



The Flaming Chalice

The newsletter of
The Unitarian Universalist Community Church
69 Winthrop Street ♦ Augusta, Maine 04330

November 2008

Worship Services

Sundays 9:15 AM & 11:00 AM

November 23

Thanksgiving This Intergenerational Service - facilitated by worship leaders Christine Little, Martha Pelletier and Annie Voorhees - will feature a story with Karen Fisk, music with the Choir and Director Doug Barley, and Pumpkin Bread and Cider Communion

November 30, Worship Services at 9:15 and 11:00 am

The Pilgrim Journey Rev. Lee Devoe. The service at 9:15 am will include the dedication of Aden Eldridge Barnes, daughter of Diane Smith and Tom Barnes born on June 22 this year.

December 1, 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Community Gathering in honor of World AIDS Day. The UUCC sanctuary will be graced with panels of the National Memorial Quilt for this time of music and reflection. Member Dan Sorensen will be one of the speakers.

December 7

Freedom and Fullness: Theological Reflection for Advent Rev. Lee Devoe

December 14

Solstice! A Celebratory Service of music and poetry including creative direction by Annie Voorhees and creative movement by Christine Little. Children and teens are encouraged to attend the service. Extended nursery care will be available for children 5 and under.

December 21

9:15 Children's Christmas Pageant
11 am Christmas Carols & Meditations

December 24, 6:00 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service led by Nancy Fritz, music with Doug Barley

Interim Minister: Rev. Lee Devoe

President: Debbie Mattson

Director of Religious Exploration: Karen Fisk

Administrator: Julie Pelletier

Office hours: Monday & Tuesday, 8 am - 4 pm

Office: (207)622-3232, admin@augustauu.org

Minister's study: (207)623-3663, leedevoe@aol.com

<http://www.augustauu.org>

Next newsletter deadline is **Monday, December 8**. Please make submissions by email if possible.

A Letter from Lee

by Rev. Lee Devoe



It's hard to believe that this newsletter includes descriptions of services through Christmas, yet here we are. I am looking forward to worship this holiday season – perhaps that doesn't mean much since I'm obviously a worship junkie. I love the energy of it – the communal singing and silence. I think the spectrum of services will be satisfying – like a delicious meal that just hits the spot. I'd like to invite you into some of the conversations that are guiding how we plan for this season.

On November 30, the Sunday after Thanksgiving we will have two services – following the “regular” schedule, which is not regular for this congregation on this Sunday. (Formerly, the congregation held one service at 10 am). This “change” (which is actually not changing) has several goals. It spreads the resources more evenly over the Sundays framing Thanksgiving, ensuring more balanced services. Leaders from the Worship Committee and staff members Karen Fisk and Doug Barley will lead services before Thanksgiving. I will lead worship, with pianist and vocalist Annie Voorhees, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Newcomers are more likely to visit at this time of year and having the doors open at the regular times is the first step to welcoming them. It is also a time for other meaningful visits: young adults attending college who are back in town for the holiday, church members whose family is visiting for the holiday and they'd like to introduce them to their church.

I have been talking with leadership - including Karen Fisk, Director of Religious Exploration, and the Worship Committee - about the terms we use to describe worship, in an effort to both be consistent and have models for worship that serve the congregation well. The conversations will continue, yet initial clarification is around the word “intergenerational” and the times when worship more expressly includes friends of all ages. The first thing to say is that children and youth are always welcome in worship. And then to acknowledge that there is a wide spectrum of children's interest or ability to be in worship and parents needs to have them there. The word “intergenerational” will be used for worship that includes children and youth in the design of the worship service. They will participate in an active way. Most likely the service will be story-based rather than sermon-based. There will also be Sundays that have no formal religious exploration program and children - as always - are welcome in worship and may be participating in worship, yet the design of the service is not based on inclusion of children. The upcoming Solstice Service on December 14 is such a service. It will be a beautiful service that captures the mystery of

the Solstice season, the time of darkness turning back to light. The service will be a weaving of poetry and music of all kinds – solos and choral pieces from many cultures and traditions. You might want to bring a friend. The service will highlight some of the distinctive character of Unitarian Universalist worship, as well as the musical gifts of the congregation. The Solstice service is potentially a meaningful time for families to share together. While these terms are imperfect, they are an attempt to help families make the most of these services and be able to plan in accordance with their needs.

