



The Communicator

of the [Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Lake County](http://www.uu-lakecounty.org)

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December Programs

Discussion Group at 9:30 am

December 3 – “A metaphysical Interpretation of Christmas Carols” with **Cathy Benton**.

December 10 – “How Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google manipulate our emotions”, a TED talk by Professor Scott Galloway of NYU.

December 17 – To be announced

December 24 – To be announced

December 31 – To be announced

Woerscippen at 11:00 am

December 3 – **Rev. Katie Culbert**. “The Power of Forgiveness.” Forgiving is not always easy. Asking for forgiveness can be just as hard. When someone has done us wrong or when we have hurt another, it can be painful to engage in the spiritual discipline of forgiveness. Pastor Culbert will explore the surprising but steadying power of forgiveness. How can we learn to forgive so that we can free ourselves to offer transformation and peace to our own lives and the wider world?

December 10 – “Searching”, with UU intern, **Bobby Kilgore**. We are all searching to fill our needs. How do we search? How can we fill that space that needs to be filled?

December 17 – **Rev. Tracie Barrett-Welser**. “The Longest Night” - Winter Solstice, or Yule, marks the longest night of the year. Rev. Tracie will explore the importance of Yule, not just for Pagans, but for all of us during our longest nights.

December 24 – (AM): **Rev. Tracie Barrett-Welser**. “Imperfectly Perfect” - The Christmas story in the Early Christian Scriptures tells us about how God chose an imperfect family to raise a perfect son. Join Rev. Tracie on this Christmas Eve to learn how we can see the perfection within our own imperfections.

At 6 PM: “Lessons and Carols” - Join Rev. Tracie for a traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service. We will retell the Christmas story, sing carols, and end with candlelight and Silent Night.

December 31 – (A.M): “Contemplation and Reflection” When you consider Contemplative Practices from the Buddhist perspective, you find three main areas of activity—what the Buddha called Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. During this talk, **Sensei Morris Sekiyo Sullivan** will talk about how mindfulness and other contemplative practices can help us manage stress, cultivate happiness.

At 1 PM: **Buddhist Inspired Retreat** with **Sensei Sullivan**. (See the following article)

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To schedule an appointment with Rev. Tracie, please use <https://calendly.com/tbarrettwelser>

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A UU-Buddhist Retreat: Lovingkindness in a Troubled World

Here is a way to start the new year off in a thoughtful and spiritually rich way. Join a few of your UU friends and some guests from the community on Sunday, December 31st, for a Buddhist-inspired retreat.

The retreat will begin at 1:00 in the sanctuary. Please arrive at 12:45. It will center around the idea of practicing lovingkindness toward oneself and toward others in a very troubled world. The retreat will begin with some instruction and a chalice lighting. There will be two theme related talks by Sensei Morris Sekiyo Sullivan, two periods of meditation (about 30 minutes each), meditative walking, and readings. It will last for approximately 2 1/2 hours. Anyone interested in joining us for this spiritual experience is welcome. Please wear loose clothing and be prepared to slip off your shoes. Socks are fine.

All participants are asked to donate to cover our costs. Suggested donation is \$10.00. Again, this retreat will be held on New Year's Eve Day, December 31st. Plan to arrive at 12:45.

December 2017



When I first arrived at UUCLC and stood in our beautiful sanctuary, one image came clearly into my mind. That was of a large table down the center of the sanctuary where we could gather as a family and a community and eat a meal together.

I tossed the idea of a community Thanksgiving out to the leadership and the congregation. I was not sure if this was a need or even a want of the community, but I felt the pull in my soul to offer it anyway. When I announced the dinner, I put the sign-up sheet out in the narthex and waited. I told my husband and stepson that it might be just us sitting there that day. I was moving out in faith on this.

A few weeks later, I arrived and found the sign-up sheet nearly full. I was there, on a late Sunday afternoon, showing my family around the building. My husband saw tears build up in my eyes and asked me what was wrong. I said that nothing was wrong and everything was beautiful. Then I showed him the sign-up sheet.

A week later, we found ourselves sitting at that table I saw in my head months ago. Again, my husband leaned over and asked if I was okay. Tears were again building in my eyes as I looked down the table at the nearly forty people who gathered around the table to break bread and share in gratitude and Thanksgiving.

