



# UNISON

November 2009

No. 785

## *A Month of Sundays*

- 1** *Liberal Religion: A Theology of Evil*  
**The Rev. Don Rollins**  
Are we a “sunshine” religion, or can our tradition make some serious value judgments?
- 8** *The Streets of San Francisco*  
**The Rev. Thom Longino**  
Thom Longino, a former UUCS member, will share his thoughts from working “God’s graveyard shift” as associate night minister with the San Francisco Night Ministry
- 15** *Worship: Why We Do What We Do*  
**The Rev. Don Rollins**  
The interim period is a great time to revisit why and how we do Sunday morning.
- 22** *Thanksgiving on East Point*  
**The Rev. Don Rollins**  
Written by UU minister Alec Craig and adapted by Don, this is a one-man presentation on life and gratitude.
- 29** **Association Sunday**  
For the past few years, UU congregations have lifted a second offering in support of our denomination’s efforts. The purpose of this year’s gifts is to advance diversity within and without the movement. Your designated checks, written to UUCS and “Association Sunday,” will be most appreciated. (All monies lifted in the second offering, designated and undesignated, will support this program.)

## PASSIN’ THRU

Don’t know about you, but I’m just not as smart as I used to be. Meanings are more nuanced, once-easy generalizations are fewer, and judgment harder to sustain. The world-in-alphabetical-order thing just doesn’t fit most of us of a certain age; life has rounded some of our edges.

One of the few things of which I’m sure is gratitude. Not the cheap stuff, but the kind that looks with steely gaze upon this sometimes woeful world, and still has gumption enough to be thankful. My spiritual heroes are those who consider gratitude a chronic willingness to look at what they’ve got despite what they lack. They find what works amidst what doesn’t. They make of thankfulness, a spiritual discipline; they teach themselves how to appreciate more and scowl less.

These are the things on my mind as we head toward the season of Thanksgiving, you and me. Despite the short time we’ve known each other—not to mention the short time we’ll be together—there is much about your congregation that I’ve come to appreciate:

- Your widespread, steadfast commitment to your church
- Your talented, hardworking leadership
- Your attention to children and youth
- Your we-can-do-it attitude
- Your love of music
- Your eagerness to laugh
- Your investment in one another’s well-being
- Your commitment to a better world

As I tell newcomers to any congregation I serve, if you’re looking for the perfect congregation (or perfect minister), keep on looking; we do our best, but Lord knows our best is fleeting stuff, just like everyone and everything else. But that has nothing to do with this wonderfully flawed church, smack dab in the middle of Bible Land. Yours is a healthy face of liberal religion, and we’re right to celebrate and be grateful for its presence.

So, my sincere thanks for this opportunity to be your partner, if only for a while. You remind me that, in this world of black-and-white, ain’t-it-awful thinking, there is much for which to be grateful.

*Happy Thanksgiving,  
Don*

**UUCS ANNUAL AUCTION**  
**Saturday, November 14**  
**Silent Auction 5:30-6:45 p.m.**  
**Live Auction 7:00-9:00 p.m.**  
See page 3

## Letter from the President

In our transition time as a congregation, with an interim minister, we have an opportunity to slow down and ask ourselves, what are we doing and why are we doing it? Does it make sense to be doing it now, just because we always have done it that way?

### Here is an Interim Progress Update

Saturday, October 3, meeting with Board chairs, Transition Team, committee chairs, interim minister, and facilitator, the Rev. Margaret Beard, Augusta, Ga., UU minister.

Purpose: To call the best settled minister we can and to achieve greater clarity during interim ministry. To look at how to establish a good relationship to the interim minister and a successful interim ministry.

The notes of the meeting are posted on the Board bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

### Summary

Administration and infrastructure, governance, stewardship, membership, and Lifespan Faith Development—we came up with that list as possibilities for the congregation and minister to work on during this interim period. And what drives all of these items and every decision the church makes? It is mission and vision. What is the mission and vision of this congregation?

Twenty members spent most of a Saturday reminding each other of our church history, what moments were most important for the congregation, and what did that say about us now?

- What is the role of the Board, really? What is governance?
- We have a point of friction—who is responsible for what?
- We have lots of programs being done, but are they related to mission?
- Do people understand that stewardship supports the mission/vision of our church?
- What is the role of children in our congregation?
- Who is responsible for the staff?
- What needs to be done in membership?
- How much authority does the minister have over worship?

You get the idea. And so we as a congregation have questions to be answered.

The Board has decided that we should concentrate on governance, administration, and stewardship for this year. The Board in partnership with Don has created goals under each of these items. There are responsibilities for the minister, Board, staff, lay leaders, and everyone. More will be coming about our assessments and action plans in these areas.

### Finances of the Congregation

This is the first year in decades that we are operating without a savings account. It was depleted last year as we paid off the bank for a mortgage on the sanctuary. Now we are watching cash flow, like a hawk. Your regular contributions provide our flow of cash. We need it to keep flowing in so we can pay our staff and our bills. Please, keep your beloved church at the top of your priority list when it comes to your money.

And one of my favorite activities comes up this month—the Auction. It is a fun evening, I hope to see you there.

*Blessings,  
Karen Mitchell*



Our choir after the service on Sunday, October 25. Left to right. Back row: Jack Seitz, Brian Ramsey, Dave Drum. Middle row: Cynthia Lanier, Jeraldine Mack, Ruth Stanton, Merike Tamm, Barbara Mattson. Front row: Music Director Keith Plumley, Margaret Howie, Susan Brown, Teretha Fowler, Rose Mary Kramer.