The Children's Christmas pageant will once again be held as the first service on the Sunday before Christmas (December 21 this year). The 2nd service on Dec. 21 will be a time for singing Christmas Carols and sharing meditations of the season. There will be Fellowship Hour after each service, thanks to Liza Gottlieb's welcoming spirit and willingness to coordinate these gatherings. Say “yes!” when she asks for your help. This format is the same as last year yet a change from the congregation's long standing tradition of having an evening reception at this time of year, in connection with the pageant. In conversation, it is interesting to see that some members define the pageant as the children's reenactment of the Nativity, and for others it was the pageantry of food at the reception! Of course, there can always be an evening reception. All it takes is for someone to step forward to organize it, as Cheryl Clukey and Linda Conti did for the Thanksgiving Harvest Feast. And it was truly a feast! The tables were set beautifully, the food was bountiful and delicious, and the hall was full with long-time members and newcomers, youngsters and elders. Much appreciation has been expressed to Cheryl and Linda for hosting this important tradition of the congregation.

It is an ambiguous time. This winter after our national election will launch new leadership for our country. For many people, this change is welcome and offers hope. Yet we enter the winter season at a time of economic uncertainty and hardship. We know that people in our community will be hungry and cold. Living into these dual realities, I look to the solace of simple things. I scoop a warm bowl of soup from the pot on the stove. I knit a “dragon” from scraps of yarn, a present for the youngest member of my extended family. I take just a moment to try a new yoga pose, feeling my body stretch in a new way and my spirit along with it. Such luxuries! As we enter the dark season of the year, I hope you will be held by the simple joys of your life and the celebrations of this congregation.

In faith,
Lee

President's Column

On November 2 the church held a Town Meeting to discuss communication needs. It was gratifying to count 28 people at the meeting.

Many people made many suggestions (see the below summary). Some suggestions will be easy to follow up on, like making a list of all Board of Trustees members and Committee Chairs for the church bulletin board. This suggestion will take the effort of one person to print and post the names and will be a reference for everyone else.

Other suggestions require the effort of all of us. For example, several people spoke of the need to make a habit of speaking directly with each other when we have complaints and misgivings. This practice of speaking with honesty, openness and curiosity towards each other builds sustainable fellowship and community.

I, also, hope we will make a practice of speaking directly with each other with appreciation and gratitude. For me, I am grateful to be in fellowship with all of you.

Thank you,
Debbie Mattson

Correction:
Ron LeBlanche asked me to make the following correction to the President's Column of the previous Flaming Chalice. I wrote that Ron is taking a break from the nursery; instead, Ron wants it to be known that he has resigned from his volunteer role in the nursery.

Debbie Mattson

Town Meeting: Communication 11/02/08

Suggestions	What's Working	Problems
<p>Consider using 5 methods of communication: newsletter, bulletin board, pulpit, email, website</p> <p>Keep communicating even if you think you've already said it</p> <p>Make leadership more visible: post names and pictures on bulletin board, include leadership position on nametag</p> <p>Add on the order of service that there is a book next to the candles to write your joys/sorrows and is available for reading</p> <p>Visit our traditions</p> <p>Call meetings of opinion before making major changes</p> <p>Send Board Minutes via email</p> <p>Place topic of sermon in Saturday newspaper, include RE & wheelchair accessible</p> <p>Designate a spot for picking up documents like the directory, 5 year plan, etc.</p>	<p>Asking people: "What's new for you in the church?"</p> <p>Continue to include announcements in order of service</p> <p>Summary of Board of Trustees meeting in newsletter</p> <p>List names of people on order of service—person greeting, serving, etc.</p> <p>Communicate directly with people</p> <p>Being patient, not everything can be done instantly</p> <p>Communicating quickly so that rumors don't fill the gap</p> <p>Including church members in Sunday service</p> <p>Board meetings open with: "What have you heard around the church?"</p>	<p>Can't open electronic newsletter</p> <p>Not knowing who to talk with and instead forming negative circles of disappointment</p> <p>No place to make personal announcements about our lives</p> <p>No Social Activities Committee</p> <p>We are stuck in old way of communicating: not being direct with gripes/worries</p>

From the Director of Religious Exploration

For All This We Are Thankful

As I drove home from an outdoor experience with our coming of age youth last Sunday night, I kept looking at my watch, willing time to slow down so I could get the chatting/laughing/adrenaline pumped youth in my car back to their parents when I had said they'd be back. I rounded the last corner picturing worried faces and bitten nails. Instead, we burst into the church to find grinning parents dancing the electric slide having been invited to join the festivities by the group using the fellowship hall. The youth were equally welcome and plied with a table replete with homemade food. What a wonderful embodiment of beloved community.