This dinner was just the beginning. I'm so excited to build these new traditions with all of you. This month will find us adding new traditions that I hope will continue. On Thursday, December 21, we will celebrate the Winter Solstice with a drum circle and fire. Feel free to bring yourself (and a chair) and your drum if you have one. If not, voices work as well as we will learn some chants and hear stories about the Pagan traditions around the Winter Solstice. When we finish, we will have shortbread and cider before departing for home. Sunday, December 24 will see us with two services, our regular Sunday morning service and a Candlelight Service at 6pm. This service will be a traditional "Lessons and Carols" service and will end in candlelight. Feel free to bring your family and let us fill our sanctuary with love and light.

In this time of blessings and gratitude, I am thankful for you, our friends and members of UUCLC. I am blessed to be your minister.

...Rev. Tracie

December Birthdays

Kit Tatum, December 4
Jane O'Connor, December 5
Carl Skiles, December 26

President's Message...

In my articles over the past several months, I have been reflecting upon the many transitions that our beloved congregation has been through. There have been the obvious transitions—like moving into our new building on May 28, 2017, but some transitions are more subtle. Did you know that 36% of our members joined the Congregation within the last two years?

Some of us share a common UUCLC history. Many of us share a UU history, having experienced UU for years, but elsewhere. Still others are brand new to UU, although they may have been UU s at heart for their whole lives.



On November 19, Rev. Tracie Barrett-Welser spoke to us during the Discussion Group and shared her journey to becoming a Unitarian Universalist minister. We got to know Rev Tracie a bit personally and learned what is involved in becoming a UU minister: a long and costly process.

But some of our Congregation are not familiar with the process that UUCLC went through as we searched and hired Rev Tracie.

Before we address that process, a bit of history is in order. The original members of the Congregation began meeting in 1989, chartered the Congregation with the UUA in 1994, and developed a consulting relationship with the Reverend Roger Seidner for over twenty years. But, the UUCLC was primarily a lay led congregation until we hired our first contract minister, the Reverend Susan Berryman in September, 2014. Rev Susan was with us for one and a half church years – all of 2015 (September 2014 through June 2015) and the latter half of 2016 (January 2016 through June 2016). When she left to be with family in Arizona, the Congregation took some time to assess how to proceed.

We consulted with the UUA Southern Region and received sound advice from then Lead Executive, Rev Kenn Hurto, regarding establishing priorities for the minister's time and determining what our budget could support. After developing an advertisement, we recruited a selection team comprised of Egor Emery, Judith Havens and Carl Hommel. This team developed a questionnaire to obtain input from Congregation members and friends regarding their expectations and values for a minister. The team met periodically with the Congregation, provided us with a summary of the survey results and kept us apprised of their progress. The selection team reviewed the applications for our part time minister position, conducted interviews, including on site pulpit review, and recommended hiring Rev Tracie to the UUCLC Board of Trustees.

The Board interviewed Rev Tracie, conducted telephone reference checks, consulted with UUA Southern Region, and confirmed the selection team's recommendation. On March 19, I was happy to announce to the Congregation that we had extended an offer of employment to the Reverend Tracie Barrett-Welser to be our minister half time for the 9 months of the 'regular' season from approximately mid September 2016 to mid June, 2017. In late May 2017, the Board and Rev Tracie signed a five-page Letter of Agreement which sets forth "the responsibilities and obligations of the Minister to the Congregation, and of the Congregation to the Minister, as we seek to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to serve one another and the larger community."

So, what did we want and agree to with Rev Tracie? Rev Tracie can and has spoken to us about her vision regarding her responsibilities to UUCLC. This is not the place for a full treatise on ministerial principles. Instead, I'll provide an extract (with my edits) from the expectations section of our Letter of Agreement. Under "Expectations" we listed: Shared Leadership; Pulpit and worship services; Pastoral Care; Services to the Board and Committees; Services to the Community --- a pretty tall order for a part time position, right?

So, now a bit of housekeeping. Every church has a budget. In fiscal year 2016, when Rev Berryman was with us, we had budgeted \$19,500 for a minister.

UUCLC operates on a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year. The UUCLC Finance Committee receives budget projections from committees and cost centers and develops its budget in the spring of each year, so that the Board can review the budget with the Congregation at the Annual meeting, which is usually on the first Sunday in April. ►

► The UUA Southern Region had advised the Board that we should expect to pay approximately \$67,000 for a full-time minister, plus FICA, housing and out-of-pocket expenses. We sharpened our pencils (and spreadsheets) and determined that **if** we could find 'home hospitality' to cover housing, and **if** we could increase our budget in fiscal year 2018 and configure the part time calendar in way that was amenable to the candidate as well as to the Congregation, this might work.