## Welcome to Our New Director of Music!

Keith Plumley, who has been serving this fall as our volunteer choir director and a regular piano accompanist at worship services, is now our official director of music. The Board approved Keith for this four-hours-per-week position at their October 14th meeting, and those involved in the search process all breathed a sigh of relief that we'd found someone so competent, experienced, and passionate about music at UUCS!

As our director of music, Keith (who has been an active Friend of UUCS for several years) will be responsible for the overall direction, planning, and implementation of the music program, working in coordination with our minister and the Worship Committee. He will be accompanying the worship services most Sundays, directing the adult choir with the goal of twice-monthly anthem performances, and arranging for occasional guest musicians and musical programs.

A graduate of the University of South Carolina Spartanburg, Keith had his first experience as an accompanist as a teenager in a church in his hometown, Landrum, SC. He also accompanied and directed a traveling singing group during college, under the auspices of the SC United Methodist Conference.

Keith says: "I am most excited about this position at UUCS because of the opportunity to be part of a congregation with diverse religious backgrounds where the presentation of music from any genre is accepted and appreciated."

Keith works full time as the director of sales in the piano and keyboard division at Case Brothers of Spartanburg, where he's been employed for thirty years. He's the proud father of two sons, John (twenty-eight) and Seth (twenty-six)—both guitarists. In his spare moments, Keith enjoys gardening, genealogy, traveling, collecting old hymnals, and spending time with his four (yes, four) Shih Tzus.

We welcome you, Keith, to the staff of UUCS. May we have many years of making beautiful music together!

## Articulating Your UU Faith

Last call, all aboard, ya'll come—pick the one that suits you, but the point is that “Articulating Your UU Faith” (AYUUF) will kick-off on Thursday, November 5.

If this is your first contact about AYUUF, it's a four-session curriculum designed to help UUs talk about two things: UUism and one's own basic beliefs. Led by Interim Minister Don Rollins, it's experiential (some nonthreatening, in-class practice) as well as theoretical (readings and reflection).

Thursday evenings, 7:00, proved to be the best day/time for the twenty-five people who indicated an interest in AYUUF. The meeting dates are: November 5, 12, 19, and December 3. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend all four sessions, but can miss one and still benefit from the course. (There is a five-dollar (\$5.00) fee for copying costs. Correct change is appreciated! Any remaining monies will go the UUCS general fund.)

You may still sign-up at the church or contact Don at minister@uucs.org to register.

## UUCS Coffeehouse

Ever think a grassroots, local-artist, UUCS coffeehouse would fly? Don Rollins is putting together a steering committee to start such a forum for area amateurs to strut their stuff, show off UUCS to local folks, and do a little good in the community.

Needed are 6-8 persons who would help with coordination: advertising, setup/teardown, concessions, food item collection, etc. Don has a model for how to organize the coffeehouse, and sound is already covered. January is the target month for the first edition. Contact Don at minister@uucs.org to learn more or volunteer to help.

## BILO BOOSTERS

By Amber Pennington

Free money? Yes! That's exactly what BiLo Boosters does for the church. Last year we received \$500 from this program.

All you have to do to help the church collect this money is have a form scanned once a year. There's nothing to fill out. Just take a sheet from the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall that includes a barcode for UUCS and have it scanned the next time you shop at BiLo. They will give one percent of your total purchases for the year to the church.

While \$500 is a good start, I challenge you to help us earn even more. If only twenty-five of our families shop at BiLo and sign up for the program, we could easily earn \$1300. One percent doesn't sound like much but over a year that can really add up. The average family spends \$100 per week on groceries. That's \$5200 a year, which earns \$52 for the church—totally free!

So, pull out those Bonus Cards and spend. Let's earn that \$1300 this year! Thanks to all of those who participated last year and thanks in advance to all of those who will participate this year. Remember, everyone must have a new form scanned for the new program year. In this time of tight budgets, every penny counts, so please take the time to sign up for the program.

## GET READY TO PARTY!

**Saturday, November 14, 2009, 5:30-9:00 p.m.**  
**Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg**

**5:30 to 6:45 SILENT AUCTION** with food and drink on the Lower Level of the Sanctuary and Wheel of Fortune in the vestibule.

**CHILDREN WHO HAVE SIGNED UP FOR THE TRIP TO CHUCK E. CHEESE NEED TO BE AT THE CHURCH BY 5:30.**

(SEE CHILDCARE INFORMATION.)

**7:00 to 9:00 LIVE AUCTION** in the Fellowship Hall  
Run by our own Jim Brown and Jeff Baynes

**BRING FOOD:** Last names that begin A-O bring finger food (Enough for your family or more). Last names that begin P-Z bring desserts.

**DROP OFF** donated items—large and small—at the church on Sunday, November 8, from 12:00 to 2:30 or on Wednesday, November 11, from noon to 8:00 p.m. (Enjoy Wednesday dinner for free!)

**PLEASE BRING ITEMS ONLY AT THESE TIMES.**

Getting items at the last minute makes it hard for our computer check-out crew. If you can't bring items on November 8 or 11, contact Jim Brown (590-2634) for other arrangements.

**COME JOIN THE FUN!**

## UUCS AUCTION CHILDCARE

UUCS Auction Childcare will be off-site at Chuck E. Cheese

**For children age 3-13**

(Potty trained through Junior High—no diapers, no dates)

Cost is \$10 per child.

Fee covers all expenses, payable auction night.

