Gadding About

Hola mi amigos y amigas!

Karen Smith and I returned from our Nicaragua adventure with the UU College of Social Justice and it was an amazing journey. It began several weeks before we departed as we studied the history of Nicaragua, with an emphasis on U.S. involvement, influence, and interference. We also studied intercultural competency: how to be good guests, develop self-awareness of our identities and privilege, and begin considering how we will take the learnings from this journey back home.

The people we met in Nicaragua were generous, hopeful, and hard working. We met strong, powerful, soulful women who were savvy businesswomen and leaders in their communities. We lived with families in Quibuto for two days and developed deep heart connections. We experienced the life of a coffee bean from first planting through harvest, cleaning, drying, milling, packaging and shipping. We met farmers who care deeply for the earth and shared with us the effects of climate change that are threatening their livelihoods.

One thread in all these encounters was the optimism of the people... they were living into the endless realm of possibility. I have a story about myself that I can’t learn another language...there’s no possibility in that story! The challenge I set for myself before the trip was to examine my discomfort with language barriers. I stayed with people who spoke no English, and I had no interpreter to support our communication. We had basic conversations that were frustrating and difficult. I was not able to have the deep conversations with my hosts that others in our group enjoyed with theirs. We could not enjoy sharing stories, or discussing theological or political ideas.

In reflecting on this experience, I could see some of the ways this limits my interactions here: with all the work that is needed for immigrant justice in Gwinnett County, I am not able to fully participate in the call to support the Latinx community in our own backyard, and I hesitate to join our groups at El Refugio because of this language barrier. I avoid engaging with local Hispanic-owned businesses, and I can only communicate with our landscaper through his sons. I’m ready to change my story to one that is based on unlimited possibilities. On the last day of the trip, each person in our group made commitments about our next steps after this journey. My commitment is to learn to speak Spanish.

I’m using DuoLingo and SpanishDict apps to practice every day (I’ve started a DuoLingo club...let me know if you want to join). We have the Pimsler Spanish program in MP3 form and we’ll be listening to these over the next few months. Yet, I know the most important aspect of learning a new language is to practice through conversations with others. I hope there might be people in our congregation who would like to form a Spanish conversation group starting in the fall. Ideally, this group would include people who are fluent in Spanish, and those who are learning.

I told my Nicaragua family that I would return when I could speak Spanish more fluently. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could create a whole delegation from UUCG to go together! What are the other possibilities we might live into if we expanded our congregation’s fluency in Spanish?

In addition to the monthly newsletter, I’m posting other reflections from my sabbatical at gaddingabout.uucg.org.

With a grateful heart…

Reverend Jan
Spiritual Growth

**Faith Development at 10:00am**
It is our goal to provide you with inspiration and resources to help you live deeper into your UU faith throughout the week. Come join us at 10:00 on Sunday mornings for fellowship and learning, and opportunities to live into the questions as you search for truth and meaning. Childcare will be available. Upcoming programs include:

March 5 - Faith Development Forum - *Everything Possible*. The Faith Development Team hosts a guided discussion introducing the monthly theme. Indulge your curiosity, join us and deepen your understanding! What gifts does this month's theme hold for you?

March 12 - Spiritual Practices - Come with the courage to experience something new, or re-invigorate a forgotten practice. What connects you with spirit?

March 19 - There will be discussions about various ways to get and stay involved in the movement to work toward social justice in our community, our nation, and the world. How can you have an impact? How can your compassion make a difference?

March 26 - A book discussion based on *The Third Reconstruction*, by The Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, which is the 2016-2017 UUA Common Read. Books are available for purchase at the Bookstore at UUCG.

**CUUPS on March 4 at 7:00pm**
We will be watching the family film, “Song of the Sea”. It is a modern day tale steeped in ancient Irish mythology. The movie is rated PG for “some mild peril, language and pipe smoking image”. We will be following up the viewing with discussion. We will NOT have childcare for this meeting as we'd love for the children to view the movie. Please bring a potluck snack as you are able.

**Visit to Our Universalist Past**
**A trip report from Sara Heath**
On Sunday, February 5, my husband, Barry, and I and Maryjane Stout attended service at the historic Rockwell Universalist Church in Winder, Georgia. The church was organized in 1839 and still has services on the first Sunday of each month. The church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. It is the second oldest Universalist Church in Georgia. It is said that the seeds of this liberal faith were first sown by itinerant preachers from Alabama and South Carolina, meeting in members’ homes. The present church was built in 1881.

