



# THE NUUSLETTER

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF CHATTANOOGA

### SEPTEMBER, 2008

#### A BALANCING ACT by the Rev. Jeff Briere

Four conditions:

1. Life is perilous. A hundred and one bad things can happen to you any day of the year. Traffic accidents. Lightning strikes. Paper cuts. The truth is we face so many hazards each and every day that we cannot hold them all in our brains. Nor would we want to; doing so would immobilize us. Danger is just part of being alive.

2. For better or worse, the Constitution provides us with the right to own and use a gun. For better or worse, Congress has been unable to restrict that right. Therefore, it is possible for an unbalanced person, someone who is emotionally or psychically disturbed, to possess a firearm and use it inappropriately. It is also possible for that unbalanced person to have a switchblade or a baseball bat or a slingshot.

3. In the past ten years, fourteen incidents of gun violence occurred in religious settings; a church, mosque, temple, or synagogue. A hundred years ago, the idea of shooting someone in church would never have occurred to a gunman. Not now. Any place is dangerous.

4. We are an open and welcoming congregation; we are not guarded and defensive. We welcome all people regardless of belief or culture. This does not mean we tolerate belligerent or anti-social behavior. We endorse civility and decorum in church life.

To recap:

1. Life is dangerous.
2. Nearly anyone can own a gun.
3. No place is really safe.
4. We are a welcoming congregation.

Question: How can we balance our concern about the first three with our commitment to the last one?

The Board of Trustees will take up this question in the near future. If you would like to be part of the conversation, please tell me or any member of the Board.

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF CHATTANOOGA  
*a liberal religious  
community*

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SUNDAY SERVICES ♦ 11:00 AM

September 7th ♦ *WATER COMMUNION*

This annual ritual marks the beginning of our church year. Please bring a small container of water to combine with other waters. See the article below.

September 14th ♦ *THE GREATEST OF THESE IS HOPE*

With this service, the Rev. Jeff Briere begins a year-long consideration of hope, a general feeling that things will turn out well, or at least as they should. We will return to this topic a few more times this year to understand better why it's vital for life.

September 21st ♦ *IS THIS CHURCH TOO SPIRITUAL?*

The Rev. Jeff Briere leads this service in which he gives his answer to this question.

September 28th ♦ *LOOK OUT BELOW! SPIRITUAL ROCK CLIMBING AND MANAGING CHANGE*

Lynn Schmissrauter will preach in this service. She wonders, "How do we deal with change in our lives? Are there ways to safely negotiate its chaos without crumbling or reaching for something that isn't there? What are the challenges and gifts in upheaval?" Lynn will discuss how to remain stable when the earth is moving underneath us. See p. 3 for more about Lynn.

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SUNDAY FORUMS

The Forum meets downstairs in the far left corner room at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. Bill Berry is coordinating the September programs. All are welcome.

**September 7** ~ Jerry Smith will lead a discussion of the book *Misquoting Jesus*, by Bart Ehrman, chairman of the religious studies department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**September 14 & 21** ~ "Muddles, Meaning, and Spirituality in Mid-Life." Dr. Don Klinefelter, a retired UTC professor, department of philosophy and religion, will lead this discussion. Much has been made of various forms of "mid-life crises" in our society and culture. As we grow older, many of us are finding new answers to such old questions as: What makes my life worth living? What old roles and habits do I need to let go? How has the loss of some of my closest relationships shaped my life? Is spiritual growth still possible? How do I face my own death?

**September 28** ~ Barbara Berry Jordan will discuss the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, commonly known as the "No Child Left Behind Act," and its impact on public education.

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WATER COMMUNION

On September 7th, during the worship service, we will enact an annual ritual that we call Water Communion. Each year, in late summer, we bring water to a communal vessel in a symbolic service that recognizes that each and every member of the church brings something special to the life of the church. When we pour these waters together, we see that our church rises or falls on our own contributions.

Please bring a small container of water from your kitchen tap, your pool, a rain puddle, a river, an ocean or a lake. You can bring bottled water, ice cubes, a snowball, a hailstone, an icicle, a jar of snowmelt, a cup of sleet, a jar of steam or a zip-lock bag of fog. The water you bring can come from afar or a-near. It can be cold or hot. If water is scarce in your life, we will have representative water available.

THE INTERDEPENDENT WEB  
by Steve Hollingsworth

*And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

~ Matthew 26:39

*But now - surely! - it was so obvious! Grissom had just screwed the pooch! In flight tests, if you did something that stupid, if you destroyed a major prototype through some lame-brain mistake such as hitting the wrong button - you were through!*

~ Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff* p. 230

Daidee and I delayed our departure to Florida and the Unitarian Universalist (UU) General Assembly for a few hours to say goodbye to long-time UU Church of Chattanooga member Bill Keiss who died in June. To me it was a necessary gesture of respect to a generation of our church leaders that is all too quickly passing from the scene.