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR AUCTION CHILDCARE IS THIS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1.**

**THIS DEADLINE IS FIRM.** We must have an exact count in time to organize staffing, chaperones, and transportation, make reservations with the restaurant, and arrange for coupons and play tokens.

**To make reservations:**

Contact Amanda Goldsmith, Childcare Coordinator

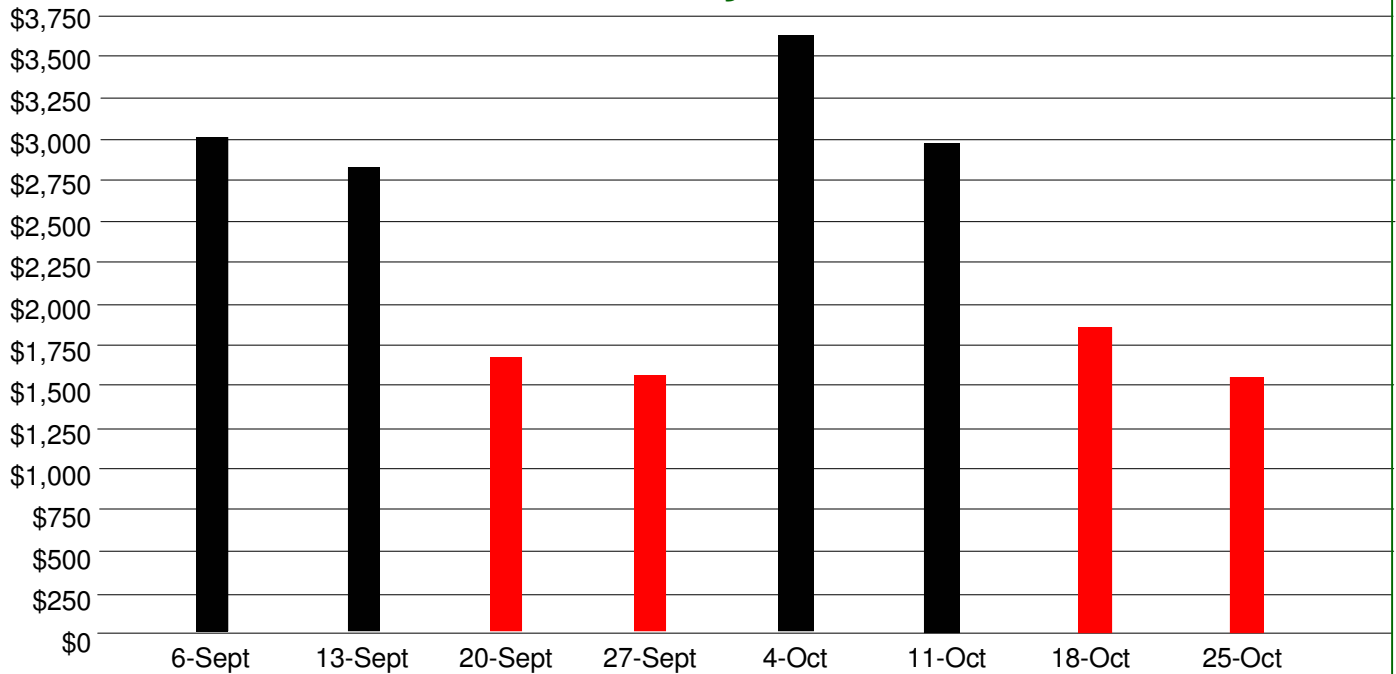
Email: goldsmia@email.uscupstate.edu

Or call 864.909.5569

**Childcare for infants and toddlers under 3 years of age can be provided at the church if needed.**  
**Make request by November 1.**

**CHILDREN WITHOUT RESERVATIONS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.**

## UUCS Weekly Revenue



Interpretation: A black bar for a given Sunday indicates that we met our pledge for that Sunday. A red bar for a given Sunday indicates that we did not meet our pledge for that Sunday. As we used our savings to burn the bank mortgage last year, the continued lack of pledge payment results in a cash-flow problem. Please remain up to date on your pledge payment.

### Spartanburg Sierra Club

**NO MEETING**—Thanksgiving Day

**HIKE**—Saturday, November 21, NATURE TRAIL, TABLE ROCK STATE PARK. This is a beautiful trail which follows a rushing creek for much of its way. We will go around it one way and then turn around and come back to our starting point. (You will be surprised at how different it is going both ways.) About three to four miles in total. Rated easy. Bring a lunch to eat at the end. Contact Jack Seitz for more information (864-597-4589 office, 948-1080 home), starting time and departure point. Non-members welcome. We will explore wildlife and vegetation along the way.

### November Birthdays

Bernie Kakuske (11/01), Launa Blackburn (11/06), Steve Fowler (11/08), George Loudon (11/08), Joel Jacobs (11/09), Katie Mierek (11/10), Brooke Ramsey (11/17), Linnette Jensen (11/18), Amber Pennington (11/25), Karen McKenzie (11/27).

If your birthday is in November and your name is not on the above list, please email the bulletin ([unison@uucs.org](mailto:unison@uucs.org)) and we will include it in the following Sunday's bulletin.

### Bookstore

IOUs are mounting up again at the bookstore. Please don't forget to take care of the price of the books.

Penny Hatchell and Sally Hicks are recycling our books. They will be removing from the rolling carts the books that have been around since April. Children's books will be given to Madison's House. All other books will be taken to the library for their book sales.

