



# The UUCC Chronicle

March 2020

## Worship: 10:00 AM

### **March 1**

Rescuing Jesus from the Christians  
Bill Dockery, Speaker

### **March 8**

Look for the Helpers  
Deanna Lack, Speaker

### **March 15**

Origins: Mission, Covenant, and Vision  
Ivan Cordrey, Speaker

### **March 22**

How Compassionately Are You Living?  
Deanna Lack, Speaker

### **March 29**

She Persisted  
Deanna Lack, Speaker

### **April 5**

Famous UU's  
Susie Zuller, Coordinator

### **April 12**

Dance with the Goddess  
Deanna Lack, Speaker

## Reflections: 11:00 AM

Every Sunday after Worship, approximately 11:00 AM; Co-facilitated by Susan Ford and Deanna Lack

Reflections is an informal, non-judgmental, small-group discussion of the sermon topic. Participants share thoughts and insights or just listen. All are welcome.

*NOTE:* For those who prefer to congregate outside the group, please keep noise directly adjacent to the Reflections group to a minimum. Thank you!

## What is Truth?

I got a message on our Facebook page from a Baptist seminary student, saying he had an assignment to speak with someone from another faith whose world view is different than his. I'm going to go out on a limb and guess that UU seminary students don't receive this particular assignment, because it's basically the assignment at church every Sunday, isn't it?

I don't have a transcript of our conversation but I thought I'd share some highlights as I remember them.

Dave: Do you believe in God?

Deanna: Well, that's complicated. If I'm answering for myself, I believe in the divine but not the way you believe in a personal God. And if I'm answering for UUs, we cover the spectrum from atheist to agnostic to deists to polytheist to Christians. And we take our answers from a number of sources of personal experience and holy writings, including the Bible.

Dave: Do you believe in Absolute Truth?

Deanna: That's less complicated. No.

Dave: I can't wrap my head around that. How do you sit with... how do you have conversations with people who don't believe the same? (In truth, he was doing an all right job, being respectful and asking very good questions.)

Deanna: Isn't it easier for me, who believes everyone has a right to their idea of truth, to sit with someone who thinks differently, than it is for you, who thinks that everyone who doesn't buy into your idea is wrong?

Dave: But how do you figure out what's right if you don't believe in the Bible?

Deanna: First, we do believe the Bible is one source of wisdom. I think it's in Romans (it is, 2:14-15) about how people who don't believe in God do by nature the thing of the law, because they have a conscience. It's inherent.

Dave: Christians come to your congregation? Why would Christians come to your church?

Deanna: Because they've been abused at your church. (I actually said other churches, but I'm not exempting his).

Dave: How can I not do that? (Abuse people and make them want to stop coming to my church... I really appreciated that he asked this question).

Deanna: Stop telling them they're going to hell. No one was ever won over to faith by this proclamation.

*(Continued on page 6)*

31 West First Street, Cookeville TN 38501

Deanna Lack, CLM

Traci Craighead, Board President

## Welcome New Member!



The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cookeville welcomes Lydia as our newest member!

## Board Meeting Highlights

February 16, 2020

By Susie Zuller, Board secretary

The Board of Directors reviewed several leadership opportunities for the upcoming months. UUCC still has one more opening for a member-at-large and a president-elect on the Board. Members-at-large not only learn about the short- and long-term planning for UUCC, but they also contribute their unique perspective on agenda items. The president-elect has the same characteristics as a member-at-large but also acts as the president when needed and is encouraged to attend free on-line trainings sponsored by UUA and the Southern Region. Two promising leaders may have the opportunity to attend a week-long Unitarian Universalist leadership school. Charles stressed to everybody that strong leadership is essential and that leadership school broadened his outlook on his role as a leader. To be on the Board, one must be a member of UUCC. At a later date, the Board will discern who may be attending a Southern Region Leadership Experience. For further information on training, see <https://www.uua.org/southern/leadership-experiences>.

Compassionate Communication facilitator Erica Swenson said that she would like to have a co-facilitator for this important small-group ministry. She plans to begin using *The Compassion Book* by Thom Bond. If you would like to work with Erica, please talk with anybody on the Board.