Death, violent death at that, has been seared into the consciousness of UUs everywhere with the shootings at the Tennessee Valley UU Church in Knoxville.

These losses are profoundly connected in my own mind. The generation we are losing so rapidly is the last generation that lived through World War II, a time of cruelty and mayhem on a scale that is still hard to comprehend. One measure is that the victors'

justice, military tribunals and other ad hoc judicial proceedings, executed a number of war criminals comparable to the American troop fatalities in Iraq. The legitimacy and rationale of those proceedings like Guantánamo's today will doubtless be debated for centuries.

Collectively the "greatest generation" found the will and its individuals found the courage to defeat manifestly evil regimes. I am humbled by their sacrifice.

In Knoxville, a few brave individuals confronted and subdued the shooter; usher Greg McKendry, a man of my generation, gave his life in the process. As sad as that is, I am grateful to find that selfless courage survives.

Spiritual practice is not particularly my thing, but I am given to introspection. Thinking about how any of us might suddenly be in the place where our action or inaction might be life or death for others disturbs me. I want to believe that I would not screw the pooch. I pray that the cup pass from me.

UUs have died in my lifetime marching for civil rights, defending an abortion clinic, even as countless others have done the same and similar things and lived to do them again another day. As the best selves we always hope to be, UUs are tough and brave. Pass it on.

### WHO'S PREACHING?

On September 28th, we welcome Lynn Schmissrauter to our pulpit. Lynn is a congregational consultant for the National Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee. She is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and has studied at the School of Theology at the University of the South at Sewanee. As the Canon Pastor of the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Jackson, Mississippi, she coordinated pastoral care in a parish of 2400 members and helped design curriculum for adult education before moving to Chattanooga to marry Joey and help him raise three young children (who are now teenagers and young adults).

Lynn is currently the Chief of Faculty for a national program called Fresh Start, which trains people across the country and in Canada and England to help clergy and congregations navigate the challenges of transitions in pastorates. Lynn is a founding member of The Sanctuary and La Paz de Dios, two non-profits which serve marginalized people in Chattanooga. She resides on Signal Mountain and calls herself an "Episcopal Buddhist Progressive." She is smitten with the game of golf and is presently reading a book entitled *Lamb, the Gospel According to Biff, Jesus' Childhood Friend*, by Christopher Moore.

The articles in *the nUUsletter* are representative of the diverse and varied opinions and beliefs of the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga (UJCC). They do not necessarily represent the views of the UJCC.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UUPDATE  
*by Jamie Sullivan, Director of Religious Education*

Did you see any of the cool crafts the children created this summer? We made glittery dragonflies, popsicle-stick baskets, and flower newspaper hats, just to name a few. Our water play days were loads of outdoor fun. Our relaxed time together has helped us build important friendship bonds for beginning our more structured fall programs.

Our fall curricula descriptions and registration cards are now available for parents to fill out and return. Included on this card is volunteer information and dates to choose from. Our Religious Education (RE) program requires at least one parent or guardian to volunteer once a month. This requirement is a valuable opportunity for us, as parents, to be involved in our children's spiritual growth and learning. And it's fun! Please return these forms and the registration fee to Jamie Sullivan, or an RE teacher.

It is a joy to be involved in another year of our religious education program. Experiencing church life with the children and adults of this church through the past year has been a gift. I want to say *thank you* to all of you who put so much time and energy into the life of this church.

Notes:

- Our RE annual calendar is ready and available. Additional dates will be posted in e-blasts and future newsletters.

- Communication is key to the success of our RE program. We invite parents to join our teacher/parent yahoo group list. This helps those of us who are extremely busy to check in on events and plug into volunteer opportunities. Please contact me if you would like to join.
- Thank You to Diane Davison for asking RE to help choose KIVA micro-loan recipients. What a wonderful opportunity to help others, learn geography, and discuss diverse living conditions around the world.
- Thank You to Steve Hollingsworth who involved RE in the litany service this summer. The children were full of smiles and excitement as we left service and made our way downstairs that Sunday. This was an enriching and educational experience for all of us. We learned the importance and joy of practice and repetition.
- Thank You to Marge Pasch for her generous donation of her incredible and unique miniature art.

Attention Parents: Now is a good time to start saving to send your child to the Unitarian Universalist summer camp *The Mountain* in summer 2009. One of our teens, Chris Ballew, thoroughly enjoyed his experience the past 2 years. For information, just ask Chris or me, or check out their website at [www.mountaincenters.org](http://www.mountaincenters.org).