It will be helpful if you will wait at least a week before bringing any new books or magazines. There are several boxes of books we need to go through before adding newer ones. Magazines can be a problem if too many of the same type are brought at one time. Remember that the holiday season is on its way. Surprise a loved one by adding a book in their stocking. Lots of magazines have great recipes for special Yuletide celebrations.

Thank you for all the wonderful support you have given to our bookstore. Let us know about books that you enjoyed—even better, write a review of a book or magazine article and we'll post it for others to read. All the money made from the books are given directly to the church. So enjoy a good book and help our church at the same time.

## News from the Membership Committee

**EXPLORING UU**—On the second Sunday of each month, we invite visitors and newcomers to join us after the service for a brief, informal discussion of Unitarian Universalism and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg. We usually gather at about 12:15 in Room 5 and often start with a look at a hand-out called “Are You a UU and Just Don’t Know It?” This hand-out includes sixteen statements that can give you a good idea of how well your core beliefs and values are in harmony with those of Unitarian Universalism. A few of these statements include:

- I cannot identify my beliefs with any particular creed or doctrine.
- I believe that a child should be encouraged to discover religion in his or her unfolding life rather than through a process of dogmatic indoctrination.
- I believe a church should welcome and appreciate the insights and answers of all healthy spiritual systems and religions.
- I believe that people are punished by their sins, not for them, and that the evil people do lives with them.
- I hold in reverence the interconnectedness and interdependence of all creation.
- I believe that the future is largely in our hands, not a fate wrought by an angry god.

November’s session of Exploring UU will be on the second Sunday, November 8. If you have any questions, you may contact [pkweiss@bellsouth.net](mailto:pkweiss@bellsouth.net). Please join us!

**QUESTION:** Do UUs believe in a universal religion?

**ANSWER:** We believe in the universality of religion in that we recognize that all humans ask questions such as “Why am I here? What is the meaning and purpose of my life? Why do I have to die?” Realizing all religions seek to provide answers to questions like these, we think there is much wisdom in many answers. Few UUs contend that there is, or ever will be, a single universal religion that is right for everyone (from *100 Questions that Non-Members Ask about Unitarian Universalism*, by John Sias).

**NEXT MEETING**—The Membership Committee will meet at the church on **Friday, November 20, at 10:00 a.m.** If you think you might be interested in joining this committee and would like to sit in, please join us!

### Buddhist Meditation Group

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.  
Please call David Stack (542-1324) with questions.

### Our Guest Speaker This Month

The Rev. Thom Longino is a “prodigal” of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg, having left in 2000 to attend seminary at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. While there, he was corrupted by a gang called the Faithful Fools Street Ministry, and another called the United Church of Christ (UCC). He now pounds the pavement working God’s graveyard shift with the San Francisco Night Ministry, where he is the associate minister.

## Be Sure You Lock Up Properly

Recently lights have been left on in the sanctuary overnight and the door left unlocked. We all need to be on full alert to make sure that lights are switched off and the door locked when we leave. The buddy system works great in checking up before leaving.

### Locking up

If you are locking up the church building, PLEASE check these items.

Are all the lights off—classrooms, bathrooms, garden level, and including the sanctuary lights?

Are all air conditioning and heating units turned off?

Are all the windows closed and locked—kitchen and all classrooms?

Are the doors locked in the new foyer and the outside door at the end of the classroom space?

### Heating and Air

Fellowship Hall thermostat MUST be reset to a low temperature, in order for us to save money on heating. Ordinarily please set at 68 degrees. If it is especially cold, set at 71 degrees. It does take an hour or so for this room to heat up.

The Lower Level thermostat MUST be reset to a low temperature. We suggest 62 degrees. This room heats up in ten minutes and is used infrequently.

The Sanctuary thermostat is programmed and you do not need to set it.

THANK YOU for lowering our utility bills and making our church building secure.

## Eating Out with UU Friends

Spend some time with your UU friends during the week! This month the **Midweek Lunch Bunch** will meet the first Friday and third Thursday of the month. We alternate between the east, west, and downtown areas of town. The next lunch will be on Friday, **November 6, at 11:45 at Jason’s Deli** on West Main Street more or less across from Barnes and Noble; the following will be on Thursday, November 19, place to be announced. Watch the bulletin and the Happenings for information about places and times; you may email Monnie Cannon ([monniecannon@charter.net](mailto:monniecannon@charter.net)) if you want to be included in a group email reminder. Newcomers are especially welcome—it’s a great way to get to know your new community.

And in the meantime, join the **Sunday Lunch Bunch** after the service and discussion. This group meets in order (starting November 1) at Bangkok, Broncos on Union Street, Five Spices, and Panera. Each Sunday bulletin has a reminder.

### Deadlines

Unison—18th of Each Month  
Bulletin—Wednesday Nights, 9:00  
[unison@uucs.org](mailto:unison@uucs.org)

Please don’t leave material in the Unison mailbox without notifying Monnie.

# UUCS Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Called to order 7:00 by President Karen Mitchell. Chalice lighting and opening words by Don Rollins. Board check-in. Board covenant read by all Board members

Motion to approve minutes: David Stack. Second: Ben Harris. The minutes from the September 9th Board meeting were unanimously approved as written after a brief discussion over wording.

There will be a congregational meeting in January to vote on the Settled Minister Search Committee. The Piedmont Blood Center motion will be considered by the congregation (this could change per Karen). The Social Concerns Committee is looking into the Piedmont Blood Center issue to see if they want to take up this issue and if so how to educate the congregation on this matter.

## Finance: Ben Harris

Our finances for September are "not good."

