Celebrating Twenty Five Years

The History of Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church

1987-2012

Part I

The Early Years 1987 to 1992
The story of Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church is one that has been highlighted by the dedication of many members who have advanced the work of the church with their energy, insights, time, talents and material goods throughout its twenty-five year history. It includes several members who have been part of the history for most or all of the entire twenty-five years, fourteen past presidents who are still active members of the congregation, many long-time, dedicated members and many new members in the last several years. It includes two extension ministers, Reverend Elizabeth McMaster (1988-1991) and Reverend Wyman Rousseau (1991-1995); one settled minister, Reverend Wyman Rousseau (1995-2008); an interim minister, Reverend Karen Matteson, (2008-2010); and our current minister, Reverend Robin Noelle Tanner, called in 2010.

PHOTO: Some charter members: Back Row: Left to Right: John Ericksen, Oak Winters, Bruce Magruder, Jeff Blum, Bill McCoy, Jim Woolsey, Bob Vermillion, Harry Lancaster, Jim Alderman, Sandy Vermillion
Middle Row: Kathy Winters, Quentin Griffey, Linda Blum, Bonne McCoy, Jane Henderson, and Charles Cottle
Front Row: Lynne Erickson, Anne Griffey, Audrey Shields, Ted Woolsey, Sandra Woolsey, Barbie Anderson and Charles Elbot.
The PUUC story begins with the idea of a church in the northeast section of Mecklenberg County, formed out of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte. This was followed by many months of meetings and planning that led to the formation of a church organization. It includes the charter service on April 17, 1988, and the installation of the church’s first minister that same year.

It includes the purchase of land in 1994 to build the church’s first permanent building and a capital campaign in 1996 that raised the funds to enable that to happen. It includes Chalice Lighter grants from the Thomas Jefferson District that assisted the early church to call an extension minister in 1988 and to purchase the land and house in 1994.

It includes the first service held in the new building in March 1998 and the beautiful dedication service in September 1998,
attended by UUA President, Dr. John Buehrens. It includes the purchase the next year of the adjoining house and land that was owned by Pat Melton, paying off the Melton property owner in 2004 and razing the dilapidated house. It includes almost a year of preparation and work to be recognized by the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation. It includes the retirement of Wyman Rousseau in 2008 and the organization of PUUC’s first ministerial search that culminated in the election in April 2010 of Reverend Tanner and her installation in April 2011. In 2013, Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church looks forward to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of its charter service at the Old Courthouse Theatre in March 1988.

PHOTO: Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte. PUUC was founded from the Charlotte church in 1987, with support from Dr. Sid Freeman, minister, and Roger Comstock, TJ District Executive. Leaders were Jeff Blum and Charles Cottle.
PUUC BEGAN AS AN EXTENSION OF THE UU CHURCH IN CHARLOTTE

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT WAS WRITTEN BY JEFF BLUM FOR A SERVICE PLANNED BY REV. KAREN MATTESON DURING THE CHURCH’S TRANSITION YEAR 2009-2010.

To form a new congregation from an existing congregation requires careful planning and much politics. There is always the church’s fear of losing members and especially their financial support. With the guidance of Roger Comstock, Charles Cottle and I were gradually able to win the support of the Charlotte Church. We knew the first major hurdle to clear was gaining the backing of the Charlotte UU minister, Rev. Dr. Sid Freeman. Without his backing it would not be possible to accomplish our mission.

PHOTO: Dr. Sid Freeman, Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte, and Roger Comstock, Thomas Jefferson District Executive, were critical in the formation of PUUC.

I remember the meeting clearly to this day. Charles and I sat in his office and presented the idea of the Charlotte Church participating in the start of a new UU Congregation in N.E. Charlotte. Then I held my breath. Much to our surprise and his credit he enthusiastically supported the idea. He even agreed to begin weaving in the concept into some of his sermons.

PHOTO: Bill McCoy, Charter Member, in 1988

Next we knew we needed some cold hard data to use as supportive evidence for the inevitable

PUUC
Celebrating 25 Years- 1987-2012
Part I
doubters and naysayers that we knew would come forth challenging the likely hood of success of this endeavor. Future charter Member Bill McCoy was at the time the head of the Urban Institute at UNC Charlotte and a respected expert, well qualified to perform a feasibility study. As expected it came back extremely favorable.

