



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP *of the Carolina Foothills*

Virtual Services via Zoom on the first and third Sundays of each month during the pandemic



Harmon Field Walkway

Happening in September:

- Sept. 6 – UUF CF Virtual Service
- Sept. 7 – Labor Day
- Sept. 11 – 9/11 Remembrance
- Sept. 13 – Grandparents Day
- Sept. 19 – Oktoberfest Begins
- Sept. 20 – UUF CF Virtual Service
- Sept. 27 – Yom Kippur



Sunday, September 6, 2020 – Lyndon Harris



Religion and Co-Existence in the post 9/11 Period

As we meet on September 6, we will be just a few days shy of the nineteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. One of the lessons from that fateful time has been that religious and interfaith relations are a matter of urgency. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 provoked a new era of hostilities between faith traditions, especially Christianity and Islam. Hate crimes against Muslims, and other little understood faith traditions (such as the Sikh community), were on the rise. If we are to move forward as an inclusive, egalitarian society, co-creating a better future, then religious co-existence and respectful dialogue are vital. So, what are the principles of successful interfaith engagement and dialogue? How can we embody them? As we anticipate the 19th anniversary of 9/11, join us for a presentation and discussion about the necessity and benefits of interfaith cooperation, mutuality and co-existence.

Join the conversation at 10:30 on Sept. 6!

Just go to <https://zoom.us/j/99226218973>

or by phone +1 646 876 9923

This is meeting # 9922618973

Sunday, September 20, 2020 – Lyndon Harris

Who Was Jesus?

Current Scholarship and the Quest for the Historical Jesus and Why It Matters Today



Rarely has there been a greater, more widespread Rorschach test of interpretation, than the wide range of perspectives on the historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth. “Son of God”, “God Incarnate”, teacher, revolutionary, prophet, magician, messiah? All of these widely varying understandings, and others, are alive and well today. Is there any hope of understanding who the original Jesus was? Is it possible to peel away layers of interpretation, attribution and accretion? Many currents of contemporary scholarship are working to do just that. Come join us for a lively discussion about the current state of discussion about “The Quest for the Historical Jesus.”

Join the conversation at 10:30 on Sept. 20!

Just go to <https://zoom.us/j/97252784558>

or by phone +1 646 876 9923

This is meeting # 97252784558



Lyndon's Letter



Dear Ones,

It's hard to believe that September is just around the corner. In the recesses of my memory, I can hear the strains of marching bands in preparation for the football season; I can smell the sizzle of BBQ on a grill as people join together in convivial tailgating. However, in reality, I hear crickets (but real crickets, since we live in the country). I'm not sure how we got here so quickly, because life in the time of COVID seems just to creep along. One of the many contradictions of this time, I suppose. But with the coming of Fall, as the air becomes crisper and the sunlight wanes, we are gently invited to reflection and introspection: what have I done with this time? What should I have done with this time? What are the lessons for me to learn? How will I be prepared for the "next normal" – whatever that is, and whenever that time should appear?

Personally, I oscillate between extremes, like a pendulum swinging from side to side. On the one hand, I am reminded of an essay I read early on about how to navigate this time of isolation and social distancing. The author used the example of taking a cross country flight with an unfortunately sick child. The child, screaming and crying the whole way, disabused the writer that she would get anything done, work-wise, on the flight. Her singular objective and strategy became merely *to survive* – to survive the at first sympathetic looks from fellow passengers that soon turned to stern looks embodying animosity, not to mention surviving the worry and stress of caring for a sick child, all the while being trapped in a very small, very public, space. The goal and strategy became to arrive alive at the destination.

On the other hand, I have entertained more ambitious goals for this "down time": to finish my book, to reorganize my forgiveness work, to pass the test (again) for my ham radio license, to begin again my study of Latin and the ancient poets, and to create at our home a kind of permaculture homestead farm - just to mention a few. After all, while under quarantine in 1605, William Shakespeare supposedly wrote his masterpiece, *King Lear*. And in 1665, Isaac Newton left Cambridge for the countryside, to escape the dangers of the Great Plague. While there, he developed calculus and his theory of gravity.

