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Lent/March 2011

## *The Good News*

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Dear Ron,

**Welcome To Lent 2011  
from Executive Director,  
Rev Ron Robinson**



Rev. Ron Robinson

In the season of Lent, we turn to walk toward Jerusalem with Jesus. This year, who will our companions be? I hope that actually you will look for others to be present with during this special time, and to be open to spending time with some you might not otherwise normally take the time to be with, people in different neighborhoods, different churches and faith communities. You may walk with Jesus and experience Jesus in surprisingly meaningful ways this Lent as you do so, enriching your contemplation of the inconvenient, risky road upon which you walk toward the Passion and Resurrection in your life and community.

Even as you seek out new companions to walk with, I want to acknowledge the companions we still walk with who have come before us, who have handed to us this special tradition and community of the UUCF. Their voices of witness and enlightenment continue to guide us. So as we turn toward the center of our faith, the Jerusalem of our faith, as we begin the walk up the hill toward the Temple and the heart of the Empire's occupation of our land, may we take time to recognize some of the hearts that have prepared our way, especially during this season of the church year.

The very first UUCF "Occasional Papers" to be published was a "Lent For Liberal Christians". It is part of our Lenten/Easter packet of resources available for sale; see below. From this publication, these words: "It is a sad fact of human nature



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that we often put our lives together in such a way that others--both our God and our neighbor--become a pale second-best. Our love of God collapses into mere favor-seeking, our love of people into mere gratification. The slippage into self-centered living can be subtle, and it is not easily reversed. Jesus spent forty days pursuing and overturning this perverting element close to the center of his humanity. The forty days of Lent calls us to do the same... So we observe Lent annually in hopes of disciplining ourselves and turning our lives around once again."

Among the suggestions for observing Lent included in that publication: walking to church, observing your neighborhood, pray silently for your minister as he/she begins to preach, say grace before meals, read devotionally more and watch TV less, write to a relative, read the story of Jesus in the wilderness from Luke 4, do a physical act of service for someone with whom you live or a neighbor, take in a sunrise, spend ten to fifteen minutes a day reading from the resources of the UUCF, read the story of the Passion in Matthew perhaps while listening to Bach's St. Matthew Passion, write a note of welcome to someone new in your church, give your child or yourself a small lilac branch or forsythia that looks lifeless but put it in water and watch it come alive during Lent....

Select a social concern you are not familiar with to become knowledgeable, read three or four Psalms each day, think of someone who doesn't like what you believe and tell them something you admire about what they believe, recruit a new UUCF member, eliminate cocktails or wine with dinner and each time you abstain offer a prayer for an alcoholic friend, go hug each member of your family right now, read Channing's Unitarian Christianity sermon devotionally, decorate your home for example as you do for Advent and Christmas but this time with a purse with silver coins, basin and water pitcher, some nails, a goblet and broken bread, carry a masonry nail in your pocket, pray each time you get in your car to be shown God's love and offer yourself in service, invite friends to church, visit one other church than your own, select one thing from your diet or lifestyle that could or should do without and contribute the money collected from not doing it to a significant charity.

We have an abundance of voices that have enriched our lives of faith, and aided our struggles, throughout the 66 years of the UUCF. We hope to continue getting more and more of these witnesses out of our archives and into the minds and hearts of people today, both through online publications such as this which we will continue to do, but also we have them for sale or for lending through our website. Explore our online bookstore and pick out a work of faith and understanding that you have not read before, and this Lent let us help you connect with those who have walked this road to Calvary and the empty tomb and Galilee before us.

See more Ash Wednesday and Lenten Resources below. And

follow along weekly as our biblical reflections during Lent are posted by contemporary members on our website's **Virtual Monastery**. We have deep wonderful surprising takes on the weekly lectionary biblical passages.

## Upcoming Events

### General Assembly

June 22 to 26, 2011 - Charlotte, North Carolina

Exciting events will take place at the UUCF Booth in the Exhibit Hall. This year we will again be sharing a theological sources booth with the UU Mystics in Community, UU Buddhist Fellowship, UUs For Jewish Awareness, Covenant of UU Pagans, and we will be sharing advertising with these groups and the Humanists as well. We will have our resources for giveaway, for sale, and a space for getting to know one another from across the country.

### Annual Communion Service at GA

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, preacher**  
**Thursday, June 23, 4:30-5:45 pm**  
**Convention Center Room 203AB**

The UUCF will once again sponsor a communion service for all in attendance at the Unitarian Universalist Association **General Assembly** in 2011. This year's preacher will be The Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, co-minister of the **West Shore UU Church** in the Cleveland, Ohio. Rev. Rolenz is past president of the UUCF, editor of the anthology *Christian Voices in Unitarian Universalism* published by Skinner House Press, and co-author of *Worship That Works*.



Let us know if you are planning to attend GA in Charlotte. We need volunteers to work at our booth, to help with the communion service, and to plan other programs and events and social gatherings of the UUCF at the booth, throughout GA.