The minister read from Philippians; of Paul writing from prison his letter of encouragement to the young Christians of Philippi. He reminded the congregation that only our faith gets us through the hard times. We sang old hymns, listened to prayers, joys and concerns. It felt a little like going back in time.

Early Universalists believed in the oneness of an embracing God and that no person would be condemned by God to hell. Rather than worshipping Jesus, he must be followed. Unitarians and Universalists merged in 1961. To learn more about Universalists check out uua.org (click on Beliefs, then History) and uuhhs.org (UU History and Heritage Society.)
Luck of the Community
UUCG Auction on March 18 at 6:00pm
We’ll celebrate the “Luck of the Community” at UUCG’s annual Auction on March 18. Donation and sponsor forms are available at www.uucg.org in “Upcoming Events” or use the paper form in this newsletter. The first $8000 we raise goes to our 2017 operating budget, everything else we raise goes to our capital expenditures. So, please give generously as this will help UUCG replace the air conditioner, repair the parking lot, etc. Come for music, fun, and fellowship. Look for ideas for donations on the back of this month’s newsletter. Your party, tutoring, class, or other Auction event can be offered in the location of your choice, including UUCG.

The Bigger and Better Health Fair Is Coming
April 22!
Save the date, sign up, spread the word! Back by popular demand: UUCG will host a health, metaphysics and sustainability fair on April 22. Yes, that’s right metaphysics will be added this year. There will be tarot card and palm readings and more alongside offerings for our physical health and the health of the planet. Email resourcedevelopment@uucg.org for more information and to sign up as a vendor or to sponsor.

Massage Fundraiser at UUCG
March 16, April 20 and May 18
Sherree Bailey is offering massage services as a fundraiser at UUCG. She'll setup a special massage table in a private classroom at UUCG and ask for a donation to be made to UUCG. Appointments are available at 1, 3, 5, 7 on the third Thursdays of the month now through May. Contact Sherree at sherree.lynn.bailey@gmail.com

Ebenezer Church Service & Mary Mac Tea Room
March 26, 2017
Debra and Ida are hosting a visit to a church service at historic Ebenezer Baptist Church where both MLK Sr. and MLK Jr. preached. After the service you will continue on to Mary Mac’s Tea Room for a nice luncheon. This is a FUNdraiser for UUCG and originally offered at the 2016 Auction. Seats are still available - just make a generous donation to UUCG and write “Ebenezer” on your check or envelope or visit www.uucg.org and select “Register for Events”.

Passover Seder on April 16, 2017 at 5:00pm
Join the Hlava family for a very special African American Passover Seder Dinner on April 16, 2017 at 5:00pm. This is a FUNdraiser for UUCG and originally offered at the 2016 Auction. Seats are still available - just make a generous donation to UUCG and write “seder” on your check or envelope or visit www.uucg.org and select “Register for Events”.

PRayer
Herbs
Meditation
Nutrition
Recycling
Healing Touch
Massage
Reflexology
Aromatherapy
Body
Mind
Spirit
Natural
Health
Holistic
Health
Breath
Work/Inspiration
Music/Sound
Therapy
Green
Building
Reiki
Communion
Fun, Food, Dancing and Winning Tickets for Prizes
Volly of the Quarter
For as long as UUCG has existed, this volunteer has walked the talk of our mission. There is, it seems, no task, small or great, that she will not take on to further our mission, to make it a reality. We don’t have time to list all that she has done for our community, but here are just a few of her recent contributions: She stepped in to lead the all-important Membership Committee when our beloved Karl died. She was integral in organizing last year’s health fair. Most recently, she said yes to the task that makes even the strongest and most willing among us whimper and cower: She led the pledge drive, one of the most vital elements enabling us to continue another year as a beloved community, helping others, ourselves, and healing our world. Thank you, Peggy Averyt, volunteer of the quarter.

Sabbatical Post Card
Our minister, the Reverend Jan Taddeo, will be on leave from our church from December 26, 2016, through July 30, 2017. Ministerial sabbaticals are renewal periods for clergy. It is a time for intentional exploration and reflection to renew enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment for ministry. Reverend Taddeo has invited two Unitarian Universalist ministers, Reverend Duncan Teague and Rev. Charlotte Arsenault to support our very capable team of Service Leaders and Worship Associates to continue creating quality worship services at UUCG. This will be a wonderful opportunity to experience a variety of voices on Sunday mornings. A special sabbatical brochure is available in the foyer at UUCG or download the brochure or video from the website at www.uucg.org to learn more.

