repeatedly unfair. Or we can treat it as an invitation to discovery. What we discover will help determine whether our path into the future will be one filled with promise or potholes.

Children and youth begin in the sanctuary.



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Get up-to-date information!
Sign up now and
join UUMAN
@ www.uuman.org.