There is so much to be thankful for in our beloved community of the UUCC. I want to share some highlights.

This year the First and Second Grade Class collected money for Unicef. An entire lesson of their "Around the Church, Around the Year" was devoted to the good works of this organization which for less than 50 cents can help keep a young person hampered by poverty safe from many diseases. The children collected nearly \$80. One young person was so moved by the amount of good that could be done that she emptied out her piggy bank and gave the whole of her life savings to the cause, \$28. That six years old exemplifies the self-less generosity that changes lives, the kind of compassion that could save the world!

The Preschool and Kindergarten Class and the Spirit Play kids have the tremendous good fortune of exploring ideas of friendship, generosity, love of life and nature and love of community within the remarkably bright and beautiful space of 71 Winthrop Street. There is not a day that goes by that I am not grateful for the quality of space 71 provides for our RE program and for the entire church community. Thank you to all the people who gave so many hours of their time and energy and goodwill to make 71 as lovely as it is, I know how many Summer weekends you all spent creating this inviting space! We love it and it seems to me the Spirit Play room is particularly

filled to the rim with love and laughter because of the good energy beaming from its walls. What a wonderful community effort. Thank you.

And of course there is the newly renovated space in our church. The youngest UUs enjoy a warm space in the nursery. I don't think I have walked by on a Sunday morning without seeing a child and caregiver stretched out on the carpet making a car go or reading a book together. The space for Young UU Worship is so lovely, so warm and welcoming. Thank you to all who helped this renovation happen.

And as I work in the Annex, preparing rooms for RE sessions, I am reminded of work that was done a few years ago to brighten and improve the space there. I smile at the beautiful cream walls painted through Dan Sorensen's generosity, the lovely window dressings hand-made by June Zellers, the beautiful rug donated by Charlene Clevon, the classroom walls painted by Toki Oshima, Janet Sawyer, June and myself. This building also reminds me of the efforts of a community to make something beautiful and good.

Grade three is enjoying a new curriculum called "The Spirit of Adventure." For one class they kids assessed their space in the Annex for safety and emergency preparedness. I found a beautiful note, signed by all, suggesting the positive changes we could make to our space to make it safer. I passed on this note to the Buildings and Grounds Committee, led by Diana Scully, who responded by following through with all requests. How is that for community service! Her committee also installed safety windows and door locks, provided brooms and trash cans, cleaned small chairs and stocked our rooms with them. Thank you BAG!

When the Grade 4 & 5 class explored sibling rivalry with the story of Cain and Abel, I found a list of things that made them mad, and a list of things that would help them deal with their anger in positive, forward moving ways. Considering the emphasis we place on nonviolent communication and problem-solving, I was once again grateful for the loving solutions our children suggested, and I thank the

Continued on page 5

Small Group Ministry

Ministry is at the heart of our congregation. We come to receive ministry and to offer it in return. "From you I receive, to you I give." Small Group Ministry has been central in this sharing for many years. Many participants have spoken to rewards they have received from even brief participation in our Groups. We expect this year to be no exception.

The Small Group Ministry Steering Committee has great expectations for this year. By the time you see this column we will have hosted an introductory dinner with sessions on group facilitation, writing to structure Ministry Group discussions, and a sample Group open to anyone who is interested. We also have plans to begin a new Group on November 18. Several of our ongoing Groups have openings, so if you have been thinking of joining a Group, please speak with me.

Our Open Group continues to meet every Sunday at 9:30 in our new building on Winthrop Street to explore an aspect of spiritual growth and to offer an opportunity for you to become better acquainted with other members and friends of the congregation. Hospitality is fundamental to Small Group Ministry. We see ourselves as a significant part of the effort toward extending the reach of our community to those who would benefit from and embrace our approach to religious life. I hope any of you who have considered dropping in on us will take the time to do that in the near future.

As I look around at all that has changed at UUCC in the last two years, I am reassured by the presence of Small Group Ministry. I hear from members in Groups that the bonds created by regular meetings have been a source of comfort and support as changes have happened. I am pleased that we continue to be able to offer the opportunity for connection to you.

If you have any questions about Small Group Ministry, please speak with me.