Visitor Orientation
UU 101 March 19 at 12:45pm
CURIOUS – If you are new to Unitarian Universalism or just new to UUCG, this class should answer some of your questions. COURAGEOUS – Join us in the library on third Sundays immediately following the service. COMPASSIONATE – We hope the information and discussions will help you on your spiritual journey.

Childcare and lunch provided. Sign up on the bulletin board by the nametags, visit www.uucg.org and select “register”, call the UUCG office at 770-717-7913, or just drop in. For more information, contact Peggy at membership@uucg.org.

New Member Class
UU 102 March 19 at 12:45pm
If you have taken UU 101 and feel ready to move on to the next step, please join us. UU 102 meets in the Lounge. Childcare will be available and lunch provided. Sign up is available by selecting “register” on the www.uucg.org website, through the office at 770-717-7913, or through email to membership@uucg.org. After completing UU 102, you are eligible to become an official member of UUCG at an upcoming signing ceremony.

Signing Ceremony
If you are considering becoming a member of UUCG, please contact membership@uucg.org, to participate in the next ceremony. Ceremonies take place quarterly in the Pastor’s Parlor, with next ceremony on May 21.
YOU’RE INVITED

Ancient Whispers: A Pilgrimage to Women’s Mysteries

A Special 30th Anniversary
Unitarian Universalist Womenspirit Spring Event

May 17-21, 2017
The Mountain Highlands, NC

A reunion and a journey through time and place to remember our sacred heritage and revive the rich mysteries of our inner being.

Registration begins approximately March 1.
Visit our website for the full brochure, more information about us and the event, and registration details.

Artwork generously and lovingly created and donated by Kathy Kemerait.
WWW.UUWOMENSPRIT.ORG
Corley Teacher Appreciation Event
Thank you for your support for the teachers at Corley Elementary School!

Congratulations Rev Duncan Teague
Earlier this week, Rep. Park Cannon of Georgia House District #58, with ten other cosigners put forth a resolution on the floor recognizing Reverend Duncan E. Teague for his leadership and work in HIV/AIDS. Rev. Teague and his husband, David Thurman were guest on the floor of the House as this was being presented. In the gallery were supporters from Georgia Equality, The Counter Narrative Project and Abundant LUUv Ministry's Core Team assisting Rev. Teague start the new congregation. He may be the first openly gay, African American man to have received such an honor by the Georgia House of Representatives. It was AIDS Watch Day at the capitol and Rep. Cannon was putting a bill forward that would require more information be given to persons who test negative for the presence of HIV/AIDS. Here is the link to the resolution. http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20172018/HR/290
I can’t thank Paige McKenzie Varner and the Islamic School of Knowledge enough for the amazing opportunity to reach out to our beautiful Muslim brothers and sisters. It was an amazing experience, loving conversations, and I walked away with my soul being fed. Thank you all for reaching out and helping to make this opportunity happen. We are all brothers and sisters with the same goals. LOVE —— Sara Shuler

The breakfast this morning with the students, faculty, and board members at City of Knowledge was amazing. The conversations were rich. When we have a date pinned down for potluck, I will pass it on to the principal - they are interested in attending. —— Paige Varner
Visit a Mosque day
March 11 from 3-6pm
Dear Friends at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett. Thank you for hosting our youth group from Gwinnett Islamic Circle yesterday. All of us left feeling very loved and welcomed by our neighbors.

We would like to invite your congregation to a Visit a Mosque Day on March 11 from 3-6PM. This is an important opportunity to show support and build bridges toward a better future for all of us.

In order to raise awareness about this event, please let your friends and neighbors, acquaintances and colleagues of all faiths know about this event.

Also, if you know anyone who is curious about Islam or has some questions, do direct them to this event. I will be at Madina Institute U.S.A - 3580 Sweetwater Rd, Duluth 30096 in Duluth and would love to see you all there!

Islamic Outreach potluck dinner on March 25 from 5:30-7:30pm
Extend the hand of friendship to our Muslim neighbors by attending this joint potluck meal. UUCG is seeking to join in solidarity with the Islamic community in Gwinnett. Invitations are being extended to mosques and Islamic schools. Please consider dietary restrictions and label your dishes accordingly.