Charles and I needed to learn organization and planning skills to start a new UU congregation. So I attended the GA of the UU that summer in Little Rock, Ark where there were a number of workshops dedicated to the Extension Program. This gave me the knowledge on how to better proceed as the anointed organizer for this endeavor. After securing a grant from the UUA Extension Dept Charles Cottle spent a week in Boston learning additional aspects of this particular approach to growing a new congregation from an existing one and the resources from the UUA we could utilize.

As fate would have it, that summer when Sid was on vacation, Rev Carol Fincher, training as an Extension minister, did a summer internship for the Charlotte UU Church. Obviously she was supportive of vision and helped moderate small group discussions within the Charlotte church. We slowly and carefully began spreading the rumor among the Charlotte membership of a new UU pregnancy arising among them. Pushing her car. Late one evening after one of our meetings, Charles and I were following this young minister home to ensure her safety when her car broke down. With no cell phones at the time after putting her car in neutral and parking ours, we pushed her along to safe spot. I am sure it was an amusing sight to passerby’s. We both would look back on that incident many times with laughter. It took a lot of hard work to start a new church but we never dreamed it would include pushing our minister around town in her car.

**PHOTOS:** Ted Woolsey dancing with Julie Blum and Liz McMaster at Ted’s Sock Hop, held in the lower level of The Old Courthouse Theatre.

Our next step was to identify and unify members of the Charlotte Church as well as others of UU persuasion or interest in the NE Charlotte area who would become the charter members of this new congregation. We started with small gatherings that
were advertised in the church bulletin and area newspapers. Our first meetings were held in a Shoney’s restaurant. It was always interesting to see who would walk in the door to join us for a cup of coffee and conversation. After a few meetings as suggested by the UUA we agreed to develop a statement of affirmation for the new congregation - a covenant.

Along the way we met many persons interested in UU sometimes in the most unexpected places, for example, a Montessori school. Encounters such as these reinforced what I believe to this day. There are many persons in our surrounding community looking for what we have been so fortunate to have found ….. a religious community based on UU principles. Gradually as the word spread in the community and the number of persons interested increased we began holding larger gatherings …… Holiday Inn then the large fellowship hall at Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church.

A start up congregation, similar to a business, requires capital to succeed. In addition to personal financial commitments and hoped for financial support from the UUA we decided to hold our first fundraiser, a LUAU! The Luau was held on the patio at UUCC, with UUCC members attending as well as members of our new congregation. Linda Blum wore her grass skirt and did a hula dance for everyone!

As the new Congregational Organizer, my next task was to form a Steering Committee, made up of individuals whose talents and interests I thought would contribute to the many different aspects of a new congregation. We are fortunate to have some of them with us today. There are some who were not able to attend such as Oak and Kathy Winters, a few we have lost track of and the passing of Charles Cottle.

Together we participated in workshops and religious educational programs to become more closely knit into a cohesive group. We met frequently planning for our new congregation. There were dozens of details. Finances, Order of Service, Publicity, Membership, R.E. Curriculum, Canvass.

As often the case choosing a name for our soon to be born infant was one of the most challenging tasks There were all sorts of suggestions some quite amusing. The speedway church …. On a fast tract to heaven. We decided to have a ballot vote at a canvass kickoff and social event held at Jim and Sandra’s We each chose our favorite name from a list. At the end of the evening we counted the votes. The name of our soon to be infant: PUUC … Piedmont UU Church.
PHOTO: Reverend Elizabeth McMaster at our Spring Street site in Concord, 1990.

**Birthing Service:** Our embryo of a UU fellowship was ready to be presented to the outside world. We wanted the birth to be a special event. It was Rev Freeman’s idea to have a birthing service. On December 6, 1987 after 18 months of planning, dedicated effort and nurturing, a historic birthing ceremony was held at the UU Church of Charlotte. It was attended by many T.J District dignitaries and of course both members of the Charlotte Church and those of us who would become members of the PUUC. Sid gave a wonderful appropriate sermon on the importance of UU growth. We gathered on stage and were presented with two chalices one for our RE program and one for the new church. This was followed by a wonderful champagne reception.

