



The Flaming Chalice

The newsletter of The Unitarian Universalist Community Church
69 Winthrop Street ~ PO Box 8 ~ Augusta, ME 04332-0008

December 2011

Worship Services Sundays at 9:15 and 11:00 a.m.

Dec 4th *Men of Faith Speaking for Non-Violence* Rev. Carie Johnsen
UUCC Men's Group

Join UU Men as they speak up about the masculine myths, glorification of violence, media's portrait of violence and the inherent human potential to engage in violent acts.

Dec 11th *Singing in the Holidays* Rev. Carie Johnsen
Douglas Barley & the UUCC Choir

The third annual holiday music service is fast becoming a favorite tradition at UUCC. This service spotlights the choir as they sing several pieces and Rev. Carie weaves in holiday themed readings and liturgy.

Dec 18th *Holiday Pageant (9:15 a.m.)* Rev. Carie Johnsen
Pat Hunter Gardiner

This traditional multigenerational service is a favorite among members and friends at UUCC. Let us gather to celebrate the season of lights and love.

Our Christian Roots (11:00 a.m.) Rev. Carie Johnsen

During this holiday season let us remember and affirm our Christian roots as we celebrate Christmas in our many varied ways.

Dec 25th *The Gift of the Magic (One service at 10:00 a.m. only)* Dan Sorensen

We are grateful for those who will open the doors and offer a meaningful service on Christmas morning. Dan Sorensen will read and reflect on "The Gift of the Magi" while Hannah Faulkner offers music and song. All ages welcome. No nursery care or childrens programming.

Wednesday, Dec. 14th
6:00 p.m.

*A Vespers Service:
Grief, Loss and the Holidays*
Rev. Carie Johnsen

This Wednesday evening vespers service is a time to share the gift of love and light as we remember who is not at the holiday table. Who is missing? It is a time to hold our unfilled dreams of how we imagined life to be in the tender care of beloved community.

Sunday, Dec. 18th
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

*Indian Kirtan – Sacred Chanting
For the 2011 Winter Solstice*
Greg Schumann & Chelsea Ray Schumann

Please come join us to celebrate the solstice with joyful chanting. **Kirtan** is Call-and-response chanting or "responsory" performed in India's devotional traditions. Kirtan practice involves chanting hymns or Sanskrit mantras to the accompaniment of instruments such as the harmonium, tablas, drums and hand cymbals. AnandaBhakti will be performing Kirtan as a fund and food raiser for local Augusta area food banks.

Saturday, Dec 24th

Christmas Eve Service
4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Rev. Carie Johnsen
Pat Hunter Gardiner

This Christmas Eve tradition will include two services. The early service at 4:00 will be specifically designed for families and children. The second service at 5:30 will include the tradition of carols, readings and candle lighting. All ages are welcome at both services.

A Faith Journey by Rev. Carie Johnsen...

It is time for each congregation to find its greatness. ~ UU World, Vanessa Southern

Unitarian Universalist Community Church **is living into its greatness** as a liberal religious leader in central Maine and in the Northern New England District of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregation. I bear witness to this phenomena everyday in extraordinary ways. You ask where? You ask how? Let me tell you...

- ◆ As the Board of Trustees invites members to make a commitment to leadership roles in the congregation, more and more people are stepping up to the plate and saying, "Yes!"
- ◆ The first Leadership Council (previously known as Committee on Committees) meeting this year brought more than a dozen members to the table to share their passion, commitment and vision as it relates to their committee work and the congregation as a whole.
- ◆ The Small Group Ministry Committee hosted a full day retreat with over twenty members present to talk about the ground breaking work UCC participated in during the 90's and to imagine how Small Group Ministry will live into the twenty-first century.
- ◆ The newly organized Finance Committee has now had two meetings. The membership of this committee includes: Bill O'Connor, Chair; Melanie Lanctot, Treasurer; Janine Bonk, Long Range Planning Liaison; Wick Johnson, Invested Funds Liaison; Harold Burnett, Member-at-large.
- ◆ The new Stewardship Campaign will kick off in January with Annie Reiter and Hillary Neckles serving as co-chairs.
- ◆ The Board of Trustees, Religious Exploration, Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee are setting the stage for a search for a full-time Director of Religious Exploration thus providing UCC the opportunity to go into a national search for a dynamic visionary religious education leader.
- ◆ The Board of Trustees has charged the Long Range Planning Committee to assess the congregation's needs as it relates to our current physical plan and facilities. Look for their recommendations at the Annual Meeting.
- ◆ UCC has been approached this past month by two faith based organizations to partner with and lead the way in justice and advocacy.

Maine Council of Churches has invited UCC to participate with three other congregations in a state wide pilot project to engage in community dialogue with our Hispanic neighbors. The goal: develop a statewide program for other congregations to replicate. The Immigration Work Group, with support from the Board of Trustees, is ready to take up this charge and inspire the congregation to participate.

The second organization is Kennebec Valley Organizing. They have embarked on a journey to expand public transportation for the low income and elderly in Kennebec County. They are eager to get UCC on board to shape transportation policies and funding in the region. Let me know if you are interested in working on this initiative.