Cash flow: September was a four-week month.

Pledge income is short (\$4,788.90, not including fundraising).

Payroll is over budget (\$1,500 due to travel and moving expenses for interim minister).

Cash flow has a \$5,408.16 deficit.

We should be able to make September's payroll without taking out a bank loan, but it will be close.

## Stewardship Campaign

Angie Shuman and Linda Leible will co-chair the stewardship campaign with assistance from Rick Hahnenberg. Thanks was extended to the Finance Committee for getting an early start on this important church function.

**Interim Minister's Report:**—Don Rollins

## Old Business

By-Laws amendment deferred to another meeting.

Bread and Board, November 1st

Nancy Mandlove and David Stack volunteered to take the lead.

Piedmont Blood Center (see above)

## New Business

### Director of Music:

Keith Plumley has agreed to take on this role for the church. Salary \$400 per month. Motion made. Seconded by Joyce Harrison. Passed unanimously by the board.

**Safety at Church.** Staff has concerns about safety.

See Building and Grounds report submitted to Board.

Motion by David Stack, second by Bobbie Schoss

To go ahead with the intercom and investigate visual option such as a baby monitor or small computer camera.

Passed unanimously by the Board after brief discussion.

### Health at Church:

A teacher and member of the congregation had questions regarding shaking of hands and hugging during the "Greeting the Holy in Our Midst." Motion by Bobbie Schoss, second by David Stack, to "Support Interim Minister Don Rollins in his explanation of why he is not shaking hands and hugging because of swine flu concerns." After brief discussion motion passed unanimously.

**Share the Plate:** There was a great deal of discussion on this. It was decided that Nancy Mandlove and Karen Mitchell would write the motion for the Board of Trustees along the lines of "a minimum of \$80 per week and up to half of all undesignated funds, etc., for a trial period of three (3) months."

### Minister's Discretionary Fund.

Interim Minister, Don Rollins, proposed two different tracks:

Gift Basis—Don would give money and work with people who are having financial problems.

Micro Loans—same as stated.

The Minister's Discretionary Fund would begin with seed money from a one-time contribution from a Sunday offering and be replen-

# Denominational Affairs

**SEUUMA:** Since many indicated they were not going to attend the conference in Toronto, we have scheduled a Fall SEUUMA to be held on November 9-12 at The Mountain. SPECIAL PRICING = \$180, all inclusive. As of October 20 only three persons had registered for this Fall gathering. Since it is a week-day event, early registration is needed. See the mountain website ([www.mountaincenters.org](http://www.mountaincenters.org)) for information.

## Jake Morrill Elected to UUA Board as TJD Trustee

The Thomas Jefferson District Board has selected the Rev. Jake Morrill of the Oak Ridge, Tennessee, congregation to fill Anna Olsen's remaining term. A lifelong UU, Jake is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School and has served the Oak Ridge congregation since 2003. As the father of two sons, he is committed to multi-generationalism and multi-culturalism in our faith movement. Those who recommended Jake have the highest praise for his passion, spirit, and ability to bring people together for the greater good.

## Report from the TJD Board

The elected board of directors, which serves 62 congregations, met on October 2 in Charlotte and took steps to accelerate our transition to policy-based governance. The board expects to formally approve all policies at their February 5, 2010, meeting and be ready to present them to the delegates for ratification at the April 30, 2010, annual meeting.

The board approved a half-time district staff position that will provide resources to help congregations become effective social change agents in their communities. The district is soliciting candidates.

The board reviewed the comments from the congregations that responded to the last board meeting report on the proposed new name for the district, "Toward Justice District" of the UUA. The name-change proposal has generated discussions within congregations.

The responses to the proposed name caused the board to desire further input. They will host town-hall type meetings whenever and wherever they have board meetings, the first being in Richmond, February 5. Additionally, they will schedule "webinars" in November or December to hear from constituents on the name-change process.

## Board Minutes (continued)

ished through private donations after that. The minister will get back to the Board with a suggestion.

## Minister's Coffee House

The board asked Interim Minister Don Rollins to proceed. This will also help facilitate Don Rollins's contract with the church in the areas of outreach, adult education, and social justice outreach.

## President's Report: Karen Mitchell

Southside Neighbor Association. We are now members with Alice Sutton leading the effort. On October 24 there will be a clean-up along South Converse. Meeting at Cornerstone Baptist Church.

**UUA**—We received a recognition certificate from the UUA for being an honor congregation. We have paid our UUA Fair Share Dues for decades, but made it last year only because of contributions from two members of the congregation. UUA funding report was passed around.

## Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Board of Trustees will meet in a special meeting Wednesday, October 21, at 6:45 p.m. to discuss the interim-year process and where we go from here.

"Ten Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards" was given to the Board members by the president. The Board was asked to read the table of contents, the introduction, and first two chapters at least before our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

# On Gratitude Road, from "Lessons in Earth School"

By Kathleen Anderson

As Thanksgiving approaches, I have mixed feelings. Abraham Lincoln started it, you know. In the midst of war, he proclaimed a national day of thanksgiving, which seems brave and noble especially since it called people to remembrance of everyday blessings during a time of immense conflict and suffering.