**Search for a meeting place:** The greatest challenge we faced was finding an appropriate facility for our congregation to meet in. 25 years ago the N.E. Charlotte region was quite different from today. There
were few facilities available and those that were quickly spoken for by other groups. We finally settled on a beautiful old Baptist Church in downtown Concord which had been converted into a community theater. Although not situated in the UNCC region where we wanted to be The Old Courthouse Theatre did provide plenty of space for RE, a minister’s office, a fellowship hall and a sanctuary with beautiful nondenominational stained glass windows.

**OUR FIRST SERVICE AS PUUC: SUNDAY JANUARY 17, 1988.**

The chalice of this church was officially lit for the first time and burned brightly that day. Oak Winters, serving as lay minister, gave a wonderful sermon. We were on our own now, just a toddler facing a world filled with promise but many additional challenges. During the next months we shared many responsibilities including the Sunday services. Of course there were numerous tasks to be completed. After writing a set of bylaws we need to elect our first official Church Board. We selected a Nominating Committee to identify officers and council chairs.

*PHOTO: Oak Winters, Charter Member, preached at the first PUUC service in January 1998.*

In Piedmont’s history perhaps one of our most shining and memorable events was Our Charter Service on a beautiful spring evening, April 16, 1988. Almost exactly 22 years ago to the date. We served an elegant Buffet dinner and special music by members of the Charlotte Orchestra. It was attended by many UU dignitaries and the President of the UUA Rev William F Shultz, who served as our guest minister. That evening 48 charter members signed the membership book.
THE INVITATION TO THE CHARTER SERVICE ON SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1998

Celebrate with your Religious Community

Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church invites you to our Charter Church Service

Saturday, April 16, 1988
6:00 p.m.

followed by a buffet supper and a program of music

Charter Service
William F. Schultz,
UUA President

Canvass Kickoff
July 1, 1988
June 30, 1989

RSVP by April 10
Blum: 782-4768
Shields-Magruder: 892-3712
THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE CHARTER SERVICE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1988

PHOTO: Rev. Dr. William F. Schulz, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, spoke at the Charter Service.

PUUC Celebrating 25 Years- 1987-2012 Part I
PUUC had become a model for the UUA of how a successful Extension Church should be conceived and born by a mother church. The UUA gave us a 5 year financial commitment to help with the cost of a full time minister. They also assisted us in obtaining an Extension Minister based on input from our steering committee.

Rev. Liz McMaster, an energetic newly trained Extension minister in her 50’s who had attended Harvard divinity was selected by the UUA to be Piedmont’s first professional leader. Jim Woolsey and I traveled to her home church in Atlanta to witness her Ordination Service. We returned with glowing reports of our future minister. After a visit to PUUC and an inspiring sermon the congregation voted unanimously to call Liz as our first minister. Her 3 year ministry brought with it energy and enthusiasm. PUUC quickly grew to over 100 members. The church’s programs and activities rapidly expanded. RE especially took off. There were social events and fundraisers. We even marched with Liz down the streets of religiously conservative Concord in support of women abortion rights.

Unfortunately after completing her 3 year commitment Liz decided to serve another congregation in Florida. Her abrupt departure resulted in many members who were attracted to PUUC because of her ministry to leave or stop participating. Our church membership dramatically decreased.
The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta invites you to join in celebrating the ordination of Elizabeth Miller McMaster to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry Sunday, June 12, 1988 at 4:00 p.m. at The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta 1911 Cliff Valley Way, N.E.

Ministers are invited to arrive at 3:45 p.m. Reception to follow in the Social Hall.
From 1991 to 1992 we were without a minister and financially had just enough funds to make it through the year. However, a core group of us refused to allow PUUC to close its doors. Roger Comstock our TJ District Executive who had been so instrumental in our development came to our rescue matching us with a second very experienced extension minister, Reverend Wyman Rousseau, eager to come to the Charlotte area. Wyman and his wife Jane brought tranquility and stability back to PUUC. However even with a new minister the leadership knew that only by resettling closer to our intended location in the UNCC area would this church ensure its survival. With Wyman we began the long journey in the NE Charlotte area until reaching our final destination here. It took the tremendous dedication and effort of so many individual members of this congregation and their families to make this happen often dealing with incredible logistical challenges as we traveled from one temporary facility to another. At one time all our church belongings were stored in a members truck from which each Sunday we unloaded and then reloaded in order to worship together at a site down the road which did not have storage space for us.

