

8th Annual Western Carolinas Cluster Gathering of UU Congregations

Transcending Boundaries

Saturday, March 27, 2010, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

9:00 a.m. Keynote

Torn Between Fuzzy Aspirations and Hard Realities: The Perversity of Embracing Diversity

There is a surprising, and painful, truth behind Unitarian Universalist efforts to become more diverse. This truth must begin with an honest look at who we are and why we are who we are, and it ends in a conundrum but not without hope. If Unitarian Universalists really want to change, accepting the truth is the only place to start. Torn between our reality and our aspirations what are we to do?

Speaker: Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

From nursery school through the University of Chicago Lab and Divinity Schools the Reverend Mark Morrison-Reed was always one of a few African Americans. Raised in the Unitarian Universalist faith he was ordained in 1979. He received an A.M. in Divinity (in 1977) from the University of Chicago and a D.Min. (in 1979) from Meadville Theological School. With his wife and co-minister, Donna, he served congregations in Rochester, N.Y. and Toronto, ON. After serving for 26 years he retired from ministry in 2005, and since then has devoted himself full-time to writing. The result is a book entitled *In Between: Memoir of an Integration Baby* published by Skinner House Books.

Workshops

Session I, 1:15 – 2:30

A: Growing Into the Future

“Thirteen Trends and Forces Affecting the Church and Faith Formation in a Changing World” is the title of a synthesis of research done on congregations and the culture we live in today. These trends and forces describe the spiritual and religious needs of the people who come in our doors. We live in an electronic age that has social networking at its core, more and more

people identify themselves as spiritual but not religious, churches of all denominations face declining attendance and families are central to the faith formation of the next generation. How can we prepare and imagine the future from this present moment?

A recent study, Faith Formation 2020, has taken these trends and created a strategic plan for 2020. Let's discuss our plan.

Presenter: Rev. Sue Sinnamon, Director of Faith Development, Thomas Jefferson District – UUA since August 2007. She has served as the Minister of Religious Education at Fountain Street Church and The Unitarian Church of Evanston, IL. Religious Education, Spiritual Development, and Faith Formation have been her calling for 25 years.

B: African Americans in Unitarian Universalism

Today there are over 30 African American UU ministers--that is more than there were in the entire 100 years after Joseph Jordan was licensed in 1889. Who were these early Universalists and Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists?

Presenter: Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed. See biography at Keynote.

C: Standing on the Side of Love

Standing on the Side of Love is a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love's power to stop oppression and is the most exciting, and challenging, initiative, to come out of the Unitarian Universalist Association in a long time. This campaign is not a marketing campaign. Instead, it provides congregations with the tools and resource to live our values in the world by speaking out against injustice and in favor of love. In this workshop, you'll learn how you can stand on the side of love and truly make a difference in your community.

Presenter: Annette Marquis, District Executive, Thomas Jefferson District – UUA

D: Governance as a Spiritual Practice

Jim Key will explore the connections between our congregational polity and governance as leadership at the Association, District, and Congregational levels. Additionally, he will report on the status of the shift to policy-based governance in the District.

Presenter: Jim Key, TJD President, UU Fellowship of Beaufort. Jim was elected President of the Thomas Jefferson District of the UUA in April 2008 after serving as Vice President for two years. Prior to his district service, Jim was an organizer of the UU Fellowship of Beaufort (SC) where he has served as President and chair of Finance, Long-Range Planning, and Stewardship committees. Additionally, he was on the faculty of the Mountain School for Congregational Leadership (MSCL) for 2003 and Dean for 2004 and 2005. Jim was named to the UUA Audit Committee in June 2009.

Jim was the Director of Internal Audit for North America and Asia Pacific for IBM prior to establishing his own consulting firm in 1997. That firm focuses on governance, risk management, and control solutions for clients in business, government, and the private sector throughout the world.

Session II: 2:45 – 4:15

E: "In Between: Memoir of an Integration Baby"

Rev. Morrison-Reed will read from his book. Copies will be available for purchase and autographing. See biography at Keynote.

F: Creating a Multigenerational Congregation

Come for a lively discussion and interactive presentation. How do we change the culture of our churches to meet the spiritual needs of all generations? At church we have a unique opportunity to enrich our lives through our authentic, diverse relationships. But how is it done? We will offer insights, ideas, and creative visioning you can apply to your congregation if you are ready to be radically welcoming to all generations in your church community.

Presenters: Taryn Strauss, DRE UU Church of Asheville, with members of the UUCA Multigenerational Task Force. Taryn Strauss is currently serving her fourth year as Director of Religious Education at the UU Church of Asheville. Since arriving on staff, she has witnessed the generational shift at UUCA from mostly baby boomers, to many young families and young adults joining the membership. Taryn is also a local theatre director, and a founding Board member of Scapegoat Theatre Collective. She is a Preacher's Kid, and her favorite thing about growing up UU was the extended family she found at her church, and all the adult mentors who supported her spiritual development.

G: Helping Our New Orleans Congregations to Recover and Rebuild

Our 3 New Orleans area congregations have raised almost \$1 Million as they work to rebuild and take other steps to recover from the failure of the levees after Hurricane Katrina. Learn what your congregation can do to help support their efforts.

Presenter: Rev. Clark Olsen, UU Church of Asheville. He has been on volunteer trips twice to work in New Orleans.

H: What's In a Name

Jim Key will briefly review the history of name change in the district before detailing the rationale and process that led to the current proposal to vote on name change at our annual meeting on April 30, 2010. Participants will be able to ask questions and suggest other names for consideration.

Presenter: Jim Key, TJD President & UU Fellowship of Beaufort. See biography at Workshop D.