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## TO THE GLORY OF LIFE

Dear Friends,

*Life is a long lesson in humility.*

J.M. Barrie - Author of Peter Pan

*Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights.*

Henry David Thoreau – Unitarian writer

*Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself at all.*

William Temple - English statesman, author

*If I only had a little humility, I'd be perfect.*

Ted Turner - US media executive, Philanthropist

All spiritual growth comes with humility. The two are so close, in fact, I think they are almost synonymous. The greatest laboratories for learning this, I'm convinced, are covenantal relationships – the kind we experience in our church and the kind we share with our spouse.

I grew up thinking that humility meant that we had to be 'lowly' or 'beneath others.' But I've learned that 'humility' or 'humble-ness' comes from the Latin root, 'humus,' meaning 'of the earth.' It simply means finding our grounding, getting 'down to earth.'

Humility, like spiritual growth, calls us to know ourselves; and then when we know ourselves to accept – really accept – what we come to know. The process requires a lot of love – usually in the form of (self) empathy, (self) understanding and (self) forgiveness.

It's very hard work. And few do it alone. I learned a lot about spiritual growth from seminary. There I had some great teachers. But I have learned a lot more from being part of this congregation. There are great teachers here too. But I

have learned the most, from my wife, who is my best teacher.

Liz has helped me grow and given me the humility/grounding I've been looking for because:

1. She knows me better than anyone else. She has helped me to see that I usually talk well beyond the point where I should be listening. And that I usually insist the hardest that I am most right, I am most wrong.
2. She teaches by example, with love. Liz points out my shortcomings with love instead of anger; with presence rather than absence. Her approach encourages me to risk moving beyond 'good behavior' to show who I really am – warts and all.
3. She always remembers that no lesson is more important than the learner. When the lesson is hard and I don't get it right away she treats me as though I can understand and, eventually, I do.
4. She understands that the best arrangements are reciprocal ones and she trusts me enough to show me her shortcomings.

One of the most humbling parts of spiritual growth is after the lesson when you realize that the whole world has, for years, seen the spinach between your teeth that your teacher just now pointed out.

I've been with you, as minister, for nearly eight years. No one is around that long without their growing edges showing. It is high time to acknowledge my gratitude for your forbearance.

Thank you. Especially as the circumstances have brought about change and demanded growth and humility, you have been patient with me. When I talked of my needs (sometimes even arrogantly saying aloud



## Happenings

### Thursday Evening Potluck

Thursday evenings at around 6-6:30 people have been arriving at UUMAN for a weekly pot luck, fun and fellowship. So come and indulge!

“our” needs) instead of listening to yours, you have been gracious. When I have been so absorbed as to make ‘my agenda’ into ‘our agenda,’ you have cut me slack. When I have made impetuous decisions and did not ask for the input or help I really needed, you have waited.

I am learning what a difficult and important part growth can be for a marriage. I am also learning that it can be the best part of a marriage. Liz and I talk more now that we see each other more clearly than when we were in our starry eyed first few months of dating. And because the conversations involve more risk and honesty and depth, they are even more satisfying (and leave us more starry eyed).

When we first met, Liz and I were a little “in the clouds.” That love was good. But our love now is firmly on the ground. And although it is much harder, and more demanding, it is incomparably better. Our marriage is growing much richer.

Our community is growing as well. Both in numbers and in opportunity. The conversations that are possible, now more than ever, offer the chance to be that kind of community that is so rare in this world. The kind with humility and high ideals. The kind where people can have their feet on the ground and still reach for the stars.

To the Glory of Life.

## Notes on Being UUMAN

It’s been a year and a half since we passed our new bylaws. The road leading up to passing them was rocky and since then, we have seen some difficult times. Recently, we have begun to work on some of the issues that arose during and after the passing of the new bylaws. In working through our differences and pain, we have owned up to each other. In all of this, I found myself asking, “What has been my role in getting us to where we are?”

I was a member of the board at that time and deeply involved in drafting the new bylaws, policies, organizational structure, and whatever else was going on then. So I clearly have a role, both in where we were then, and where we are now.

I recall being on the board during the governance conversations thinking that the direction we were going was the best way to go, and that this was obvious to everyone. I just couldn’t see how anyone could not see that this was the best thing since peanut butter on sliced bread. I can easily imagine that I was dismissive, or worse. I have been known to stumble through life rather clueless.