For me personally the moment I saw the land upon which this church now resides and our subsequent purchase of it in 1994, I knew PUUC’s survival was ensured. I finally felt confident that the time and effort put forth by many individuals in the early years of this congregation was consecrated. The future success of this religious community was assured.

I look back over the past nearly 25 years of PUUC history with many fond memories which will last a lifetime. This congregation has a rich heritage of which it can be proud. This has served it well through the recent transition period with the professional leadership of our interim minister Karen Matteson. Now, entering early adulthood, Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church, is about embark on a new exciting future as it prepares to call its third minister. May all of us present today have as many wonderful memories of these times and those that await us in the future as some of us have been fortunate to have had in the past.

Written by Jeff Blum, PUUC’s founder and 1st President, for a service celebrating the history of PUUC in March 2010.
PUUC’S BIRTHING CEREMONY

On December 6, 1987, after almost two years of planning, a historic birthing ceremony was held at the Unitarian Church of Charlotte. Dr. Sid Freeman delivered the sermon, addressing the subject of extension. Special guests included Roger Comstock and Doug Walters, Chair of the Thomas Jefferson District Extension Committee. Following the service a joyous champagne reception was held in the Fellowship Hall.

Affordable rental space for the new church was found in downtown Concord in the Old Courthouse Theater on Spring Street, about twenty miles from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. This building had been the home for many years of the First Baptist Church of Concord and had been purchased for use as a theater when the Baptist church built a new complex two miles away. The first public religious service was held in the Old Courthouse Theatre on Sunday, January 17, 1988. The original intention for a site was area close to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, However, at that time, the area was still undeveloped with hotel, schools, etc, available to rent, and the congregation chose a site in Concord, twenty miles from downtown Charlotte.

PUUC’S CHARTER SERVICE

A charter service, including buffet supper and music program, was held on Saturday evening, April 16, 1988. The president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Rev. William F. Schulz, was the guest minister for the service, which was also attended by representatives from the Thomas Jefferson District board and Roger Comstock, T.J. District Executive.

The following forty-eight charter members signed the membership book on that date: Jim Alderman, Barbara Anderson, Edward and Shirley Barrier, Jerry and Sharon Bickford, John and Pam Bloom, Jeff and Linda Blum, Cyndie Childress, Charles Cottle, Charles and Barbara Elbot, John and Lynne Erikson, Quentin and Ann Griffey, Charles Hatley, Kingston Heath, David and Mary Kartzman, Harry Lancaster and Jane Henderson, Skip and Tina Lyon, Bruce Magruder and Audrey Shields, Terrill
and Rosemary Mayes, William and Bonne McCoy, Michael and Brenda McRae, Karen Peters, Daniel Propst, Carol Sikes, Robert and Sandy Vermillion, Oakley and Kathy Winters, Jim and Sandra Woolsey and Ted Woolsey.

Of those original members, the following were still active members in 2012: Jeff and Linda Blum, Ed Barrier, Harry Lancaster, Jane Henderson, Jim and Sandra Woolsey.

**LIZ MCMASTER SERVED AS PUUC’S FIRST MINISTER**

![PHOTO: Jeff Blum and Rev. Liz McMaster celebrate the opening of PUUC’s first church office.](image)

A major development in the spring of 1988 was PUUC’s acceptance into the UUA Extension Program. Through this, the UUA would make a five-year financial commitment to the church to help with the cost of a full-time minister. After the Sunday service which she conducted, the congregation voted unanimously to call Rev. Elizabeth McMaster to the pulpit. Liz was a recent graduate of Harvard Divinity School, who had been an active member of her Atlanta UU congregation for PUUC

*Celebrating 25 Years- 1987-2012*

*Part 1*
many years before entering the ministry. Liz arrived at PUUC in the late summer of 1988 to begin her ministry. Liz brought energy and enthusiasm to her ministry, involving herself in issues that concerned her in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties. Her sermons were thought-provoking and well-written. PUUC attracted many visitors and added members.