These days, Thanksgiving has morphed into a celebration of gluttony and football and family dysfunction. Requisite children dressed as Indians and Pilgrims grin and stammer and shake hands in front of crudely painted scenery while turkeys and pumpkins dance in school plays all over the country. Millions of Thanksgiving Day sales assure us that we need to Buy More Stuff! And, lest we forget, Thanksgiving Day parades all across the country mark the official kickoff of that greatest of all seasons of greed and vulgar consumption, Christmas, when Santa shows up on the back of the last fire truck, hurling candy into the crowd. All of that there is whitewash, folks, an embarrassment, a celebration not of entrepreneurial spirit and blessings shared, but of money-lust and racism and ignorance. It is a capitalist cover-up of monumental, sustained genocide and shameless imperialism that have never been fully acknowledged, forgiven, or repaired. But I digress.

So, back to mixed feelings. How do I join in the ancient celebration of harvest, and acknowledge my blessings and the people I love without buying in (literally and figuratively) to all the crass commercialism and ethnocentric hubris of the imposed Holiday Season?

Burning Questions:

1. Do I have to cook? If so, do I have to cook a turkey?
2. Do I have to spend time with my family of origin?
3. What can I do to really feel and show gratitude in a special way?

First, I'm deciding right now that I *don't* have to cook on Thanksgiving any differently than any other cooking day. I like the idea of sharing that work with others. I don't have to do a turkey either; just as long as it's not to-furkey, we're OK. I'm thankful for that.

Next, I expect I probably DO need to spend some time with my family of origin. I don't spend much time with them on purpose, but ties are ties, and a national holiday centered on over-eating is as good a reason as any to get together. My wild and radical ideas (to them) aren't in the closet anymore and I have given myself permission to speak, even if my voice shakes. That feels brave, and truly evangelical in the very best sense of my family history. Actually I'm finding the role of family gray sheep liberating; now I get to hold up the silvered mirror, and say out loud things that others in my family don't dare to think, yet. It seems to cause sputtering and stuttering or stunned silence followed by a safe change of subject. At least they haven't kicked me out of the family, and if it gets too strange, I have a good car. I'm thankful for that.

Now, how to be more grateful, and how to pass it on? I'm not a good Buddhist at all, but I do love the clarity and simplicity of that path. It's very straightforward. No "thou shalt not" commandments. No dogma about virgins and talking snakes and chosen people, no heaven or hell, and you get as many lifetimes as you need. There are some guidelines to follow that, if

you follow them, make your life more peaceful. You show up. You practice. You keep showing up and little by little, you make progress. How reassuringly realistic and gentle. Gratitude works like that. It's a simple, show-up kind of thing.

Actually, even though it's simple, intentional gratitude is powerful, and it's getting a lot of notice these days. Google it and you get 2.4 million hits. Gratitude is a joyful way of showing up, of paying attention to reality, and it's contagious. (And isn't "*pay attention*" a great expression? Followed by "*You get what you pay for.*") See? Gratitude for *this* beautiful day, *this* cool drink of water, *this* bowl of soup, *this* good friend, *this* funny joke, *this* sweet community. It brings Right Now into clear focus and grounds peripheral anxieties in the present moment. And the more we practice gratitude, the more we *pay* attention to our blessings, the more we awaken into abundance, and the more we give others room to do the same.

In Japanese, in Zen, there is a term—"on." The meaning of *on* is gratitude, but it means more than just the feeling of gratitude. It includes the sincere desire to give back that arises naturally out of the recognition that we have been supported and cared for by others. The practice of gratitude is a good way to feel *on* because it makes us more peaceful and happy and present. In fact, peaceful presence is such a powerful agent of change that hard science has proof and even a math equation for it: The square root of one percent of a population is the tipping point where peace spills over. Other ways of moving gratitude outward could be those random acts of beauty and kindness, or developing a personal ethos of paying it forward; it can be ideas crystallized into art and music, or joyful, intentional support for causes and communities that are important, like this one.

These are hard times for lots of folks. Some of them are right here. Stress is all around and we all feel it. The media's fear mongering and disaster reporting are relentless. We are bombarded daily by stories and images of violence and misery that make us feel vulnerable and helpless. The insane culture of "Get More" arises out of a false belief in "Not Enough." It's infuriating, and scary, and sad. We hold our collective breath, and hang on, knowing that change will come. It always does. But we worry: Will it be change for the better? Will change come too fast? Will it come in time?

Hard times. That brings us back to old Abe Lincoln, who asked a country locked in civil war, in times harder than these, to stop and notice what was good, even while they worked and waited for better days. It was a good idea. And curiously enough, studies show that the practice of gratitude works best to bring harmony when it occurs in a situation of dissonance—when things are comfortable and easy, we tend to be lazier and less reflective. Cultivating an attitude of gratitude, just like the tendency to complain, is a choice, and what we choose often enough becomes habits, and over time, habits become character. Why not choose gratitude? It's simple. It's easy. It's right here. Breathe out. Ah. *These* eyes that read. *This* chair to sit on. *This* sun, *this* breeze. *This* silky cat walking across the yard. Ah.

I give thanks for you, for us, for the blessings of community and love.

# Lifespan Faith Development November Schedule

## Adult Education—Optimal Health

Dr. Connie Godenick will be starting a series on optimal health on Sunday, November 1, at 10:00 a.m. This coming Sunday's topic will be "Your Immune System: How to Optimize It for Better Health." Learn common-sense tips to reduce your chances of getting the flu plus other "outside the box" thinking to keep yourself in optimal health. There will be plenty of time for questions following the presentation. Feel free to bring guests! Dr. Godenick is a board-certified family medicine doctor with twenty-two years experience in medicine as well as ten years experience in alternative or integrative medicine. She has a degree in Foods and Nutrition as well as a Masters in Public Health. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness with only minimal (or no) use of medications. Topics for upcoming months include heart health, cancer, healthier alternatives to common prescription drugs, diabetes—how to avoid and how to treat, maternal and child nutrition (to be presented by Wendy Cox), and strategies for anti-aging. Topics are subject to change if requests for specific topics are received.