I am taking this opportunity to offer an apology to any of you who feel that I’ve stumbled right into you. I do have my moments of density. If I have caused you any offense and you’d like a more personal acknowledgement, please come see me.

I am reminded of the fable of the six blind men who went to see what an elephant is like.

The first felt the elephant’s side and declared that an elephant is like a wall.

The second felt the elephant’s legs and was convinced that an elephant is like a tree.

The third felt the elephant’s tusk and knew that an elephant is like a spear.

The fourth felt the elephant’s tail and perceived that an elephant is like a rope.

The fifth felt the elephant’s trunk and was persuaded that an elephant is like a snake.

The sixth felt the elephant’s ear and described the elephant as like a fan.

Each man was partly right and all were wrong.

The common factor in these two examples is perspective. Each story provides an example of a need for a change in perspective. Time is one way that our perspective changes. That’s how my perspective has changed.

But there are other ways to actively change our perspective. One of those methods is collaboration. Working together we can all expand our perspectives. We may find that we are not so far apart after all.

We each have our perspective and that’s a good thing. And we need to be actively listening to others’ perspectives. Even though it seems like we can see the whole world, pretty often we’re missing pieces of the puzzle.

Along with that, we need to gently persist in presenting our perspectives. As a community, we will only see as much of the picture as gets shared with us.

As we move toward creating a shared vision of UUMAN and what we can be, we all have a responsibility to look at the world from each other’s view, and share our view with each other.

—Marty Harvey, President



# A Note from Toniann

As I sit down to write this month’s newsletter, I realize that I am writing, for the first time, in my new role as Director of UUMAN’s Ministry with Children & Youth. I am feeling humbled & blessed by this tremendous leap of faith that we are taking as we embark on this new relationship. I have a lot to learn & I look forward to sharing those lessons with YOU!

I hope that you, too, can sense the energy & enthusiasm that I am seeing & feeling all around me at UUMAN as we set about the important work of learning, growing, worshipping, serving, leading & playing TOGETHER!

We are in the middle of our annual “**Secret Friends**” Program which has been lovingly organized & facilitated by an amazing team. *Be sure to thank Laura Keck, Naomi Braff, Dee Ruff & Kirsten Moore* when you see them, & don’t forget the Celebration on Feb 18<sup>th</sup>.

There is inspiring energy in our new MCY Committee & renewed RE Council (REC). Both teams are creating structure & covenants that will guide the work of supporting this vital Ministry of our congregation. Our Youth Adult Committee (YAC) continues to provide leadership & support for Youth Programming at UUMAN & resource for the Mid South District. These teams meet monthly & everyone is welcome & encouraged to come along. Your input & participation is vital for our success! *The MCY committee meets on the first Sunday evening of each month, the YAC & the REC meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> (or last) Sundays respectively after Service.*

As we go forward it is my intention to serve our community with integrity, generosity & love. I want to participate in a Ministry that creates the conditions for faith to develop...a safe place where we can try our best & make the mistakes that we need to. We can do this when we know that we will be gentle & forgiving with one another whilst holding firm to our covenant, guided by our UU Principles & values.

One Love...

—Toniann Read

## **R.E. TEACHER & YOUTH ADVISOR TRAINING!**

**Saturday February 10th (9am-12.30pm) Fellowship Hall**

*Breakfast will be served at 8.30am*

**The UUMAN R.E. Council invites all R.E. Teachers & Youth Advisors, Childcare staff & Volunteers to a morning of connecting, sharing, learning and fun...**