Discussion continued about funds still available for the

NAACP dinner. Jenifer said that about \$180 is left over from last year when UUCC sponsored a table, which was about \$300 and allowed eight people to attend. De said, "This project would be a great opportunity for Social Justice." The Cookeville-Putnam County Branch of NAACP will host its Freedom Fund Banquet Oct. 20, at the First United Methodist Church Christian Life Center, 165 E. Broad Street at 5 p.m. Guest speaker is the Reverend James Evans from Jackson, Mississippi, a civil rights leader and president of the Jackson Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Other leadership opportunities are for service coordinators (see Gates), greeters (see Charles), readers for the Sunday 9:30 a.m. Story for All Ages (see Deanna), a facilitator for Social Justice (see Deanna), as well as editors and proof-readers for the new [uucookeville.org](http://uucookeville.org) web site (see Cassandra).

Road trip opportunities for learning about UUism include "Pi Day: Small Number, Infinite Possibility!" March 14, in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and General Assembly, June 24-28, in Providence, Rhode Island. If you would like to attend either one or both of these events, please see Deanna.

Cassandra and Deanna volunteered to update the UUCC brochure. If you have ideas as to what the brochure should contain, please contact either Cassandra or De.

The next Board meeting was set for Sunday, March 8, at approximately 11:45 a.m., at UUCC. Members and friends of UUCC are welcome to attend.

# Events

## First Sunday of the Month Potluck!

Sunday, March 1 @ 11 AM

Sunday, April 5 @ 11 AM

For the Potluck, please bring a cooked dish or a store-bought item or contribute \$3 in the donation tin toward the meal or offer to wash or dry dishes. When you bring food, please bring enough to serve all who wish to enjoy your dish. And EVERYBODY wishes to enjoy your tasty morsels!



## Chalice Circle

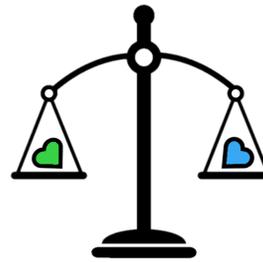
Contact Gates Craighead for additional details.

## Meditation

Contact Deanna Lack for additional details.

## Social Justice Committee

Sunday, March 8 @ 11:30



## Story for All Ages



Whether you are a young kid, or a not-so-young kid, come listen to the story for all ages, where we can all learn through wonderfully illustrated literature! Contact Deanna Lack for additional details.

## Board Meeting

Sunday, March 15 @ 11:30 AM

Current Board members, incoming Board members, and all those interested are welcome!



## Movie Night

Contact Ric Finch for additional details.



## Compassionate Communication

1st & 3rd Wednesdays

Wednesday, March 4 @ 6:00 PM

Wednesday, March 18 @ 6:00 PM

Compassionate Communication is an effective tool for resolving differences. This training will aid you in better understanding other people and in having other people better understand you.

Event dates and times, including events added after the newsletter is published, will be listed on the events whiteboards toward the back of the church and are announced at the close of service. If you are on Facebook, look for additional events in the UUCU group.

April is the month in which we observe Earth Day. If you have any tips on consumption reduction, conservation stories, or anything else environmentally related, we would like to hear from you! Submit your Earth Day tips and stories to Kathy Perdue at uucc.kdp@gmail.com by March 21 for inclusion in the April newsletter!

## Treasurer's Report

February 2020	
Income:	\$2,697.31
Expenses:	\$ 701.18

## Silent Auction Fund Raising Event

Our annual silent auction is upon us, and we have a great selection for you to examine. Even if you cannot attend services, you can bid on anything and stop by to pick up your winning selections. The auction will end at noon on March 29. Please contact [susiechas@yahoo.com](mailto:susiechas@yahoo.com) for additional information. BY Charles Zuller

ITEM	QUANTITY AVAILABLE	SUGGESTED BID (each)
Résumé and cover letter help	3	\$5
Loaf of bread (12 oz) multigrain or dried fruits and nuts	2	\$7
Hand sewing repair lessons	4	\$5
Sewing machine basics lessons	4	\$5
Wire wrapping class	6	\$10
Computer tech support (try to stump the expert)	3	\$5
Watercolor painting lessons	2	\$10
Circle of friends candle holder	1	\$10
Large bean bag	1	\$5
UUCC sticker for cars	as needed	\$5
Hummingbird wall hanging	1	\$10
You choose sermon topic (dates to be determined)	3	\$10
Crochet hat or scarf	4	\$12
Knife block (new)	1	\$7
Hair care products basket (see to believe the great deal)	4	\$10
Saturday brunch and a movie (date to be determined)	8	\$15
Batch of Norma cookies (2 kinds)	2	\$10
Original watercolor painting (unframed)	1	\$15
Singing or dancing lessons class (instructor requested)	4	\$10
Wooden ladder (6-foot) requested	1	\$10
Ramen Dinner for Two at the UU	1	\$35
Dinner for 6 cooked by Russ and Deanna Lack at the UU	6	\$15



