

Universalist Anchor



Words by Rev Lillie

Grace

Grace is giving unearned—sometimes undeserved gifts—or unconditional love to another.

For example, when we are a young child, no matter how mischievous or provocative, compliant or dutiful we might be, we still get a present on our birthday!

The most profound example of *grace* I know is the hijacked United Airlines Flight 93 that was flying to Washington, DC on 9/11. Experts tell us that it was very likely going to crash into some building in DC that is a prominent symbol of our country. Yet, despite the terrorists' intentions, Flight 93 crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. Because a few passengers were courageous enough to take matters into their own hands, a DC building was spared and *grace* happened for some workers. What a wonderful example of *grace* given to those who certainly did not earn it and were never even aware of it.

Our Universalist heritage is about *grace*. *Grace* is the best word in our language to describe God's unconditional love for us.

The culture in which we live embodies the antithesis of *grace*. In our society, it seems we must earn everything—including

forgiveness. It is hard for us to accept grace-filled actions. Just in the last few months, individuals have publicly forgiven perpetrators of crimes against their loved ones, yet newspapers publish the comments of others that cannot understand this forgiveness.

In the last decade, many Protestant religions have become more inclusive, accepting women as ministers, as well as accepting gays and lesbians into their churches and their ministries. They have been living out the *grace* that Jesus brought into the religious story of Christianity.



However, there are still those who cannot embrace the concept of *grace* or the belief in God's unconditional love for everyone. Our Universalism calls us to live out the *grace* that Jesus brought to human consciousness. It calls us to implement unconditional love in our lives for each other. No matter what the issues, we are all challenged to live out the principles of our religion.

What would it look like if we intentionally saw every person we meet as a person worthy of God's unconditional love, a grace-filled person? At hospitality after church, at work, at play—a stranger we meet in line at the grocery store? Would the conversation be any different if we asked them, "What in your life brings you blessings?" or "joy," instead of "What do you do?" or "Where do you live?"

Wouldn't our lives be different—better—if we could see every person we meet, including those with whom we disagree, as an opportunity to spread God's grace and unconditional love?

Grace, living out God's unconditional love which Jesus brought to the world. Is it possible?

Religious Education/Youth Group

Six teens have been meeting as the *Uber Fellowship of Life* on Sunday evenings at the church. Upcoming activities include visiting mosques, temples, and other Protestant churches. Their social concerns ministry will focus on the homeless, and they are exploring ways they can serve. They will be asking permission to redecorate the teen room. Dara Peterson and Scott Robertson are the teen sponsors.

Our younger children meet on Sunday mornings with Sally Segal. We plan lessons for seventh grade and below. We also have a nursery provider, in the event we have toddlers visiting. Soon, we hope to have more families to serve.

There is a rocking chair in the sanctuary for anyone who needs to rock an infant!



In the New Year Expectations for Growth

Research shows that the churches in the United States that are growing are the ones that have clear expectations of members. We talked a lot about this at our semi-annual meeting.

It also shows, that churches have to be clear about what members expect from the congregation.

In the New Year, the Welcome and Membership ministry will be facilitating home meetings, where members and friends can get together and focus on the topic of church growth and membership expectations.



They will be asking you to host a meeting or attend one. We will offer facilitator training and a suggested discussion format to make it easy, fun and engaging for everyone.

This is an opportunity for deeper connections with each other, as well as to talk about what the church means to each of us.

Growing UNMC!!!

To grow our church, everyone needs to know what they expect from the church, and

The congregation needs to make clear what they need from the members.

Church Administrator

Do you know someone who would be perfect as our Church Administrator? What qualities would you like to see in an Administrator?

Our Personnel Committee is in the process of defining our needs and a job description for the new Administrator. The job will begin March 1, 2007 so there are only eight weeks to hire a new person.



In the meantime, we have an interim administrative support person who is here temporarily and who will leave at the end of February.

Please contact the personnel committee if you would like to help in the hiring process.

Chancel Flowers

Mary Simmons, Coordinator

January 7—Communion Sunday

January 14

Given in memory of loved ones by the Jones Family, Tom, Julie, Tom Jr., and Nok

January 21

Given in memory of Jean Jacobs by her loving son Jeffrey Jacobs

January 28

Given in loving memory of Mary Graham by her daughter Sally and son-in-law Doug Simon

Sunday Services

December 31st- “The Magi And The Gifts For Baby Jesus.” Rev. Henley preaching.

January 7—A Communion Sunday

Our first annual “Service of Our Living Tradition” begins this Sunday. This is the Sunday we will recognize births and deaths of the previous year. We will also welcome new members who have joined since the last “New Member Welcome.” This is the first year our pastor Rev. Lillie Henley recognizes the “Minister’s Volunteer of the Year.” The homily will be “The Spirit Sustains Us.”

Lectionary readings for this Sunday Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22.