*Please join us!*

### MCY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

**Feb 4 - C-MCY Meeting (6.30-8.30pm) DH**

**Feb 9-11 – Jr Youth Mountain Con**

**Feb 10 – Teacher & Advisor Training (9am-12.30pm) FH**

**Feb 16 – Jr Youth ‘Open Door’ (7-10pm)**

**Feb 18 – ‘Secret Friends’ Celebration!**

**Feb 18 - RE Council Meeting (12.30-2.30pm) DH**

**Feb 25 – Installation Service for DMCY (10.30am) Sanctuary**

**REGISTER NOW! ‘Worship For All Ages’ Renaissance Module (Mar 2-4)**

### CONTACT TONIANN

#### Office Hours

**Wednesday 11.30am-3.30pm**

**Friday 10.00am-2.00pm**

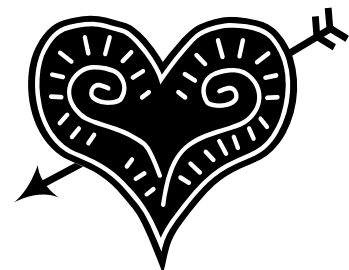
**Sunday 9.30am-2.30pm**

**Office Telephone:**

**(770) 992-3949**

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**dtzjread@comcast.net**



## “SECRET FRIENDS” REVEALED FEBRUARY 18th!

We hope that you have had fun delivering your notes & exchanging treasures with your friend...now it is nearly time for the wonderful mystery to be revealed. Please join us as we gather together after our Sunday Morning Worship & RE classes for a celebration of our new found friendships!

*Many Thanks to Laura Keck, Kirsten Moore, Dee Ruff & Naomi Braff for weaving their magic for us this year!*

*Mid South District RE Committee sponsored*  
**RENAISSANCE MODULE**  
**March 2-4 (Pensacola, FL)**  
*\$200 Registration deadline Feb 15th*

### **“Worship for All Ages”**

*During this training we hope to*

- Expand & deepen the understanding of worship experiences by differentiating between personal and communal worship, by becoming acquainted with theories of communal worship & by considering differences in responses to worship experiences among children, youth, adults, & intergenerational groups
- Share memories of personal experiences of worship  
Develop competence & confidence in leading worship by considering the nature and needs of children, youth, and adults at worship, drawing upon insights from recent studies of human and faith development.
- Consider the conditions that encourage worship in a communal setting, such as;
  - the role of silence, meditation, and prayer
  - the aesthetic dimension, including music and dance
  - finding the balance between spontaneity and ritual
- Suggest guidelines for planning worship within a church or fellowship by providing examples of stories, songs, readings, and other resources
- Offer opportunities to design worship experiences
- Inspire participants to make worship a significant part of the Religious Education experience!

**Training is from 6.00pm Friday to 3.00pm Sunday.**

*Please note that full attendance at the module is required for credit to be received. Each module is an unfolding process. Both group dynamics and learning depend upon everyone being present for all sessions.*

Contact Linda Cobb, [cobbL@cox.net](mailto:cobbL@cox.net) , for more information

## Jr Youth ‘Open Door’ VALENTINE’S DANCE!

Friday February 16<sup>th</sup> (7-10pm)

### What is it?

*A dance, filled with fun and exciting games and activities all in one neat package for your convenience!*

### Who’s invited?

*Jr Youth from Atlanta area UU Congregations. Each Youth may bring one friend!*

### What does it cost?

*\$5.00*

### Attire?

*Black & White & Pink! Comfortable!*

### What do you need to bring?

*PERMISSION SLIP!*

*ADVISORS!*

*Fave music (no parental advisories please!)*



## Organizing the Opportunities to Give

At UUMAN, we know that one of the most rewarding aspects of being at UUMAN is knowing that we have contributed to positive change, that we have made a difference. As we grow we want to get better at making people aware of the different ways that we all can contribute to success.

In the coming months we invite you to look in the newsletter and in fellowship hall for ways to give to UUMAN. We hope to soon have a bulletin board that describes giving opportunities and to highlight those in our newsletter.

We want everyone to know a few of those.

1. Operating Canvass – this is where every member (and those regular supporters) has the chance to pledge to the success of UUMAN’s mission. This includes keeping the building open and running, our staff salaries and acquiring the resources to keep our programs running. We will all get to share in the upcoming canvass beginning next month.
2. Capital Giving – this is where we help maintain or improve our UUMAN assets (building or equipment). Some current UUMAN giving opportunities include:
  - Air Conditioning System for Fellowship Hall
  - New Maple trees to replace the ones recently taken down
  - New Drop Safe to safely hold the monies we collect
  - New Roadside Sign
  - Capital Donation (i.e. pay down our building debt)
3. Gifts for Social Action – These gifts go to partnering programs we are currently encouraging. Currently, we are supporting Heifer International (H.I.) and exploring the values and principles we share in common.
4. Gifts in Memoriam – These are gifts given to honor someone connected with UUMAN who has recently passed away. At this time you are encouraged to give in honor of Frank Creech. Frank is our own Joe Creech’s brother who died in December. Frank was the artist who designed the chalice that is on the top of our sanctuary. To give to this fund, make you check payable to Frank Creech Memorial Fund for the Art and mail to Four Oaks Bank and Trust Company, Post Office Box 1436, Smithfield, NC 27577.