KEEP YOUR TREASURES (AT LEAST FOR A WHILE)  
*by David Reed, Vice-President, Ways and Means*

In last month's nUUsletter, we talked about Double the Plate, which is one of our major fundraisers for this year. This month I want to talk about our second major fundraiser, and ask a favor.

**The Rummage Sale Is Back!**

It's been a few years since we've had a rummage sale, and they have traditionally been successful for us. So Maddie Kertay has graciously agreed to coordinate another sale this year.

We plan to hold the Grand Event in early May.

The Rummage Sale is our OPM fundraiser. OPM means *Other People's Money*. In many years, we look to our own congregation

as the income source for our fund raising efforts. This year, we're doing that with Double the Plate. So we wanted to make our other major fundraiser bring in people, and their money, from outside the church.

The favor I ask is: don't get rid of yesterday's treasures, tomorrow's junk, or today's unnecessary stuff just yet. If you can store it for a bit, hold on to it and let us have it for the rummage sale. We really appreciate anything and everything (within reason) you can donate to the effort.

And, to paraphrase the late, great George Carlin: if you don't give your stuff to us, you might have to buy a new house to hold it all.

**BIRTHDAYS!**

You might be sharing your birthday with someone else at UUCC! Not the year, necessarily, but the same month and day. Check the list for September, then try to learn more about your "twin"!

Les Kertay and Adam Couch  
Kay McCurdy and Rich Dwyer

## THANK GOD FOR EVOLUTION!



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga is pleased to welcome the Rev. Michael Dowd to our church on September 10 at 7:00 pm.

Michael, a former United Church of Christ pastor, is the author of the 2007 book, *Thank God for Evolution!*, which has attracted endorsements from five Nobel laureates and a host of leaders across the religious spectrum.

According to Reverend Michael Dowd, the war between religion and science is over. Just as scientific theories evolve and expand over time with new discoveries and new information, Dowd proposes that divine revelation is not limited to the Bible but continues to be discovered through science. "Facts are God's native tongue," he writes.

Drawing on the full range of cosmological, geological, biological, and human-related sciences, *Thank God for Evolution!* shows the history of the universe as an epic drama in which the generations alive today have a crucial role to play. It offers a shift in public perception on a scale not experienced since the Copernican Revolution or the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. By

acknowledging the global, collaborative scientific endeavor as public revelation, we can newly appreciate the timeless insights within the private revelations of the world's enduring religious traditions. Moreover, Dowd shows how the discoveries of science—notably, evolutionary brain science and evolutionary psychology—offer astonishing gifts for understanding and overcoming the challenges in our personal lives and relationships. This, he declares is "the gospel according to evolution."

In rejoining our heads with our hearts, Rev. Dowd speaks to what matters most to us: our personal struggles, breakdowns, and pain; our closest relationships; our choices about where to spend our time, energy, and money; and the well-being of our communities and our world.

For 6 years, Michael and his wife, Connie, have lived on the road, delivering talks for some 300 Unitarian Universalist congregations, summer camps, and minister retreats as well as for other religious and secular groups. Their work was featured as the cover story of our national membership magazine, *UU World*, in the spring of 2006, and was featured in a 2008 issue of *The New York Times Magazine*.

### INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

*by Charlotte Davis, IHN Coordinator*

On Wednesday, August 27th at 10 AM groundbreaking for the new Family Day Center on Baldwin Street occurred. This day center will be a safe place for the families in the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) to stay during the day and on weekends.

We will be hosting IHN families Sept 29-Oct 5. We need several volunteers to assist with this important area of social justice in our church community. In addition to the usual volunteers needed for

set-up, cooking, hosting, etc., we also need a driver for the trailer. In the past, Ron Pasch has graciously provided his skills and his truck to transport the trailer; however, during the upcoming hosting Ron will be enjoying some time out of town. Anyone with a truck and some time to assist with the trailer, or anyone interested in volunteering in any capacity, please contact Charlotte Davis or Chris in the church office.

### ART ON OUR WALLS *by Carol Hobbs*

K. Louise Crowell, of Winchester, Tennessee, daughter of Ray and Helen Solomon, will display eight paintings in our church during September and October. Louise Crowell began working with oils in 2003 with no formal training. The artist is a kindergarten teacher who loves the fresh perspective and excitement children bring to our lives.

Mrs. Crowell credits her artistic talent to having grown up in a large family where natural abilities and talents were encouraged.