**THE EARLY YEARS – 1988 TO 1992**

Jeff Blum, Kathy Winters and Ed Barrier served as the first three presidents of the congregation. The organization of the church continued to take shape and membership grew to approximately 84 members at the end of the 1989-1990 church year. The membership geographic area encompassed a 75 mile diameter. Members identified two goals at their fall retreat, increasing membership and relocating the church to the university area. Members provided assistance to Treasurer Jim Alderman’s hometown in South Carolina, which had been severely damaged by Hurricane Hugo in September 1989, and later in the year worked for Habitat for Humanity, participated in the annual CROP walk, assisted a social services family at Christmas and made homelessness an important social justice concern. The young congregation valued religious education for children and youth, and Lynne Erickson directed the program in its first two years. Linda Blum, Pam Bloom, Sandy Kartzman, Jane Henderson, Tere Wood and Quentin Griffey served as teachers and youth leaders in a very active program for 38 children and youth. Janet Carmichael directed the program the following year, 1990-1991.

Of the members listed in the PUUC directory for 1989-1990, Jeff and Linda Blum, Jim and Sandra Woolsey, Harry Lancaster, Jane Henderson, Barbara Hollingsworth, Ed Barrier and Anne Laukaitis were still members in 2012.

**1991-1992 – A CRITICAL YEAR FOR PUUC’S SURVIVAL**

In 1991, during the third year of her ministry, Rev. Liz McMaster made the decision to accept a call to the UU church in Fort Lauderdale. PUUC was then without a minister during the 1991-1992 church year. That year was a critical one in PUUC’s
history, with a very small group of active members remaining, possibly as few as 35, who worked to ensure the church’s survival. Many members participated in an expanded Religious Services Council chaired by Anne Laukaitis and presented services or made contacts for guests to present services, so that for most weeks, Sunday services were held and church traditions were continued. Religious education for the children continued. In the early months of 1992, President Valerie Davis and President-elect Harry Lancaster asked the UUA for another extension minister to complete the remaining two years in the extension contract. The UUA named Reverend Wyman Rousseau, an experienced UU minister with over twenty years of ministerial experience. Wyman was eager to relocate to Charlotte and accepted the call. He traveled to Concord in May 1992 to meet the members, and his appointment was approved by all.

Board members also sought to relocate the church to a rented space closer to the university, and Barbara Hollingsworth led a small committee that found an office space in Harrisburg, close to Mecklenburg County. The congregation was successful in both efforts, both essential to PUUC’s continued survival.

PHOTO: Jeff Blum, John Bloom and Jim Woolsey at an early fundraiser for PUUC.
Unitarian Universalists Meeting In Concord

Some 30 to 40 people from the Lake Norman, University City and Concord areas have come together to share their religious beliefs and questions and encourage each other in spiritual growth. Seeking enriched spiritual and ethical lives in an atmosphere of openness and acceptance, they have formed the Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church.

The first service was held Sunday, January 17, although publicity committee member and Lake Dweller Dr. Audrey Shields explained that organizational meetings had been going on since last April.

The group is meeting in the Old Courthouse Theatre in Concord, a building which was originally a church.

The Piedmont church got its start with the help of the Unitarian Church of Charlotte. The Charlotte church, established in 1947, has a membership of 700 adults and children. Approximately half of the new church’s members had attended the Charlotte church prior to the establishment of a congregation in the Lake Norman vicinity.

Characterizing Unitarian Universalist belief is difficult, Shields explained, due to the conviction that the individual should be free to develop his or her own beliefs as part of a personal search for truth. Beliefs vary not only from person to person but also from church to church, with each church writing its own creed.

One concept characteristic of Unitarianism is the belief in the unity of God. Unitarianism rejects the notion of the Trinity—God as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. While the figure of Jesus is revered as a great and worthy teacher and moral leader, most Unitarians reject the notion of his divinity.

In their approach to faith, Unitarians and Universalists tend to stress ethical issues with a focus on the here and now rather than the hereafter.