### In Sympathy...

It is with great sympathy that we take a moment to honor life of Earl Schmitt, a beloved member of our UU community, who passed away on February 6. Please keep Dicksie, his wife of 63 years, in your hearts, thoughts, and prayers during this time of sorrow.

### Tornado Relief

If you or someone you know has had a loss due to the recent tornado and needs assistance, please contact a member of UUCC. We will help in any way we are able!

## FAMOUS UUs

*Service for Sunday, April 5*

You know you want to do it. You really do. You've got the bug. It's the acting bug!

You've either attended or been in plays before. Oh, the fun the cast has. Lots of make-up. Period costumes. Funny accents. Wigs, hats, and facial hair. Dancing and smiling their way into the hearts of their audience. These were the comedies.

There are also the tragedies. Tugging at the heartstrings. Tears flowing down our faces. Wanting to scream at the actors. Knowing, at the end, that it was just a play, "...a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," as the bard wrote.

You will have the opportunity to show us your acting skills on Sunday, April 5, if you so desire. On this date, Susie will be the service coordinator. She needs about five to seven people to choose to tell us about a famous or maybe not-so-famous Unitarian Universalist.

- You may choose to act and dress as if you were this person.
- Maybe you'd rather just read something about them.
- Maybe you'd like to talk about how they changed history or the influence that UUism had on their life or how they influenced UUism.

For example, you could briefly discuss a book by Louisa May Alcott. You could "be" Florence Nightingale, the angel of the battlefield, as she nursed the sick and dying. Maybe you could sing a solo of "Jingle Bells," written by James Pierpont. You get the idea. Do whatever makes you feel happy that gives your audience an idea of who you are.

Your skit, part, song, or whatever, should be about three to five minutes long. Susie will have a sign-up sheet for about three Sundays, beginning mid-March. You'll have plenty of time to think about who you would like to know more about and share with us. Susie will have a hard copy of some famous UUs for you to peruse. Also, for an idea of some famous UUs, see <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/workshop2/186399.shtml>.

Learn about a historical Unitarian Universalist. Share with us! You'll be glad you did, and so will we.

By: Susie Zuller

## Survey Says ...

How well do you know our Unitarian Universalist congregation? Recently, more than half the congregation responded to an on-line survey about individual beliefs and preferences. Giving diminishing weight to the categories from Very Important (5) through Not Applicable (1) and multiplying by the frequency of responses, we could look for trends.

The most important reasons for people first attending UUC were looking for community, intellectual stimulation, and a group sharing common values. These are unsurprising results, since we all tend to be social animals, seeking a comfortable fit among our peers. Seeking additional information, these same characteristics are why people continue to attend UUC.

In addition to the above, the features people most enjoy in our services are the Joys and Sorrows ritual and the support and encouragement for social justice. We, as a community, tend to be "doers" and expect everyone to be active participants in our quest for social justice. We also expect everyone to be encouraging and supportive as we travel our individual spiritual paths.

Examining our individual religious beliefs, we tend to believe that the powers traditionally attributed to a god are simply part of the natural world. Perhaps this is one reason we are considered humanists. We value critical thinking and evidence-based results higher than the acceptance of dogma or superstition to explain the unknown. We mostly accept God may exist but arguing about it is simply a waste of time, since everyone is entitled to individual beliefs.

In terms of individual spiritual practices, we tend to favor communing with nature and meditation over other religious practices. As Unitarian Universalists, we tend to march to our own drummers and determine what routines make us feel safe, happy, and fulfilled in life. Possibly that is why we tend dissatisfied with the idea of blaming problems on fate or "it's God's will." Our destiny is what WE make it.

Do you believe these results ring true for you? Could additional features be added to the worship program that would increase your sense of belonging and participation? Your feedback is crucial to our existence as a congregation. Speak up!