January 14

The Unitarian Universalist Second Principle is to *Affirm and Promote “Justice, Equity, and Compassion” in Human Relations.* Rev. Henley and member Perry King will look at Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s work in the context of this second principle. King’s birthday was January 15.

Lectionary readings for this Sunday Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11.

January 21

“Prophets Called to Fight (and Fail)” a sermon by Amanda Poppei, the ministerial intern at River Road Unitarian Church. We often feel called to take stands on moral issues. What happens, though, when we are standing for a lost cause? Are those stands worth taking? Poppei explores the spiritual and moral imperatives that call us to witness, to fight, and--sometimes--to fail. She is a seminarian at Wesley Theological Seminary and a candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry.

January 28

“We Are All Called” to serve others, each in our own way. James Luther Adams, Twentieth Century Unitarian Universalist theologian, said we are all prophets and priests. Rev. Henley preaching.

Lectionary readings for this Sunday Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, I Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21.

UU On The Road

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals ?

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) can fulfill your dream! For 27 years, they've provided a network of hosts who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.



You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at 828-281-3253. Host listings on the *UU're Home* website at www.UUreHome.com are updated monthly. The paper edition is published every year in April.

For a copy of the 2007 directory, please send \$20 (or \$25 and your e-mail address for both the book and website access) to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.

Food For All

The Board decided to **Share Our December Plate with Food For All**. It is the only program that delivers groceries to the poor throughout the District of Columbia. In 2005 their contributions were recognized by the Capital Area Food Bank with the Hunger Lifeline Award.

Many of its clients are home bound, afflicted by age or disability. They also assist low-income single parents, and families facing emergencies such as sudden unemployment.

All the Food For All personnel are volunteers, people willing to give their time to improve the quality of life of others in the city.



Words of Gratitude

"Thanks to all who expressed your condolences when my sister Blanche Murphy died on December 2nd in Beaumont, Texas. It is especially hard for me, because my other sister Jean's best friend Rowena and her sixteen-year-old daughter Karmen were killed in an automobile accident just nine hours before Blanche died.

Your cards and words made the grief more bearable." *Pastor Lillie*

Outreach Activities

More than a dozen members and friends braved the cold in early December to pass out 100 cups of hot apple cider and dog treats to our neighbors at the dog park on New Hampshire and S Street.

We visited with neighbors about their holiday plans and invited them to join us at our Christmas services.

The cups were wrapped with our information and website so anyone who was interested could find out more information about UNMC. We also had a banner advertising our website



Security Alarm System

The alarm system is now in place. If you haven't been trained on how to use the new system, please call the office or come in on Saturday (10-4) to learn the system. The alarm system is now **ON**, you will need your security code to enter the church.

REMEMBER YOUR CODE!

(False alarms to the DC Police are quite expensive!!)

and wishing everyone happy holidays.

We will continue our outreach activities in January by welcoming new members at a special ceremony the first Sunday of the New Year (Jan. 7). Please join us as we officially welcome Catherine Bocskor and Scott Robertson.

Finally, we will toast to the New Year and each other at a happy hour in January. Look for more information about where and when we will meet in upcoming church bulletins and emails. If you did not receive the Evite about the last happy hour in November, and would like to be included on future Evite lists please send your address and contact information to Elizabeth Crawford.

Leland Place Dinner Ministry

We served dinner to eighteen men at Leland Place in December. It is always satisfying to see others enjoy our culinary efforts; it is especially joyful to know we have done something for the residents at Leland Place. Part of the joy is the cooking at the church. Even those who rarely cook enjoy the good time of shared effort. It is indeed a ministry, and you are invited to participate.

Our next dinner for Leland Place will be Saturday, January 20. We'll meet at the church. Contact Dave Skidmore for more details.

Caroling

Sixteen people joined to sing carols for our neighborhood. It was delightful to see all the smiles of those who appreciated the caroling. We were a big hit with the crowd around McDonalds on 17th Street!



Next year, we hope to have three dozen voices Christmas caroling and at the potluck!

The *Universalist Anchor* is published monthly for the members and friends of the Universalist National Memorial Church in Washington, DC. It is also on our website, along with Rev. Henley's sermons, and announcements and activities.

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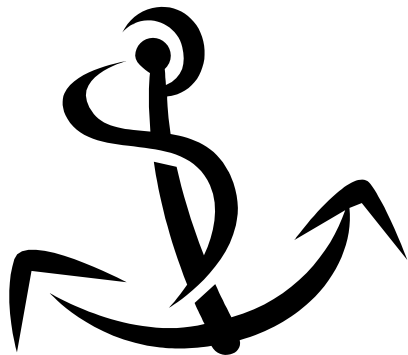
Patrick McNamara, Church Office

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Our Mission (adopted May 2002)

We create a loving community
for worship and service
in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

We welcome all and respect individual beliefs as we grow together



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