Wow!! And we are only three months into our program year. UCC is indeed well prepared to enter into 2012 embracing healthy practices, leadership development, pastoral care within and community outreach for our neighbors. UCC is growing in numbers, in health systems and structures, and is becoming a more visible justice congregation in the wider Augusta area. You are an amazing community!!

My colleague, the Rev. Christine Robinson, says *If you deepen, you will attract. If you risk offering heart, spirit, god, prayer, blessing—without demanding that people believe specific things about these practices – you will grow.*

May this be our vision as we embrace the future as a program size church spreading the good news of liberal religion in central Maine.

In faith of all that is UCC, *Rev Carie*

Building and Strengthening our Shared Ministry

Ministry is a quality of relationship between and among human beings that beckons forth hidden possibilities. It is inviting people into deeper, more constant more reverent relationship with the world and one another. ~ Gordon McKeeman

A Congregation Wide Training

Saturday, January 28, 2012 ~ 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (Snow date February 25, 2012)
Sunday, January 29, 2012 ~ 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. (Snow date February 26, 2012)

Adopting a spiritual practice of compassionate listening. Do you want to learn why the gift of listening is the best offering you can bring to a friend or family member during time of crisis and conflict or when simply engaged in day to day conversation? Do you want to improve upon your deep listening skills? Do you want to develop a presence of compassion? Do you wish to let go of your impulse to fix others problems, conflicts and dilemmas? Then this Saturday training is for you. No further commitments required.

Leadership. Do you want to understand how leadership is a commitment to shared ministry? Do you want to strengthen your skills as a UUCC leader or committee chair? Do you wish to expand your ability to listen, share ideas and be open to the collective wisdom of your committee or team? Do you want to hear what others have to say without preparing your answers and defenses? Then this Saturday training is for you. No further commitments required.

Small Group Ministry Facilitator. Are you a member of a group who takes your turn to lead the group from time to time? Would you like to know what makes this role so important? Would you like to feel confident that your session is going well? Would you like to be able to listen without taking responsibility for how someone else's comment affects the group? Then this Saturday training is for you. No further commitments required.

Building a Pastoral Ministry Team Join the emerging Pastoral Care Team at UUCC. Do you have a ministry of deep listening and compassionate presence to offer members of UUCC and the wider Augusta community? Do you have a desire sit with our members who are in crisis or lonely or in long term care? Do you love coordinating resources such as rides, prepared meals and errands for members who are incapacitated or coming home from a hospital stay? Then this Saturday and Sunday training is for you. Following the training you will meet with Rev. Carie Johnsen to identify what specialized lay pastoral ministry is right for you. The Pastoral Ministry Team will meet monthly to continue skills development and support each other in their specialized lay pastoral ministries.

Small Group Ministry Leader. Is the free and responsible search for truth and meaning at the heart of your commitment to UUCC? Has your group chosen you as the person to be responsible to hold the role of leader in your group? Would you like to become a leader in a new Ministry Group? Do you want to listen deeply to the individuals in your group? Would you like to be able to listen to the group as a whole? This Saturday and Sunday training is for you. On Sunday we will focus on the skills needed to be an effective leader in a Ministry Group.

This training will be co-facilitated by Kathy Kellison, UUCC Small Group Ministry Coordinator and Rev. Carie Johnsen. Please Sign up on the bulletin board or by sending a RSVP to Julie Pelletier, Office Administrator at admin@augusta.uu.org. Please remember to tell us if you plan to stay complete the Saturday training only or both days. If you are staying for Sunday as well, let us know if you plan to participate in the Small Group Leader training or the Pastoral Ministry training.

UUA Common Read with Rev. Carie Johnsen ...

The Death of Josseline: Stories of Immigration from the Arizona Borderlands ~
Monday, January 30, 2012, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation ~
Monday, February 6, 2012, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.



Interim Director of Religious Exploration ...

Candle, firelight, lamp, or star...

May there be brightness where you are!

There are many ways of having light in our lives, many ways of bringing brightness to the lives of others. As the winter holidays appear on the near horizon, I invite you to consider the many ways in which Light (capital 'L') might come to you and yours.

Capital 'L' Light may come in the form of a kindness done or received. It may appear as a new insight into an old issue, or as a shiny new piece of knowledge. Light may be the trusting face of a small child, or it may appear on the face of someone at a soup kitchen who is fed because you contributed in some way.

No spark, no kindness is too small to light a dark place.

I sometimes hesitate to turn on the news because there is so much darkness being reported. But in this approaching time of the shortest days of the year, I try to remind myself that there is coming a swing back toward the light.

I attended the first Peace Jam session on Nov. 13 (the next is Dec.11), and was so impressed at the breadth of interest, compassion, and energy in our youth. With young people, and leaders like this I feel confident that the Light is indeed being held and nurtured among us!

When we hold Young UU worship, or when I stop by our RE classes, I see the Light growing within our younger children, too. And our group leaders and others who nurture the Light deserve our most profound thanks; they bring a gift of their Light to the young people of this church!

Upcoming this month...