## Sunday, November 1

### 10:00 Adult Forums

**Nutrition and Wellness** with Dr. Connie Godenick (first in a series, for first Sunday each month), Room 5

**The Power of Myth** Video Series, Room 6

Coffee and Conversation, Bread and Board—Fellowship Hall

### 10:00 Youth Forums

Pre-School Class: Lessons from *We Are Many, We Are One*, with Amanda Goldsmith, Preschool Nursery

Youth in Grades 1-12 meet in Hatcher House

Elementary Spirit Play for Children 6-8, Spirit Play Room

Intermediate Youth, ages 9-10: Get Acquainted, Orientation, Back Classroom

Junior High Youth: Lessons from *Traditions with a Wink*, with Cathy Matthews

Senior High Youth: Discussions in Morals and Ethics, with Karen McKenzie

**12:30-2:00 Tarot Study Group** (Bring your own cards and resources, and your lunch and/or food to share.) Fellowship Hall. We'll be looking at different kinds of readings and how and when to use them.

**7:00-8:30: Facilitators' Covenant Group**, Room 5

## Sunday, November 8

### 10:00 Adult Forums

**YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!**

Special Guest: HUB-CITY CO-OP director Ashley Campbell will be with us to present information about The HUB-CITY CO-OP, a newly forming co-operative grocery store planned for downtown Spartanburg. The CO-OP's focus is to support local farms and businesses by making it possible for people to buy

local produce and goods at an affordable price in a friendly, family atmosphere. It's time for Spartanburg to support local growers and come together in a spirit of community! Fellowship Hall

Coffee and Conversation in the old foyer.

### 10:00 Youth Forums

Pre-School Class: Lessons from *We Are Many, We Are One*, with Amanda Goldsmith, Preschool Nursery

Youth in Grades 1-12 meet in Hatcher House

Elementary Spirit Play for Children 6-8, Spirit Play Room

Intermediate Youth, ages 9-10: UU Heritage, Back Classroom

Junior High Youth: Lessons from *Traditions with a Wink*, with Cathy Matthews

Senior High Youth: Covenant Group, with Karen McKenzie

**12:30-1:00: Exploring UU Class**, Room 5

**12:30-2:00: Lifespan Faith Development Committee**, Fellowship Hall

## Sunday, November 15

### 10:00 Adult Forums

**Teachings of Jesus from the Aramaic**, with Michelle Daigle, Room 5

**The Power of Myth** Video Series, Room 6

Coffee and Conversation, Drinks and Discourse—Fellowship Hall

### 10:00 Youth Forums

Pre-School Class: Lessons from *We Are Many, We Are One*, with Amanda Goldsmith, Preschool Nursery

Youth in Grades 1-12 meet in Hatcher House

Elementary Spirit Play for Children 6-8, Spirit Play Room

Intermediate Youth, ages 9-10: UU Heritage, Back Classroom

Junior High Youth: Lessons from *Traditions with a Wink*, with Margaret Howie

Senior High Youth: Discussions in Morals and Ethics, with Karen McKenzie

## Sunday, November 22

### 10:00 Adult Forums

**Teachings of Jesus from the Aramaic**, with Michelle Daigle, Room 5

**The Power of Myth** Video Series, Room 6

Coffee and Conversation, Drinks and Discourse—Fellowship Hall

### 10:00 Youth Forums

Pre-School Class: Lessons from *We Are Many, We Are One*, with Amanda Goldsmith, Preschool Nursery

Youth in Grades 1-12 meet in Hatcher House

Elementary Spirit Play for Children 6-8, Spirit Play Room

Intermediate Youth, ages 9-10: UU Heritage, Back Classroom

Junior High Youth: Lessons from *Traditions with a Wink*, with Cathy Matthews

Senior High Youth: Discussions in Morals and Ethics, with Karen McKenzie

## LFD November Schedule (continued)

### Sunday, November 29

#### 10:00 Adult Forums

**Teachings of Jesus from the Aramaic**, with Michelle Daigle, Room 5

**The Power of Myth** Video Series, Room 6  
Coffee and Conversation, Drinks and Discourse—Fellowship Hall

#### 10:00 Youth Forums

Pre-School Class: Lessons from *We Are Many, We Are One*, with Amanda Goldsmith, Preschool Nursery

Youth in Grades 1-12 meet in Hatcher House

Elementary Spirit Play for Children 6-8, Spirit Play Room

Intermediate Youth, ages 9-10: UU Heritage, Back Classroom

Junior High Youth: Lessons from *Traditions with a Wink*, with Cathy Matthews

Senior High Youth: Discussions in Morals and Ethics, with Karen McKenzie

## HELP WANTED

We need to hire at least two additional childcare workers this month. The position carries about six to twelve hours per month at \$10 per hour, with most hours being on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings. Applicants must be eighteen (18) years of age or older and must consent to a criminal background check. If you like working with swell children and could use a little extra money, please apply.

Contact Kathleen Anderson at [dre@uucs.org](mailto:dre@uucs.org) or Amanda Goldsmith at [goldsmia@email.uscupstate.edu](mailto:goldsmia@email.uscupstate.edu) to arrange for an application and interview.

### Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg

210 Henry Place — P.O. Box 1942—Spartanburg, SC 29304

The Rev. Don Rollins, Interim Minister

Minister's Office Hours: 10:00-1:00 Tuesday — Thursday

Worship Service: 11:00 a.m. Sundays

Kathleen Anderson, DRE

Keith Plumley, Director of Music

Penny Hatchell, Church Administrator

Church Office: Monday-Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Church Phone (864) 585-9230

Off South Converse Street by way of Hudson Barksdale

Hatcher House on Wheeler Court

Website [www.uucs.org](http://www.uucs.org) — Regular e-mail: [office@uucs.org](mailto:office@uucs.org)

Announcement for weekly e-mail and publications—

[uucs.communication@uucs.org](mailto:uucs.communication@uucs.org)

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 2009-10

Officers: President, Karen Mitchell (579-3791); President-Elect, Joyce Harrison (574-1253); Secretary, David Stack (542-1324); Treasurer, Ben Harris (591-1526). Trustees-at-Large: Mary Frances Crivellone (864-472-5454), Kim Danner (641-9512), Margaret Howie (573-6752), Nancy Mandlove (573-6433), Bobbie Schoss (541-7121). Ex Officio: Finance Committee Co-Chair, Ed Wilde (573-2130).

## WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS

Wednesday nights are great fun at UUCS.

### First Up: Excellent Eats

Brought to you by our fabulous dinner coordinators, Norm Schoss and Angie Shuman

Supper is at 5:30.

You can bring a dish to share, or pay \$4 per person or \$8 per family. This is a great deal on some of the best food and fellowship anywhere!

After supper, at about 6:45, we begin our evening programming.

Childcare is provided for children aged three and up (children older than six who are not involved with Wild Tic-Tacs may participate). We generally have an art or craft activity, free-play time, and sometimes a fun video.

### Wednesday, November 4

Council on Committees: Room 5

Book Club: Room 6

Wild Tic-Tacs Rehearsal: Fellowship Hall

### Wednesday, November 11

**2:00-4:00 Telling Our Stories Group:** Fellowship Hall

Join facilitator Kathleen Anderson as we gather to listen and talk and write. This month, we'll be writing about strange and wonderful family traditions.

### Evening:

Board of Trustees Meeting: Room 5

**Cakes for the Queen of Heaven:** 6:30-8:30: Garden Level

(Don't forget! If you have trouble negotiating stairs, you can park your car at the back—Come in to the driveway by taking the last left on the cul-de-sac on Wheeler Court and pull right up to the building. Someone will be there to let you in!)

Wild Tic-Tacs Rehearsal: Fellowship Hall

### Wednesday, November 18

Coltrane Covenant Group: Hatcher House

Humanist Discussion Group: Room 5

Knit, Love, and Crochet: Room 6

Wild Tic-Tacs Rehearsal: Fellowship Hall or Sanctuary

### Wednesday, November 25

NO PROGRAMMING, HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

## Wednesday Night Book Club

The Book Club meets the first Wednesday of each month. Please join us to share good books and great discussions. Our book for November is *A Broom of One's Own*, by Nancy Peacock. Please join us on November 4 at 6:30 for a great discussion.

## Sign Up for Happenings

If you are not receiving "Happenings," our weekly electronic newsletter, go to our website at [UUCS.ORG](http://UUCS.ORG) to sign up.

## Generosity and Gratitude

Our UU congregation acknowledges with great appreciation these recent gifts to our church and community.

**Dan McBride** for repairing the door to the minister's office.

**Kim Danner** for donating a new computer for the interim minister's office and **Kim** and **Teresa Hall** for the hours spent in getting the computer set up and networked.

**Bob Mitchell** for faithfully pushing and riding lawnmowers over the hills and dales of our huge, hilly church property month after month.

**Steve Fowler, Michael Rainey, and Kathleen Wilde** for their dedication in cleaning and maintaining our church buildings each week. You really make us sparkle!

**Sydney Pye** for her extra effort helping the folks who manned the UUUCS table at September Interfaith Fair at Converse College. Sydney took the initiative to drive over to UUUCS and pick up a banner and framed mission statement to make the church table more attractive.

**Alice Sutton** for donating a collection of beautiful altar cloths for our worship services.

**Shannon Bracey** and **Brandon David** for assisting one of our seniors in being able to see more clearly while driving.

**Dr. Chris Nowatka** for his volunteer physician service to St. Luke's Free Medical Clinic, despite being extremely busy during the fall "flu" season at his own family medical practice.

**Teretha Fowler** for coordinating our clerical volunteers for St. Luke's for our UU once-a-month volunteer effort there. To Teretha, **Jan Ingerson,** and **Caro Dempsey** for their dedicated service to the clinic each month. The clinic clerical volunteer coordinator, Mabel Hospital, commends our church for "being the most reliable church we have in providing these volunteers every time it is your turn."

**Dixon Covenant Group** for providing a wonderful supper for SPIHN (Spartanburg Interfaith Hospitality Network) guests at Fernwood Baptist Church on October 1. **Launa Blackburn** for serving as a host to these guests on October 3 at Fernwood Baptist.

**You:** for your contributions to the kitchen wish list, Total Ministries foods, Deb and Kris's multiple sclerosis motorcycle ride, the Rainbow Group's Coming Out Day, the Auction, and your payment of your pledge towards the financial well-being of our church.

**We thank you all so much!**



*Justin, Brian, Shannon, Kaitlyn, Savanna, and Adam enjoyed the Rainbow Group's Coming-Out Day Celebration on Saturday, November 17.*