The result is what you have seen.

- At our April 2017 Annual meeting, we talked about the need to provide housing for Rev Tracie. Two 'snow bird' members graciously came forward to offer their homes, while they went up north. Rev Tracie has been staying in the home of Judith and David Havens when she is in Lake County from May to November. As of the beginning of December, she will be staying in June Sweeten's second home. We owe all of these generous people (and others who offered) our heartfelt thanks. Thank you, thank you.
- Our fiscal year 2018 line item for minister's salary is \$25,000 or 37% of a full time minister's salary. So, we can afford a half time minister for only 75% of the time:

(50% -- half time x 75% -- 9 months of the year) and that's what we have agreed to with Rev Tracie.

You can see her schedule posted on the window of the office. Concisely stated: Rev Tracie is with us for the last 2 Sundays of each month and for the time in between (except not on that Friday). She is also with us on the first Tuesday through Thursday of the month. After a while, we got used to the schedule.

Some have asked, how can we get more of the minister's time? That is primarily a budget issue and the short answer is: an increased budget which relies on increased pledges.

If you aren't a member and you'd like a voice in what the Congregation is doing, consider becoming a member. If you are a member, speak up. If you'd like to see more programs (or increased minister time) that require resources and you are able, consider increasing your pledge and/or the time you contribute.

Spring follows quickly after the holidays. The Board will soon be turning its attention to planning for fiscal year 2019 (July 2018 to June 2019). Russ Littlefield has agreed to chair this year's Nominating Committee. If you have an interest in being considered for one of the upcoming Board vacancies (President, Secretary, Trustee), please see him. If you have ideas for FY 2019 programing, see a Committee Chair or Board member. There are many opportunities to be involved in this beloved

... Chris Higgins

The Open Door Raises \$30,000 for the Homeless

The Open Door held their First Annual "Soup For Good" event on Nov.7 and raised over \$30,000 in support of programs and services provided to our community's homeless. It was also to recognize the volunteers that give of their time, talent and treasure to help make it a success. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend so our own Candi Tipton stepped up to represent UUCLC volunteers.

It sounds as if I missed a blast as over 200 attended. Corporate and Table Sponsors provided "celebrity servers" such as Doctors from Florida Hospital Waterman, Lake County Commissioners, Eustis Mayor, Sheriff Grinnell and several local bankers and business leaders. I have seen a video of some of the "celebrity servers" dancing through the maze of tables serving soups donated by some of our local restaurants such as Pisces Rising, Tilly's, Barnwood BBQ, Golden Corral, just to name a few. It was a huge success.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank our UUCLC Open Door volunteers for giving of themselves to help the less fortunate in our community: Candi Tipton, Bernie Greenberg, June Sweeten, Laine Panuska, Ana Briggs and Cecelia Everest. Also, to those who remain nameless who drop in on their own with donations. Thank you and I love you all.

Suzie Lockwood

Anyone with Frequent Flyer Miles, Please Contact Russ Littlefield

Peter Mayer is arguably *the* premier contemporary UU song writer and musician. He is also considered by some a notable UU theologian. As far as I know, Pete Mayer has never written a book or an essay of theology, but he has written songs, lots of them, and they are loaded with UU theology. They are songs like, "Everything is Holy Now;" "God is a River;" "Church of the Earth" and "Blue Boat Home." He is headed our way for our dedication weekend, first for a concert on January 27 and then for our dedication ceremony on January 28. He is from Minnesota and is flying into Orlando. If anyone has frequent flyer miles that they might contribute toward his flight, please let me know.

We will have more to say about this dedication weekend in the next newsletter, but for now, please set aside January 27th and 28th. Russ

From Esther Smith's son, Michael --

Esther passed away peacefully in her sleep the day after Thanksgiving. She was in considerable pain and ready to go, so this was a blessing. She didn't want a memorial or anything like that, but maybe you could mention her passing during the next service. I know she had good friends there who cared about her. Thankfully, she was able to make it to last week's service with my sister, Meredith.

Some Scenes from Thanksgiving Dinner at UUCLC (photos by Gina Rossi)...