If you have any questions about giving to any of these – or other – UUMAN endeavors, please contact Stephen Shanahan ([stephen.shanahan@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.shanahan@gmail.com)) or Cliff Brown ([cliff.brown@tec-trac.com](mailto:cliff.brown@tec-trac.com)) or a member of the board of trustees.

## Say Yee-Haw, Somebody. (Chili Cook-off Wildly Exceeds Goals)

UUMAN’s ever popular Chili throw-down continues to draw from far and wide, and this Winter Edition exceeded the fundraiser goal of \$1,000.00 for the Chilli cookoff..hooray! Thanks to all of you for making this a terrific annual event!

The first place winner for the best chili was Alice Penton, second place was Rebecca and Avery Perkins and third Devon Moore. Congrats to them!

I would like to thank my chili team Martina Queenth, Sarah Jones, Jeanne Holford, Annelies Woesten, Margarita Jacobs, Kate Hudson, Jim Cooper, Bruce Langston and of course Randy Blasch for his auctioneering skills! Kudos to them for all their hard work.

Thanks again for making this a terrific fund raiser.

### UUMAN TIMES

**Editor:**  
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Dave Lakly

**Contributors:**  
Greg Ward, Marty Harvey, Toniann Read, and others

**Submissions:**  
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, at [newsletter@uuman.org](mailto:newsletter@uuman.org)

—McPatti Langston Mcchil



**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](http://www.uuman.org)



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Get up-to-date information!  
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## Worship Schedule

February 4<sup>th</sup> Cliff Brown and The Adult Sunday School Group

### “Sacred Balance”

We are the air, the water, the soil and the sun. What we do with the earth, we do to ourselves, because we are part of the web of life. Wisdom from this service is taken from the work of David Suzuki, Brian Swimme and others who are exploring the meaning of our seventh principle: the interdependent web of all existence.

February 11<sup>th</sup> Rev. Greg Ward and Lars Olsson

### “Be Thou My Vision”

Around this Valentine's Day I wanted to reflect on the first year of marriage. Specifically, what it is like vs. what vision I had for it. Now that I know a little more about it my insight has grown – and so has my vision.

February 18<sup>th</sup> Merri Beth Stephens and Randy Blasch

### “UUMAN Evolution or: How the Program Council will Save UUMAN Existence”

The future of the planet, the future of this country, the future of democracy and the future of UUMAN have two things in common: our ability to practice good communication and our ability to compel everyone to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. This service will talk about how this is true in this religious community.”

February 25<sup>th</sup> – Rev. Greg Ward and Don Rizzo

### “Don't Make Me Come Down There – God”

We gave up counting on an all-loving, all knowing and all powerful deity to fix our world to be just right. That frees us up to imagine a world that needs us. We will talk about how that is true at UUMAN as we CELEBRATE the installation of Toniann Read as our Director for our Ministry with Children and Youth.

## Editor's Note, or: if a Newsletter falls in a forest...

The newsletter you hold in your hands or, more likely, are viewing on-screen, represents the collaborative effort of a half-dozen or so UUMANites, who depend on the editor to gather the submissions, package the stories in a tolerably readable fashion and prepare an electronic version for our website. Beyond that, distribution of the newsletter falls to...

Well, that's the sticking point; at present, there *is* no distribution network.

Printed copies need to be made available in UUMAN's anteroom for perusal before and after service. An announcement needs to be made through our Yahoo-based online groups. It should be possible, as well, to make an emailed version available, or to at least provide a link to the electronic version, so that as many people know of the newsletter's publication at the start of every month.

To those who've made me aware of what we've delivered in the past and could deliver in the future, I offer my thanks and ask that you continue to press me for a more user-friendly version of the UUMAN Times. While the publication of a new edition isn't necessarily the most earthshaking news you may digest in a given month, it's certainly worth knowing about in a timely fashion.

Put another way: They also contribute, those who let me know that they had no idea a new issue came out.

—Mister Ed.