Although the seeds of Unitarianism were sown as soon as the doctrine of the Trinity was adopted some 300 years after the death of Jesus, the movement began gaining popularity in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

A separate religious movement, Universalism, rejected the widely accepted Calvinist doctrine of salvation of the few, instead claiming that God’s grace is available to all.

“The belief is that no particular person, because of race, station in life, or culture will be excluded from God’s bounty,” Shields explained. “This includes those outside the Judeo-Christian tradition.”

In 1981, the two organizations merged, to form the Unitarian Universalist Association of Churches and Fellowships in North America. Currently there are approximately 181,000 members in this country and Canada.

The faith stresses religious tolerance. “The reason I like it is that the freedom of the individual to believe as he or she wants is preserved. People have respect for and are interested in each other’s beliefs,” Shields said.

continued on next page
Shields, whose specialty is internal medicine, has been practicing at the Davidson Clinic for two and a half years. She became acquainted with Unitarianism as she and her husband, who was raised in the Unitarian church, attended the church in Charlotte.

A feeling of fellowship and support is an important element in any religious community, but perhaps more so among people who express their faith in ways that fall outside the mainstream.

“My first thought was this is so nebulous, maybe I should just stay at home and have my own religion like I have for years. But I think the main benefit is being with other people who want to think, question, study and read.”

Do Unitarians believe in God? “Not necessarily,” Shields explained. “Most believe in a universal force of some kind. In our group, we decided we were uncomfortable with the word ‘God,’ because of the connotations. However, we will use it somewhat.”

The Sunday service begins at 10:30 am, and lasts about an hour, with Sunday school provided for the dozen or so children during the service.

Readings are taken from a variety of sources, including the Bible, Thoreau (a Unitarian), and other examples of world literature.

The church is currently looking for an ordained minister. Shields mentioned Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Chicago as schools where Unitarian ministers are trained.

Both the movements have a long tradition of humanitarian work, and Shields indicated that social issues are a concern for the Piedmont church as well. “We’re still getting organized, however,” she commented, “so we haven’t set specific projects yet.”

“We don’t have any evangelistic potential,” Shield acknowledged. “We don’t preach one belief. We’re just a group of people who have come together to promote individual and religious growth through study and fellowship.”

Anyone interested in becoming involved with the Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church can call 892-3712 or 788-8806. —Emily Partin
Unitarian Church in Cabarrus County

By KRISTA C. GIBSON
Staff Writer

A new Concord church, the Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church (UUC), held its charter service Saturday at the Old Courthouse Theatre.

The president of the UUC, Dr. Bill Schultz, was on hand to speak.

The Piedmont UUC held its initial service Jan. 17, but a charter service is held to dedicate the new congregation into the denomination.

Schultz, who was in Charlotte this weekend to speak at the Thomas Jefferson District meeting of the church, said that he is glad it worked out for him to be at the service.

"It's fairly rare that I can participate in a charter service," he said. The denomination adds about 25 new churches annually, he said. He is headquartered in Boston, Mass.

The key difference from other churches is that Unitarian Universalist do not believe that a minister, pope or bishop should decide how a person should believe, Schultz said.

Jeff Blum, a charter member and a member of the steering committee, said, "We don't have a specific creed that you have to believe in."

The group does have two covenants, one specifically for their congregation and the other for the denomination. The Piedmont UCC covenant states in part, "We encourage and support individual freedom of religious beliefs for all...We will seek the truth to enlighten and acknowledge human accomplishments and possibilities."

"The mysteries of life are so great that they overspill," Schultz said. There is not one path, one answer, he said.

The UUC looks to sciences, all the world's faiths and other topics to find their beliefs.

The services are like a standard Protestant service, Schultz said. There is an organ prelude, hymns, responsive readings, a sermon and a collection. The church usually holds services on Sunday.

The Saturday service was followed by a dinner and reception. Members of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra provided music for the reception.