Now, let's compare our UUC survey data with the Demographic Data from the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) and the Faith Communities Today (FACT) Surveys conducted in 2001 and with the Pew Research Center surveys of 2014. Since the wording among the surveys differ, we will have to exercise some judgment in interpretation.

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Dave: But how can I not tell them they're going to hell if I believe they're going to hell?

Deanna: Listen, friend, I know you're telling them that from what you believe is a place of love because you don't WANT them to go to hell, but you are hurting people with this. Maybe emphasize God's love instead of eternal punishment.

Dave: So you don't believe that we're all sinners and need redemption?

Deanna: No, this is the fundamental reason I left Christianity. I believe all people are inherently good.

Dave: What makes you believe that?

Deanna (laughing): Wishful thinking maybe; sometimes I question it. People disappoint me. But I believe that even when they aren't good, people want to be good.

Dave: I don't know, no one taught my son to lie, but he lies (as evidence of the inherent not-goodness of people, I guess).

Deanna: Maybe, but he squirms when he does it; he knows it's wrong.

Dave: What would it take for me to change your mind, to believe in absolute truth? Deanna: Which one? Your version, or the Christian church's down the street, or if I'm born in Calcutta, an entirely different truth? Ultimately we all choose our own version of truth; I choose mine piecemeal according to what feels right to me, rather than accepting the entirety of the doctrine of one particular (branch of one) denomination.

Dave: I watched the video about UU philosophy on UUA's website, and it feels like it's all about the individual, all about me, me, me.

Deanna: No... it's all about the collective. We, we we. Whether that's a family, a congregation, or the whole of humanity. Three principles about the individual (1, 3, 4) and four about the collective (2, 5, 6, 7, and the "encouragement" in 3 could be argued to be both).

<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>

I do believe it's important to get comfortable sitting with and having respectful conversations with people who believe differently than we do. While we UU's have more practice at this than people of other denominations, I think we're reaching a place where it is difficult to speak to people who are firmer in their beliefs about what Truth is, and people who fall on the conservative end of the religious and political spectrum. Try reaching out this month to talk to someone who doesn't think like you do. At our church, we have a variety of ideas but ultimately we have things that tie us to one another that we probably all share. Get curious about someone else's ideas. Be respectful. Maybe make an agreement about safe/brave space.

Sit down and have a one-on-one and ask them what they think about things, even and maybe especially if you think you already know what they believe. Let them surprise you. Or maybe we could do this as a congregational exercise, pair up and write down what surprised us, and then share.

By Deanna Lack

*(Continued from page 5)*

In general, 91% of responding Americans believe in the existence of God, while 41% of UUA [respondents](#) believe it. Meanwhile, 22% of UCC respondents believe God is a vital part of their spiritual life. Of the American residents believing in God, 89% indicate they believe in miracles, while 65% of UCC respondents believe the powers traditionally attributed to a god are simply part of the natural world. UUA members in general tend to question any assumptions about a higher power, believing it all comes down to individual choices.

While 58% of UCC respondents believe "goodness" and "meaning" are human constructs (probably subject to interpretation), 79% of UUA respondents believe the standards for right and wrong depend on the situation. The variation here may be the wording. Nevertheless, human interpretations clearly dominate any religious idea that the standards are set by God (e.g., the Ten Commandments).

Since 54% of UUA respondents report meditating at least weekly and 46% of UCC respondents saying they meditate often, we are very similarly aligned across the nation. The idea that we frequently center ourselves comes of little surprise. We feel mature enough to determine our fate by making a plan, executing it, and dealing with the results.

Finally, 39% of UUA respondents say they pray daily, compared to 17% of UCC respondents saying they pray often. The variation here may be due to the wording of the surveys. Also, the overlap between praying and meditation could be due to different interpretations of the terms.

Reaching any conclusions based on very limited data is challenging. It appears that UCC respondents tend to be less religiously oriented than the UUA respondents across the nation. However, consider that UUA is composed of UU congregations that range from very religiously oriented to others that are primarily nature oriented.

In summary, Unitarian Universalists must be considered heretics. We choose our faith, not because we choose to be rebel against any orthodox religious order. "Heresy" in Greek is defined as "choice." Possibly this word defines us more than any other concept.

By Charles Zuller