### Revival 2011 - Washington, D.C. Reclaiming the Feminine in Christianity

One Year From Now: March 22-25 at Washington D.C.'s [Universalist National Memorial Church](#), the historic Universalist National Cathedral. Enjoy a reviving retreat time in Spring and Lent in the nation's capital and go deep into the recent scholarly work on the wide influence of women in Jesus's ministry and the early church tradition, as well as how it can transform our faith and our world today.

Mark it in your calendars now. Keynote Lecturers will be

announced soon. Revival contains Workshops, Dynamic and Varied Worship Services, Small Groups, Service Project, Social Gatherings, and the annual UUCF Meeting. The Revival Team includes:

- Rev. Lillie Mae Henley and Board Member Jennifer Sandberg of UNMC, coordinating small groups and local logistics,
- Dave Dawson of All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C. coordinating workshops,
- Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger coordinating worship,
- Along with other team members Danielle Marx-Conwell, UUCF Board member from South Carolina, UUCF President Dean Drake from Michigan, website promotions and registration by Kelly Ratliff of Colorado, and Bernard Vainik of San Diego which will be the site of the subsequent Revival.

The latest news will be available in the **Revival** section of our web site including information on the program, schedule, speakers, discount rates at nearby hotels, and more. Start making your plans now to attend our next wonderful **Revival**.

## Special Easter Good News Issue - Contributors Sought!

**Deadline is March 11, 2011**



Remember that March 15 is the deadline for submissions of articles for the special printed issue of the Easter 2011 Good News Journal. Sermons, essays, prayers, poetry, art, testimonies, reviews, and more are solicited. We're looking for material to fit the general theme of Easter and Lent. Editors are **Kimberly Beyer-Nelson** & **Kathleen Rolenz**. For writer guidelines and more information click **here**.

Our new expanded printed publication will be mailed out to UUCF members next month. We published our first new expanded publication Mary's Yes for Advent and Christmas 2010. It was a great success and launch of this new ministry to members and supporters. Thank you to Editor Kim Beyer-Nelson.

Join, Renew, Come Back, in order to receive this special issue. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Join, Renew, Donate Online

**March 31 - Deadline**

This is a critical time to show your support. We are nearing the end of our Fiscal Year, and are preparing our budget for the next fiscal year for the UUCF which begins April



1. We need all lapsed memberships to be caught up to date as soon as possible and by March 31. If you have questions about your membership status contact Administrator **Lisa Franklin**. We are in the process of sending out final renewal and termination letters.

The more we have moved to online ministries where content is more available in the world, which is our mission, the fewer paid memberships we have received. At the same time, the fewer members are giving more at higher levels than ever before. Consider joining them through the easy online **donate** buttons for monthly donations as a regular part of your overall giving budget; or consider increasing annual support at least to the level that it now takes to help us sustain our ministry, the \$75 level. The Executive Director position has recently been temporarily cut back to quarter time from half time due to financial concerns as the UUCF Board is committed to holding to a balanced budget and using only the income earned on our endowment funds; it will be reviewing this status at each quarter of the fiscal year. Your contribution goes a long way at this particular point, and at time time in the history of the UU and liberal Christian movement.

Remember, you don't have to be Unitarian Universalist to be in the UUCF, and you don't have to be Christian to be in the UUCF. Support our progressive Christian voice, uphold our rich heritage and historical witness for freedom and Jesus, and help us expand that witness through the UU movement and beyond.

**Donate Online** today! Or send renewals or special contributions to UUCF P.O. Box 6702 Turley, OK 74156. You can **join** with us for the first time, **renew or upgrade** your membership, answer the call to **contribute** to specific projects or make special **donations**.

If you have any difficulties using the online system, please email either the **Administrator** or **Executive Director** or via the telephone (918) 794-4637. Paypal administers our donation system but you do not have to have a pay pal account to pay online; debit and credit cards are fine.

Thanks and Blessings, and may this year be full of "epiphanies" in your life,  
Ron Robinson  
UUCF Executive Director

## Liturgy Sharing

### Ash Wednesday Liturgy From King's Chapel, Boston

Hymn



**Opening Sentences and Collect** (minister says)

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23,24

Almighty God, who has made us to know that we are dust and to dust we shall return, make us also to know that we are temples of thy holy Spirit and recipients of thy grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**General Confession** (all say)

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare thou those who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life; to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

**Prayer for Forgiveness** (minister says)

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desirest not the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn from their wickedness and live: we beseech thee to grant us true repentance, and thy holy Spirit; that those things may please thee of which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last we may come to thine eternal joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer** (all say)**Welcome and Announcements****Old Testament** - Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 (read by lector)

See the link for the text, and click [here](#) for more Ash Wednesday resources.

**Psalm** 51:1-17 (minister leads congregation in reading responsively). Click [here](#) for more resources.

**New Testament** - Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (read by lector)

Click [here](#) for more resources.