The church has members from Cabarrus County and the Lake Norman area as well as from Charlotte.
Order of
Service for the
Charter
Service on
Sunday, April
16, 1988

Charter Members

Piedmont
Unitarian
Universalist
Church

Charter Service
April 16, 1988
6:00pm

Prelude: Reverie (Debussy)
Lighting of the Candles: Julie Blum & Ted Woosley
Welcome: Jeff Blum
Hymn #34: O Life That Makwest
All Things New
First Reading: Jane Henderson
Candles of Concern and Celebration
Congregational Response (in unison)
May the light of these candles
disperse the darkness that
touches us, that is left
in hate and not in peace.
In living affection and trusting hope
Commitment: Moonlight Sonata
(Debussy)
Announcements
Second Reading: Bruce Magruder

Special Music: Amazing Grace
(Church Choir)
Message: William F. Schulz
President - USDA
Reflection
Hymn: Carry The Light
Closing Affirmation (in unison)
We appreciate and support individual
freedom of religious belief for all.
We give in a loving ministry care
for the sick, and providing,
for the emotional, physical, and
spiritual healing.
We are dedicated to providing religious
education for our children which will
become the positive norm of our child.
We will strive toward social responsibility
with the purpose of strengthening an
ethical commitment to our congregation
and community.
We will seek the truth to enlightenment
and understanding, human accomplishment
and aspirations.

Postlude: March (Gluck)
Closer To Home

Unitarian Universalist Church Established In Concorde

By JIM WRINN
Staff Writer

CONCORD — Two years ago, Chuck Cottle and a friend asked themselves why they should have to drive 20 miles each way to attend the Unitarian Universalist church in Charlotte. They wondered why services couldn’t be held in Cabarrus County.

Their curiosity came at an opportune time. When they began inquirires, they learned the little-known Boston-based denomination was ready for growth in the Carolinas.

Today’s first official meeting of the Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church marks the beginning of the denomination’s effort to establish five new churches in suburban areas of Charlotte.

Church members will meet at 10:30 a.m. in the former sanctuary of First Baptist Church, 49 Spring St. N.W., Concord, in the building now occupied by the Old Courthouse Theatre. The Rev. Sidney Freeman, minister of the Unitarian Church of Charlotte for more than 20 years, will speak on the application of Jeffersonian ideas today.

“The long-range goal is to broaden our offering to the area, to give residents a better opportunity to participate and to provide an alternative,” Cottle said.

The Unitarian Universalist Church was formed in 1961 from the merger of the Unitarians, a 400-year-old denomination, and the Universalists, a 200-year-old denomination.

The church is theologically liberal, Cottle said. “There is no creed or dogma, with all members free to believe and search for their own truths,” he said. “Morality and social issues are perhaps the main theme, along with their belief in the basic worth of all human beings.”

Without any publicity, two informal meetings the local congregation held earlier this month drew about 35 adults and 20 children. The church hopes to draw its membership from Cabarrus County, northeastern Mecklenburg County, the Lake Norman area and Rowan County.

“We think we’re off to a good start,” Cottle said. “We’re an offshoot of the Charlotte church, which is the only Unitarian church between Greensboro and Greenville, S.C.”

Chuck Cottle, organizer of the Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church, on the steps of the former First Baptist Church in Concord is meeting.

Cottle said the church expects to receive its charter in April during a service that will be conducted by William Shultz, president of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Boston.

Guest speakers and members of the congregation are providing each Sunday’s program for now, Cottle said. A full-time minister is expected to be appointed by September.

The Church Bulletin

A long-term goal is a permanent church, theater building, church pew seating for the present.

Want To I
In Cabarrus Coun
768-8506 anytime, I
call Bruce Magnuson

Celebrating 25 Years- 1987-2012
Part 1
Concord is home to new church

Concord is the home of the new Piedmont Unitarian-Universalist Church whose doctrines and beliefs stem from the power of democracy and reason in each individual.

The church started its services in the Old Courthouse Theatre, 47 Spring St. N.W., last Jan. 16. Pastor is the Rev. Barbara McMaster, who is a graduate of Denison University in Granville, Ohio. She lived as an adult in Atlanta, Ga., for 25 years, and recently was ordained a minister at her home church after she graduated from Harvard Divinity School this past June.

The church has approximately 50 adult members and 35 to 40 children who attend. Services are held each Sunday at 10:30 a.m., with child care and a children's Sunday School provided.