I think I am much closer to the "survive and arrive" end of the spectrum. How about you?

Although we haven't been able to meet in person as a fellowship, it warms my heart to see you on our Sunday morning Zoom sessions – to see your smiles, and to hear your stories. As we each navigate this crazy time, let us remember one another and give thanks for the blessing of our community and our friendship, as we continue to explore how we might be helpful to the wider world in this time of need.

Who knows? We may just arrive not just surviving, but with new insights on how to thrive. I sure hope so.

With warmth and affection,
Lyndon

Email your announcements to the Nuusletter to dgreeson1@gmail.com.

Note to Self:

Want to Help with the Presidential Campaign? — submitted by Robin Edgar

To help with the Biden/Harris Campaign, the NC contact for our region is Ethan.lott@2020victory.com.

To help locally to staff Democratic Headquarters in Columbus four hours a day Tuesday through Saturday; to make phone calls for Sam Edney and Moe Davis; or to be poll greeters during early voting and on Election Day contact:

Pat Salomon at the *Polk County Democratic Party*: 864-384-5076

Thinking Ahead — submitted on behalf of the UUFCE Board by Don Greeson, Secretary

What's that old Chinese proverb? A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step? During the most recent Board of Trustees meeting, we members found ourselves discussing the Fellowship's future and how we might emerge a stronger congregation after the pandemic subsides. We decided that, despite being unable to make any concrete plans, there are in fact general goals the Fellowship can establish. An obvious one is someday having a permanent place to meet rather than renting space. A second goal might be to create a designated savings account, one that could eventually become a "Capital Fund" to begin working toward realizing that dream. On the surface, it sounds ambitious, but we can take that first step by simply making a tax deductible contribution at the end of the year, directing memorials to be made to UUFCE, or remembering the Fellowship in our wills. Let's be thinking about this as a congregation. The board welcomes your input and ideas, and in turn we will keep the membership informed of any new initiative.

THOMAS JEFFERSON: PRESIDENT, SLAVE OWNER, UNITARIAN?

"Black Lives Matter" hits close to home

The media coverage of President Trump's extraordinary efforts to win a second term expose and amplify his true character. Future historians will no doubt have much to analyze once the dust settles from this era's turmoil. Trump's attitude toward racism, both systemic and blatant, is out of touch with today's realities. From a liberal religious perspective, facing racial disparities and working to correct them is not only important, but essential to the health of our nation.

UUs have a role to play. The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) was formed in 1961 through the consolidation of the American Unitarian Association, established in 1825, and the Universalist Church of America, established in 1793. Both denominations embraced liberal Christian traditions, and both have a long, proud heritage. In fact, a Harvard Divinity School graduate named Ralph Waldo Emerson became minister of Boston's Second Church (Unitarian) in 1829.

But should we count Emerson as one of our own? His faith is most often described as transcendentalism, and he was considered by some an atheist. Many of the country's founders are also considered either Unitarian or Universalist (James Madison was claimed by both!) but most who espoused liberal religious views were actually members of Congregational or Episcopal churches.

Thomas Jefferson claimed to be a Unitarian. In a 2004 UU World article, Peg Duthie shares his own words from one of his letters. *"The population of my neighborhood is too slender, and is too much divided into other sects to maintain any one preacher well. I must therefore be contented with being a Unitarian by myself."* Duthie elaborates: *Jefferson was a regular donor to St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, and served on its vestry, but he was also known to worship at Joseph Priestley's Unitarian church in Philadelphia.* (By the way, Priestley was the minister there... the same Joseph Priestley who discovered oxygen!)