**Homily**

**Invitation** (Invite all who wish to receive ashes to do so, in whatever style suits the group and its context. At KC folks kneel at the Communion rail and receive ashes from the minister that way.)

**Homilies:** For more Ash Wednesday and liturgical resources click [here](#). For Ash Wednesday homilies by the Rev.

Wallace Robbins and Clarke Dewey Wells go to our **blog**. There you will also find Lenten resources.

## Sermon of the Month



**Christianity Our Parent** (With Pictures!)  
by Rev. Anthony David of the UU  
Congregation of Atlanta on March 6, 2011.

I begin with a quote from writer Oscar Wilde: "Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them; sometimes they forgive them."

I begin with this because Christianity is the direct spiritual parent of Unitarian Universalism, and as such, we bring to it the same kind of "stuff" we might bring to understanding our own parents. Even if, as individuals, we have good stories about our experience of Christianity, we are still influenced by the collective status of our faith tradition, which is this: just 50 years old. From the perspective of other world religions, 50 years old is miles away from maturity. Miles away from adulthood. We're more like a teenager whose very real dependence upon his elders can at times feel utterly humiliating. "Mom!!" whines Unitarian Universalism at its Christian roots. "Mom, stop embarrassing me!" The reason is developmentally appropriate and understandable: we are trying to stand on our own two feet, as the independent post-Christian, more-than-Christian religion we are becoming. We are busy establishing our own traditions and rituals and stories and symbols and on and on. But we can go overboard in our quest for independence. We can think everyone else has wisdom for us, but not Mom. Not Dad. No way!

Click [here](#) for the rest of the sermon.

## UUCF Online Communities

### Blog of the Month

**Deep River - Faith in the Universal Love of God** by Anna Snoeyenbos

An Invitation for All to Lenten Observances -Check out and follow along with Anna on her **blog**. Anna is also with the UU Congregation of Atlanta's One Love UUCF group.

You're invited to the Deep River Virtual Lent Event! (And by "event" I mean 40-day slog... just kidding!) But



**Online  
Communities**

in all earnestness, **One Love**, the Universalist Christian worship group at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, is launching into the season of Lent this week - and I'm so excited about it that I figured I would invite my online readers to join me on the journey as well!



Click **here** for more.

## Small Group News For Lent and More

Ash Wednesday services at 7 p.m.  
UU Church of Arlington, VA Thank you!  
4444 Arlington Blvd. Arlington, VA.  
Lenten Communion Services continue  
Sundays at 5:00 p.m. through Palm  
Sunday. All are welcome!



We will also be doing a Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00 p.m., and a Good Friday Tenebrae Service at 7:00 p.m., and an Easter Sunrise service at (heaven help me) 5:00 a.m. People can contact Rev. Madelyn Campbell at this **e-mail** address for more information.

If you have special news to share about your small group, please write a highlight for us and **email** it to Rev. Ron Robinson.

## In the News

### UUCF Executive Director Featured in UU World Cover Story

The Rev. Ron Robinson's local ministry on the northside of Tulsa and the UUCF connection were featured in the cover story for the Spring 2011 *UU World* issue. Click **here** to view the article, "Cultivating An Abandoned World." For more behind and beyond the story and beyond the article go to **The Welcome Table Church blog** and also to the other postings on the church's blog including a three-part essay exploring the community development issues and some of the responses of the UU Christian missional community there.



Rev. Ron  
Robinson on  
cover of UU  
World

For more on the missional church in its progressive vein go to Rev. Robinson's **Missional Progressive blog**. To donate to the group and its work go to The Welcome Table Community **donation page**. The UUCF national offices have recently moved along with the group from the previous rented space into the "new" building originally built in the 1920s as a Community Methodist Episcopal Church, that

then became United Methodist, then the building housed an Indian Methodist church, and most lately an African American Baptist Church.

## General News

### Resource Packets for Lent/Easter For Sale Online, by Mail or Phone

We have a wonderful collection of the best of writings, sermons, liturgies, sermons and more that have been published by the UUCF over the years about the themes and holy days connected with Lent and Eastertide. We also have Resource Packets for Communion Resources and Advent/Christmas.

They are a wonderful bargain at just \$15. Order them now by visiting our online **Bookstore**. You can also send a check and order to UUCF PO Box 6702 Turley, OK 74156 by calling us to place an order. Leave an order message at (918) 794-4637 and we will process the order promptly.



Address: P.O. Box 6702, Turley, OK 74156-0702

Phone: (918) 794-4637

[www.uuchristian.org](http://www.uuchristian.org)

[info@uuchristian.org](mailto:info@uuchristian.org)

We are non-creedal followers of Jesus rooted in the history and tradition of Unitarian Universalism. All who wish to freely follow Jesus are welcome to be members of the UUCF.

**Sincerely,**

Ron Robinson  
Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship

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