Mrs. Crowell's subjects are many and varied, including landscapes, still-life, portraits and animals. She has completed many commissioned works, mostly portraits. Currently, her painting of an American soldier and his wife hangs in the White House in Washington, D.C.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEE HIGHLIGHTS

*by Eric Papendorp, President-elect, Board of Trustees*

The following are a few highlighted actions of the Board of Trustee's from their meeting on August 13, 2008

✓ Decided to mail quarterly statements to all pledging units, as promised pledges are behind by 50%

✓ Finalized the 2008-2009 calendar

✓ Approved purchasing 4 blocks of green power switch

✓ Continued planning for the formation of a Grounds Committee

✓ Discussed possible solutions to remedy the lack of volunteers to clean the kitchen after coffee hour

✓ Appointed Elaine Watkins and David Reed to lead committees to investigate and develop church emergency and security plans

✓ Accepted the generous donation of a new RE computer from April and Kyle Waggener

### BALANCED ON THE BRINK OF WISDOM

*by Tim Trussell-Smith*

At the beginning of the summer, I was approached about writing a "Student Corner" newsletter article each month as a way to stay in contact with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga community and to keep you updated on my progress at Andover-Newton Theological School.

So far, I've met a few students and faculty and am anxiously awaiting orientation and the beginning of classes during the second week of September. Until then, April and I are getting our basement apartment in order. That's right—we're the cliché impoverished, Boston scholars. In fact, we couldn't even afford a Hobbit Hole in the city. Instead, our little burrow is located in a suburb called Roslindale. At least it's spacious enough that I don't have to duck in *every* doorway. Actually, we both really love our new digs and luckily we look really cool to everyone at our respective schools because Roslindale, apparently, is the "up and coming" neighborhood which lots of artists and other interesting folks call home.

In the spirit of one of my heroes, Mark Twain, I'm trying not to let "my schooling interfere with my education." I've accepted a part-time job at First Parish UU Church in Dorchester—the third oldest church in Massachusetts—as their Director of Religious Education.

First Parish seems to embody many features of Boston and New England that I'm still trying to get used to. First of all, there is an abundance of UU congregations (they are almost as thick as Baptist churches in the South). Also, they are, like every place up here, dripping in history. First Parish, for example, was not even founded in the New World! In 1630 a Puritan congregation in England decided to emigrate as a whole. I'd encourage anyone to spend an interesting hour browsing [www.firstparish.com](http://www.firstparish.com) to see more about their history and mission.

It's no wonder that First Parish is focused on reconnecting to the neighborhood which they helped to bring into existence. It is still a neighborhood largely inhabited by immigrants. It seems appropriate then that this particular immigrant should be settling at Dorchester, at least for a time.

In fact, I am deeply aware at the moment that although the physical movement to Massachusetts is complete we are just beginning our real journeys. I have no idea where my own road will take me—but I can't wait to see who else I cross paths with down the way.

### INTERLUDE

Beginning September 17th, the Rev. Jeff Briere will lead a worship service on Wednesday evenings. The service will be known generally as Interlude, as it occurs mid-week. The time of the service will be 6 pm, unless another event in the church takes precedence. The character of the service will be more contemplative and meditative than the worship on Sunday morning; it will be aimed at calming the mind so as to increase

awareness. Included in the 30 minute service will be some recorded music, visuals and a guided meditation.

At this time, we don't have the resources to provide childcare. As soon as we can locate an appropriate provider, we will provide childcare. Watch the newsletter for details. The second worship service will be suspended on the first Wednesday night of the month for Wednesday Night In.

## ANGEL NUUS

Our monthly potluck requires a lot of work in preparation and in clean up. This month we were blessed with more angels than we can count to prepare the kitchen and fellowship area and to clean it all up again.

**Pat O'Brien** and **Elaine Watkins** earned angel wings for their efforts in reorganizing the kitchen to make it more user-friendly and in labeling the cabinets as to what's where. They worked long and hard at this on Tuesday, August 12 and the results are evident.

**Harold Linn** and **Mike Bascom** pitched in and set up the tables before the August 17th service for the potluck to follow. Mike and Harold just happened to arrive early and were immediately put to work.



All those who stayed late to clean up after the potluck also earned their wings in keeping our kitchen clean and neat. It does indeed take a village, or at least every member of the congregation.

As usual, when something breaks around the church, **Ron Pasch** and **Paul Adler** dust off their tools and their angel wings and get right to work. This month they fixed the railing that dislodged on the stairs to the basement.

Thanks to all these angels for their contributions to the church!

## PAGAN NUUS by Leslie Walters

### Dates of Interest:

September 7, 9:30 AM - Study group meets, the topic will be

*Paganism: Practices and Practitioners*

September 15 - Full Moon

September 21 - Autumnal Equinox - This the time when daylight and dark are of equal duration, and the time of the final grain harvest.