Jefferson is revered for his contributions to our nation's founding, but he was not an abolitionist, and in fact, owned slaves. (Many are unaware that Sally Hemmings was actually a half-sister to Jefferson's wife.) In 1993, a group of African-American UUs objected to celebrating the third president's 250th birthday. At the General Assembly that year, Black ministers asserted that "Thomas Jefferson's role in the racial history of the United States is not one which African Americans, native Americans, or others victimized by the 'founding fathers' wish to honor."

This controversy was especially poignant for UU congregations in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, who made up the Thomas Jefferson District. In 2011, at a district conference, delegates voted to change the name to the Southeast District. It seems that, not unlike professional sports teams who have recently abandoned their racially insensitive names, or the removal of public statues and monuments memorializing the Confederacy, even religious institutions are challenged to acknowledge injustices of the past and embrace a higher standard. For UUs, addressing violations of human dignity is at the core of our seven guiding principles. It's never too late to do the right thing. —Don Greeson



Daveed Diggs plays Jefferson in Broadway's "Hamilton"

Profile

Dave Edgar



In a community known for art and recreation, it's only natural that Dave Edgar and his wife Robin would settle in Tryon. Like many who now call the “*friendliest town in the South*” home, making the move here was a lifestyle choice. Dave has followed his instincts throughout his life, and as a result has enjoyed some enviable circumstances, including a job as a craftsman for Walt Disney World—working on projects for Epcot—and a 12-year stint as the administrator of the Armory Art Center in West Palm Beach, Florida. But his story begins with a family history just as unique. Born while his Citadel-educated dad was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, he eventually migrated to his dad's home near Gainesville, Florida. There is where, in a crossroads town named Edgar, his great-grandfather founded the family business. After discovering a large deposit of kaolinite, a mineral that creates a white clay ceramicists call Kaolin (ideal for porcelain,) the senior Edgar created a factory. Dave's father, who had earned a business certificate at Harvard, had the foresight to steer his son away from a lifetime of service to clay production and enrolled him in Massachusetts' Tabor Academy. After graduating from prep school, Dave first attended Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, then the Minneapolis College of Art and Design where he earned a BFA degree, and afterwards the Cranbrook Academy of Fine Arts in Michigan, where he earned his master's. Drawing and painting were neither his keenest interests nor strengths, but instead his love was sculpture, and to learn how to sculpt in metal he enrolled in Troy, Ohio's Hobart School of Welding. It was this layered education that landed him the job with Disney, followed by a series of administrative roles related to art education. First was service as CEO at Orlando's Crealde School of Art, then CEO of West Palm Beach's Armory Art Center, where he met his future wife Robin. Following that was a stint managing Broward County's Cultural Affairs Division, then Art Department Chair at Ohio's Ashland University. It was an offer to be over the Arts Administration program at UNC-Charlotte that final brought him—and Robin—to North Carolina. Of course, while Dave assumed responsibility for these management positions, his first love was still sculpture, and he taught and practiced his craft all along the way. While in Charlotte, he and Robin began thinking about a second home to use as a retreat and maybe retire to one day, and Dave remembered happy summers in the mountains at Camp Sequoyah near Weaverville. With that in mind, they considered searching for a lake house on Keowee or Jocassee. But a tip from a friend alerted them to the charm of the Thermal Belt, and over time they built a cottage just steps from Tryon. Here Dave would pursue his art with a focused enthusiasm. Giving up the bulk and expense of welding equipment, he began creating whimsical creatures from discarded plastic, repurposing the material in a most creative and entertaining way. From there with Robin's help, a book on his art titled *Fantastic Recycled Plastic* was written and published, and a dedicated website created to display his work. You can view his virtual gallery at www.plastiquarium.com. During all the years of teaching and administering in the academic world, Dave remained largely uninvolved in organized religion, despite the fact he grew up in an English Episcopal tradition. That, he explains, is thanks to his maternal grandfather, who was an Episcopalian Rector in Canada. Thus, our little fellowship represents his first foray into a church setting as an adult. We are glad to call him one of our own!

Unitarian Universalist affirmation:

*“Love is our doctrine,
the quest for truth is our sacrament,
and service is our prayer.”*