"We are considered a middle-sized denomination in the United States and Canada. There are around 1,000 churches with approximately 160,000 members in the two countries. The Unitarian-Universalist Church has seen modest growth since 1960 while many other denominations have seen a decline in membership," said McMaster.

"We have a long history. We are a very 'American' church, although our history runs all of the way back to England and some of the other European churches. Michael Servetus was burned at the stake on the order of John Calvin. Servetus basically believed that human beings were not condemned to hell and that there was not a salvation of the elect.

"In 336 AD, at the Council of---, there was a tremendous struggle over the Trinity and one God. Those who believed in the God-head as One believed that God was more than Jesus or the Holy Spirit," said McMaster.

The name of the Unitarian-Universalist Church is not as well known in the South as it is in New England where the early American Universalist Church flourishes. Dealing with unfamiliarity, one may have to deal with being labeled as something that they may not represent.

"I think it’s dangerous to label people and groups that we don’t understand as cults. We have been accused of being Satan worshipers and practicing witchcraft, because we are not as well known in the South as in New England," said McMaster.

"Seven presidents of the United States were Unitarians. Universalism was brought over by John Murray, a Methodist preacher in the 1700’s, who split off from the Methodist Church. Basically, Universalist believed that all people are saved, and Unitarians believe that God is One.

"In 1961, the two groups merged because of their financial statuses and similarities in doctrines. It seems to me that in the year we put our hearts and heads together. We believe that you have your own ability to formulate your own religious concepts and beliefs," said McMaster.

McMaster and Dr. Jeffre Blum, president of the congregation, stress the importance of personal convictions and religious diversity. "We educate children to learn about different religions of the world and foster their own ideas, along with the inherent worth and dignity in each person. We don’t have any creeds that you have to believe in, but we do have certain principles that our denomination follows," said Blum.

"We are socially activated and have taken strong views," said
McMaster, citing the example of Theodore Parker, a Unitarian who was also an abolitionist. We affirm the principals of each person, no matter what race, creed or sexual preference that person is," she said.

"There is an emphasis on being good, not to avoid going to hell, but for the sake of being good. We don't know for sure what is going to happen to us after we die, and that is not as important as what is going on and what we can do for today," said McMaster.

The form of the services also is different than what most other churches follow. "We have a 'Sharing of the Candles Concerned,' where members of the congregation light a candle and share their experiences. We also have an inter-generational service where children and adults read poetry (to the congregation) and may speak.

"We have found that a lot of other churches have steering committees that make and carry out decisions. We have a democratic policy in our church that lets the people involved make decisions... and see those things carried out... so the whole thing is an organization that grows and develops," said Blum.

and the Unitarian church

"To affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of every human personality, the dignity of man and the use of the democratic method in human relationships"
TRANSITION

In August 1992, Rev. Wyman Rousseau moved to Charlotte with his wife Janie Williams, his father, and Janie’s son, Landon, to begin his ministry at PUUC. It lasted fifteen years until his retirement in December 2007. These were the Wyman Years – 1992-2007.

PHOTO: Reverend Wyman Rousseau began his fifteen year ministry in 1992, beginning another era in the church’s history. In this photo, he is pictured with Rev. Dr. William F. Schulz in 2005 at the first event of the Piedmont Liberal Forum.
APPENDIX I

CHARTER MEMBERS

The following forty-eight persons are charter members of Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church:

Jim Alderman
Barbara Anderson
Edward and Shirley Barrier
Jerry and Sharon Bickford
John and Pam Bloom
Jeff and Linda Blum
Cyndie Mynatt Childress
Charles Cottle
Charles and Barbara Elbot
John and Lynne Erikson
Quentin and Ann Griffey
Charles Hatley
Kingston Heath
David and Mary Kartzman
Harry Lancaster and Jane Henderson
Skip and Tina Lyon
Bruce Magruder and Audrey Shields
Terrill and Rosemary Mayes
William and Bonne McCoy
Michael and Brenda McRae
Karen Peters
Daniel Propst
Carol Sikes
Robert and Sandy Vermillion
Oakley and Kathy Winters
Jim and Sandra Woolsey and Ted Woolsey.