Kathy Kellison

RE - Continued from page 4

adults who volunteer their time with our children for guiding them toward nonviolent solutions.

And the youth, what is there to say about the youth of our church community? They are abundant (for this I am so very grateful), generous, caring, open-minded, willing to participate, and enthusiastic. And the youth leaders, well, just return to the last sentence and read it again.

Adult RE continues through the nurturing guidance of Helen Zidowecki and more plans for religious exploration continue to blossom in so many different gardens from meditation to nonviolent communication to small group ministry to the Sunday Religious Exploration programming for children and youth. What a rich and abundant and truly beloved community we all exist in and define by our communal good will. Thank you!

The coming of age kids took up a challenge where one person is pulled by the entire group to a remarkable height; the lifted person then chooses when to release the line and fly free. I found the moment of the pull a personal paroxysm each time. And the ensuing whoop of joy an invitation to breathe again and whoop as well. In so many ways our beloved community (a community which we have all built together) is pulling us along, helping us reach heights we couldn't have imagined. In many instances, when we release the lines that bind us to the group, we aren't leaving the group, we are flying on the wings our group helped us create. What a gift, what a gift. And for this (and so many other things) we may all be thankful.

Yours in faith,
Karen

The Afghani Family

Most of you will remember the Hassenzada family, whom we helped to settle into Augusta several years ago. They are thriving down in Gorham, where they now live. Their last name is now Jamal and they are American citizens. Last year, Ferozan married Mussen; they are expecting their first child at any moment. Faranaz and Farchunda are in high school. Mustafa, age 17 is in need of our aid again. You'll recall that he became famous as a Little League player. He has been chosen, out of thousands of boys (he's the only one from Maine) to go to Dodgertown, Florida on a scholarship, in late December, to the Baseball Factory at the L.A. Dodgers spring training camp. It is the # 1 rated college placement and player development camp in the country. Mustafa is very excited to have this opportunity, and it may be his one chance to play college baseball. But he is obligated to fundraise \$3000. If you would like to help Mustafa once again, make a check out to Baseball Factory, and mail it to: _Mustafa Jamal, 46 Gray Rd. Gorham, ME 04038. If you want to know more about the Jamal family, talk to me. Dan Sorensen

Comprehensive Long Range Planning Committee

The Comprehensive Long Range Planning Committee has been meeting regularly since last summer and has been working on establishing a schedule and approach for updating the five year plan. Annie Lunt and Janine Bonk are new members to the committee and Stephanie Ralph has been appointed as the representative from the Board of Trustees. Jeff Janelle was elected Chair. Other members of the Committee are Priscilla Jenkins, Steve Gove, and Don Bell.

Members of the Committee are reviewing the results of the Search Committee survey for anything that may have an impact on the plan update. Each member will be reviewing and revising an element of the plan, if necessary. The committee welcomes any comments you may have concerning the plan and will consider them when updating the plan.

Meetings are held in the Annex from 5:30-7pm on Mondays. Upcoming meeting dates are: Nov. 17, Dec. 15, 2008 and Jan. 15 and Feb. 12 2009.

Our meetings are open to anyone wishing to attend.

Caring Committee Corner

Our warm thoughts go to Ginny Christie as she begins recovery from her long-term illness. She likes to receive cards and phone calls.

Deepest sympathy from all of us to Helen Wright on the recent tragic loss of her young nephew. Cards will be welcome.

We actively reach out to Don Paul Sommerfeld with rides, casseroles and cards as he copes with his serious illness.

We gladly extend meals, rides and visits to Faith and Rudy Soria. They like to receive cards and other help during Rudy's serious illness.

Many condolences to the Nielsen and the Little-Kmen families, who have recently lost beloved pets.

We send loving attention to Elva Ingraham as she recovers at home from recent hospitalizations.

If you have news or want to help, contact Hannah Faulkner (293-9377) or Marty Thornton (512-2587).

Greetings from the Aesthetics Committee. We would like to officially introduce ourselves. We are Liza Rose Gottlieb, Mark Griswold and Janet House. The Aesthetics Committee oversees and maintains the beauty and integrity of our buildings. In the months ahead we will be looking at how we can continue to make our space look and feel welcoming; address the 'sound' issue in the fellowship hall; continue to relocate furniture, artwork, window treatments etc. But we view this as our church, our sacred space that we all must become stewards of. So we are asking for your participation. For your part, we ask that you help by keeping the bulletin boards tidy and keeping the information on them timely. Monitor and remove any outdated material to keep them less cluttered. Make sure nothing is taped to the walls. Please keep all areas picked up after use. If you see something in need of repair or replacement, please bring it our attention. More importantly, if you have ideas or suggestions that would improve our space let us know.