On February 26, UUCG had 32 Islamic youth group visitors from several mosques in Gwinnett County. Our congregation recently sent flowers to these mosques telling them we are glad they are in our community. These young people wanted to come and thank us personally for our kindness. They were a delightful group, and repeatedly told us how much they enjoyed their visit.
General Assembly 2017
General Assembly (GA) is the international gathering of Unitarian Universalists. This year, GA is relatively close - New Orleans. 2017 GA includes the election of a new President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Registration and housing are now open. This is a great time to register as financial aid applications are available, discounts are offered through April 30 and housing tends to fill quickly. There are pre-GA racial justice training workshops too. Get updates by liking UU New Orleans on Facebook or visit www.uua.org/ga.

Southern Region Spring Gathering in Nashville April 7-9
At this moment in time, the values of Unitarian Universalism - hope, love, justice, courage and joy - are desperately needed. The world needs us and we need one another more than ever before. Come into these gatherings and network with other Unitarian Universalists partnering with you and supporting your work:

• Participate in your choice of workshops to find partners in the work you do. How we do what we do makes all the difference.
• Congregational Presidents, join into the discussion with the other congregational presidents to develop relationships that will help you succeed.
• Join in our UUA Presidential Candidates forum to see how the future might form under the leadership of a new UUA President.

WhaleCoast Alaska
Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? Four Alaska UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program next summer! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Seward, and Sitka with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, seals, and otters. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Forget the cruise ships – our program is the best way to visit Alaska! Tours led by Dave Frey, member of the Fairbanks UU congregation and Alaska travel expert. Find out more about this Alaskan trip of a lifetime before our tours sell out! Complete information at www.WhaleCoastAK.org. Contact info is: dfrey@whalecoastak.org or call 907-322-4966. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

UU Youth CONferences and More at The Mountain in Highlands, NC
• Youth CONs: Elementary March 10-12, Intermediate Mar 17-19, Senior High Mar 31-Apr 2
• Music Week at The Mountain April 16-21
• Homecoming Weekend at The Mountain May 26-29
• Summer Camps - Dates vary by age range with options from June 11 - July 22
Learn more and register at www.themountainrlc.org.
This year the board is in preparation for strategic planning. We are reading a short book *Growing a Beloved Community* because it inspires, informs and connects us to our vision. We are asking ourselves key questions that we developed at the Board Retreat in August that can help us understand the best ways to govern for our vision to be achieved. This month’s question: How do we grow healthy processes with all our engagement?

As I reflect this month on the question, I am reminded that healthy processes of engagement include listening and then listening some more. I am always messing up listening. I am a doer – I want to move to action and solution. Sometimes that’s not the right thing to do though. My action and my solution may not be what is really needed. I do it to myself as well. It is why the turtle is my favorite creature on the planet. The turtle started showing up in my life at my first job out of college. My co-workers gave me a turtle pin that said “slow-down”. Finding the balance between listening and action is one of my personal works for my life.

Right now, is the time for our annual Auction to support our Operational Budget. Lots of stuff to do but we must also remember to listen and really hear what is being said. Our Auction is not just a time for us to do something; it is a chance to come together for support and fun. It is a chance to donate items that may start some conversation; it is a chance to come up with a fun event for people to join with you on during the rest of year; or be a sponsor if you can’t attend and send a well wishes advert in the program. It is a chance to engage for our Luck to continue the history of UUCG for coming generations. We are so needed in the world not only for each other; let us listen to the heartbeat of UUCG – our community, and facilitate what she needs to keep growing.

**Summary of the month from the board:** How do we grow healthy processes with all of our engagement?

- Develop projects and services that can help us continue to build our roots and traditions.
- Recognize our history as UUs and as UUCG.
- Engage and participate as members and friends in activities and projects.
- Find ways to involve people with their usual friendships to facilitate new connections.

Let us grow this beloved community together.

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**Town Hall Meeting April 30 after service**

Please save the date for our next the Town Hall meeting. The April 30 meeting will include a report on the parking lot and a look at our elections as we prepare to vote at the Congregational Meeting on May 21.
Wanted: People who like making decisions with other people who like making decisions.

It is recruitment time for the upcoming elections to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Leadership Development Committee.

We have several open positions on both, if you are interested in being more involved in the future of UUCG. Please contact Denise Benshoof, Terry Welsheer, or Viki Andino if you are interested in a position.