September 29 - New Moon

## GROUNDS COMMITTEE FORMING

The Board of Trustees is looking at the possibility of performing the maintenance of the church grounds "in-house." This would allow the money that is currently being spent on lawn service to be used to purchase equipment and make improvements rather

than just maintaining the church grounds. If you would like to get your hands dirty or you want more information, please contact Eric Papendorp.

## COFFEEHOUSE

This coming year we are planning three Coffeehouses. If you missed the last one, you missed an exciting evening of entertainment. The next Coffeehouses will take place October 18,

January 17 and April 18. Reserve those dates and don't miss these evenings of entertainment, coffee and goodies. And if you would like to participate, see Kate Briere.

### PLEASE HELP US SAVE COFFEE HOUR!

We are urgently in need of kitchen help for several days in the near future. The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen. You can ask any Board member how to sign up and what needs to be done.

If we do not have someone (preferably someone who hasn't done this before) signing up to help on these days, we will cancel coffee hour after the service.



UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome SINGERS!!

Beginners/Intermediate/Advanced

Sundays 9:15 - 10:30

Come join the fun!!!

UU CRAFT COOPERATIVE

The UU Craft Cooperative will meet Mon., Sept. 15 at 6:30. Bring your favorite craft and come join other crafters as they knit, paint, weave, and solder their way to happiness. Child care available by RSVP only and is \$2 per child. Contact Maddie Kertay or Diane Davison for more details or to RSVP.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT OUT

Wednesday Night In will continue on the first Wednesday of the month at the church. Wednesday Night Out is currently under construction. Anyone wanting to help or offer suggestions can contact Leslie Walters.

SEARCHING FOR AN ASSISTANT EDITOR

- Would you like to be one of the first to hear all the church news?
- Do you know how to use a word processor?
- Can you proofread and edit simple text?
- Do you have a couple hours available the end of each month?

If you answered yes to the above questions, you may be just the person we need. The newsletter needs an assistant editor. This person will provide a final proofreading to the newsletter after it is compiled by the editor, "sanitize" a version for the website by removing phone numbers and email addresses, and print the final copy for Chris to take to Kinko's for printing.

If this sounds like a volunteer opportunity for you, please contact Wendy Sapp at <nUUsletter@uuc.org> or 706-694-0940.

FOR SALE

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga Endowment Committee seeks to sell four cemetery plots and a bronze marker located in the Christos Garden section of Chattanooga memorial Park ("the Duck Pond") in Red Bank. The retail value of this offer is over \$10,000 but the Endowment Committee will see the plots and markers for the following prices:

- \* All four plots plus the bronze marker for \$4,500.
- \* Two of the plots and the marker for \$2,300.
- \* Two of the plots (without the marker) for \$2,200

If you are interested, please contact any member of the UUCC Endowment Committee: David Reed, Buck O'Rear, or George Helton.

LATE SUMMER READING

If you would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism or have resources to share with your family and friends, you might enjoy these books available through the UUA bookstore.

- ✓ *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*, edited by William Sinkfield
- ✓ *A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*, by John A. Buehrens and Forrest Church
- ✓ *With Purpose and Principle: Essays About the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism*, edited by Edward Frost
- ✓ *ABC's for UU Newcomers: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*, by William Cleary

THE NUUSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

*the nUUsletter* welcomes articles from members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga. Articles should be limited to 400 words and be on topics of interest to church members. Please send your submissions to *the nUUsletter* to the editor, Wendy Sapp. The deadline for the October issue of *the nUUsletter* is September 15<sup>th</sup>.





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DATE	9/7	9/14	9/21	9/28
TOPIC	Water Communion	The Greatest of These is Hope	Is This Church Too Spiritual?	Look Out Below! Spiritual Rock Climbing and Managing Change
LEADER	the Rev. Jeff Briere	the Rev. Jeff Briere	the Rev. Jeff Briere	Lynn Schmissrauter
BOT MEMBER	Diane Davison	Maddie Kertay	David Reed	Elaine Watkins
GREETER	Carolyn Moore	Roger Davis	Carol Hobbs	Nancy Beel
USHER	Pat Mann	Charlotte Davis	Mike Bascom	Tim Kleve
CHANCEL DÉCOR	Mary Hunter	Mary Hunter	Mary Hunter	Mary Hunter
MUSIC	Kate Briere	Steve Hollingsworth	Marcia Jenison	Nancy Anderson

*I think the object of praying and meditating is life—life in the most beautiful, glorious meaning of the word.*

~ Thich Nhat Hanh