Liza Rose Gottlieb - lizarosegottlieb@yahoo.com, 549-5198

Mark Griswold - markg@gwi.net, 441-2380

Janet House - belgradehouse@roadrunner.net, 465-3524

Reflection

About a year ago I was asked to become a member of the Board of Trustees. I was very flattered to be asked and after some consideration decided to say “yes”. I had no idea what a wonderful opportunity this would be. Brenda (my wife) and I do not have a long history with the church, having become members only a few years ago. We have been impressed with the social conscience of the/our church and its individual members and have appreciated the support of the congregation and the church structure in their/our endeavors. I had observed the “struggles” of the church with things like budget issues, long range planning issues, deciding whether to build a new church, and others, at a bit of a distance. These were issues of “church administration” with which I had no great interest in being involved. I was happy to be able to come to a place where I/we were welcomed and our ideas/causes were warmly received and supported. I also liked being in an atmosphere where others shared similar concerns and commitments.

As a member of the Board, I have been involved in the development and maintenance of a structure which allowed me and others to share our causes and concerns and receive support for them. I have come to realize that this process, the development and maintenance of structure, is no small feat. It takes an enormous amount of time, energy and commitment by a relatively small group of thoughtful, devoted persons so that many others may do the “work” for which they have passion. Without the efforts of the Board, all other processes will fail. The Board truly is the glue and security blanket which holds all “church things” together.

I have truly loved my time on the Board. At times the responsibility of the position has seemed a bit overwhelming, and from each board meeting I came away with a renewed sense of commitment. As the time for Brenda and I to return to Nicaragua drew closer, I was faced with a difficult decision. I became aware that I cannot be selfish and continue to maintain a spot on the Board while I will be away and not available for the next four months. We, our church and our congregation, are in a time of transition and it is critical that our church leaders be highly visible and readily available for on-going communication. It is, therefore, with a bit of a heavy heart, that I have resigned my position on the Board. I leave with a much fuller idea of what is involved in developing and maintaining a church community and a stronger commitment to try to support that community while I am here. I want to thank-you, Board members and all members of the congregation, for such a wonderful opportunity. I truly hope that every member of the congregation is given and accepts the opportunity to be on the Board. It is a wonderful experience. Warmly, Kit Perry

UUCU Staff News

Julie Pelletier is our new administrator. She will be working Mondays and Tuesdays, 8 AM – 4 PM, and will have flexible hours on weekends. She has written the following as an introduction:

My name is Julie Pelletier. I live in Pittston with my wonderful family. I have been married for 20 years to my husband Norman. We have one daughter, Carly and a very silly dog, Charlie! I love to read, camp, listen to music and take long walks on the beach.

I have been working for 6 years at a local elementary school. I am very happy to be joining the staff at UUCU.

Welcome, Julie!

Board Highlights

The November First Sunday Town Meeting was attended by 28 people. The topic was communication, and people made some excellent suggestions. The board looks forward to implementing some of them quickly.

The next Town Meeting will be on December 7 following the 2nd service. The topic will be “Social Activities”.

Martha Pelletier approved as the new chair of the Worship Committee.

Work continues on the Sound System. The Treasurer will hold the recent bill until the buzz is fixed.

71 Winthrop Street looks great and is ready for occupancy. Offices will start moving from the Annex shortly.

Unitarian Universalist Community Church
69 Winthrop Street
Augusta, Maine 04330

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
P A I D
AUGUSTA, ME
PERMIT NO. 207



Unitarian Universalist Community Church

Peaceful Heart Sangha - Day of Mindfulness Stopping, Calming, Resting, Healing

Saturday, December 6, 2008

10 - 4

Mindful eating - Pot Luck Lunch
Recorded teachings from Thich Nhat Hanh - "The Art of Mindful Living"
Meditation, mindful movement
Choice of deep relaxation, Reiki, teachings on Bon (Tibetan tradition)

Bring your own cushion or use our chairs.

Bring a blanket and pillow, if you want to participate in deep relaxation.
Childcare available from 10 - 1, maybe longer, if donations make that possible.

Questions - contact Marty Soule - martysoule@verizon.net or 685-9270