And, even if you don’t call us, we might call you, just to see what interests you at UUCG.

The Board of Trustees: To be on the BOT, the candidate must be a member of UUCG of at least two years, good standing. Meetings are once a month, but responsiveness to e-mails is a must, as well as joyfully welcoming new members into our congregation by witnessing occasional new member signings.

Being on the BOT means sometimes making mundane decisions, such as writing a new policy, but also includes the exciting work of listening to others, agonizing over fiduciary ethics, and coming to conclusions some will like and some won’t. Our Board makes the serious and legal decisions of our church, and we need a variety of types of members on the board to make inclusive and sound decisions that represent the congregation.

Available positions on the BOT for the spring ballot are President and Vice-President, which are one-year terms beginning on July 1, and Treasurer, which is a two-year term. We prefer the Treasurer candidate have experience working with nonprofits and/or financial records with an eye for details.

Board of Trustees Teen Associate Members: Associate Members are teens between the ages of 12 and 17 who would like to work as nonvoting Board members. Two positions are available for teens who are or plan to become UUCG members by attending COA or UU 101 and 102. In these positions, teens are expected to attend the once-a-month Board meetings, participate in other Board duties, and respond well to e-mail.

Although the positions are non-voting, the Associate Members’ opinions are essential to making intergenerationally-aware decisions for UUCG’s future. Associate Member positions are one year terms.

Leadership Development Committee: The LDC has the challenge of seeking out UUCG members who are motivated to create a church that lives out their dreams and beliefs. We recruit people for the BOT and LDC, explore leadership and volunteer development theories, and encourage people to explore and grow while in leadership positions within the church.

Positions on the LDC are two-year terms. Currently, we have two appointed positions available to the LDC. Both have a little more than a year left on their terms. Two more positions will be available for the spring ballot for two-year terms beginning on July 1.
Building Open
Sunday: 9:30am-12:30pm
Tuesday: 10:00am-3:30pm
Friday: 10:00am-2:00pm
By Appointment: 770-717-7913

Staff
Rev. Jan Taddeo, Parish Minister
RevTaddeo@uucg.org
Our Minister is on sabbatical through July 31. Contact Staff or Board at the numbers below or our Pastoral Care Associates at 770-847-0566.

Laura de Castro, Administrator
Ldecastro@uucg.org
Office: 770-717-7913
Our Administrator is in the building on Tuesdays, Fridays and 3rd Sundays and available through email 12-3:30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Appointments suggested.

Christiana McQuain, Program Assistant
cmcquain@uucg.org

Michael Parker, Choir Director
choir@uucg.org

Board of Trustees
Barbara Stahnke, President
president@uucg.org

Ben Lower, Vice President
vp@uucg.org

Steve Smith, Treasurer
treasurer@uucg.org

Ally Perras, Secretary
secretary@uucg.org

Board Members at Large
Sara Heath
Theresa Waldrop
Phoenix Lastinger
Vacant

Order of the Owl Wizardry Camp is a Hogwarts experience for the next generation! Campers ages 7-14 will enjoy a week of otherworldly games, spellbinding crafts, enchanting dance moves, wizarding classes, & magical memories that will last a lifetime! BONUS: We've added a drama camp!
Cost per camp $125 (note price increase schedule below)

Session I: June 5-9 cost $150 (sibling discount $125), 10 AM - 2 PM Daily
Session II: June 19-23 cost $150 (sibling discount $125) 10 AM - 2 PM Daily
*Wizarding Drama Camp: June 12-16 cost $150 (sibling discount $125)
*Drama Camp for 2017 featuring the play Harry Potter and the Obnoxious Noise- the sssPOOF! by Jeannette Jaquish.

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church of Gwinnett
12 Bethesda Church Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30045

Registration request or questions? e-mail 1692productions@gmail.com or call Julie at 770-241-9805
UUCG member? Tell us when registering!!! Payment via check to Julie Goodrow or PayPal 1692productions@gmail.com Please check in on our Facebook page for details at www.facebook.com/orderoftheowlwizardrycamp

******SPECIAL EARLY REGISTRATION PRICES******
Register for one of our summer camps NOW thru February 28th for only $125!
Price increases to $135 March 1st - March 31st!
Price increases to $140 April 1st - April 30th!
Price is $150 from May 1st until camps begin. (additional sibling cost remains $125 throughout price changes)