- ... the Cookie Walk in between services on Dec. 11
- ... Peace Jam on Dec. 11 (gr. 8-12)
- ... the holiday pageant at the 9:15 service on Dec. 18
- ... no Jr/Sr High Movie Night this month
- ... two Christmas Eve services
- ... Christmas day falls on Sunday. No RE or nursery that morning. Children welcome at service.

During all of the hustle and bustle of the season, take time now and then to stop and breathe. Look up at the sky. Look around you. Look into the face of a child. Remember that what children want most during the holidays (in spite of their often lengthy lists) is time with family, the focused attention of those they love.

And for that matter, isn't that what we all want, what we all need? Someone to see us, and to appreciate that each of us is, in our own way, a special gift to the world.

Who we are makes a difference.

Namaste (I honor the Light within you),

Pat

Annual Cookie Walk ~ Mark Your Calendar! The RE program will hold its annual cookie walk on Dec 11th between services. Please bring in a batch or two of your favorite holiday cookies to share on Dec 11th. All are invited to fill a container full of cookies for a small donation to the RE faith in action.

Adult RE ...

SAVE THE DATE!! Adult Religious Exploration Opportunities ~ Evensong with Rev. Nancee Campbell

The church will be offering an Adult Education class that is sure to warm you in the midst of winter. **Evensong** is an eight week course of spiritual introspection and reflective conversation in the form of a vespers worship experience. The class will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, January 24 -- March 13, 2012. A more detailed description will be in our next newsletter, but in the meantime, SAVE THE DATE!!

Small Group Ministry ...

Unitarian Universalism is sometimes characterized as a religious movement that honors unity in diversity. This usually refers to our lack of a theological creed and our principle which promotes a 'responsible search for truth and meaning'. Unity in diversity is also an apt description of our Small Group Ministry at UUCC.

Over time, each of our groups has developed a way of being together which marks its individuality. No group is exactly like any other. (Unitarian Universalist congregations are like this, too!) None the less, all of our groups share three basic elements, so although each group is different, they are more similar than different.

Each of our groups has created a COVENANT. Members have taken the time to think about and describe the promises they make to one another to keep the group running smoothly. The covenant answers basic questions such as, how often do we meet, will we stick to our two hour time frame, will we meet in member's homes and if so, are they expected to clean before we come? There are understandings about whether and how to respond during the check in portion of the time together to keep that from becoming the focus of every group. Not surprisingly, each group's covenant is unique to that group's needs.

Each of our groups commits to being OPEN. Although our practice limits the size of groups to between eight and ten members, we expect that groups will take new members when they have room. We want to share the power of Small Group Ministry with as many as possible and having room to add members to groups and groups to the ministry is essential to doing that. We are not interested in creating closed circles of isolated individuals or being limited by a set number of groups.

The third basic element is the commitment to provide SERVICE to our congregation or to the wider world. We know that there is power and strong connecting energy in sharing a work project. Whether it be painting our church buildings or providing food for a church function, groups bond around the effort. The same is true for service outside our congregation, whether it be adopting a family for the holidays or going as a group to help at the soup kitchen or community supper. Service makes the groups stronger.

Covenants, openness and service are what identify our Small Group Ministry. As the Small Group Ministry Committee moves forward with thinking anew about how this ministry works at UUCC, we will hold these three elements as fundamental to what we do. We are committed to Small Group Ministry as a potent opportunity for spiritual searching and growth.

Kathy Kellison
Small Group Ministry Coordinator

Small Group Ministry will be starting new groups in January. If you are interested in knowing more, visit the Small Group Ministry table during Fellowship Hour, speak with Kathy Kellison, Janet Sawyer or Carie. Groups will try to accommodate schedules of those who are interested.

Thank you ...

The immigration committee wants to thank this great congregation for their tremendous help welcoming the economic refugees who lived among us this past summer. Because of your generosity, this church befriended over 66 Haitian migrant workers, giving each a large bag of food, several personal items and 8 soccer balls for off-duty enjoyment.

In addition, your donations allowed us to host a delicious homemade supper for any of the workers who wished to attend. As a church, we have established or reestablished a positive working relationship with St. Mark's Episcopal Church, their food pantry and essentials, the Augusta Food Bank and several merchants in Augusta that donated to the cause. Furthermore, the UUCC has completed the process that entitles us to buy food from the Good Shepherd Food Bank in Auburn.

We also want to thank Juan A. Perez-Febles of the Maine Department of Labor, who visited with the committee giving us a valuable overview of the concerns and opportunities related to the migrant workers here in Maine. Later, Kamis Ley of the Maine Migrant Health Program spoke to the committee. Her insights and invaluable assistance were instrumental in any success we had. She was not only a major advisor; she also served as the interpreter, communicating with the workers in their native Creole. We can't thank her enough.

This congregation embraced this service not only as a right thing to do, but also as a partner with our U.U. ancestors, those who spoke and acted against slavery, women's subjugation, racism, capital punishment and homophobia. We stand with those who spoke (and speak) of peace not war, who strive for economic equality as well as marriage equality. And our efforts to welcome the strangers among us, while a small step, it may not be the last. Many committee members would like to meet soon, planning not only a similar activity next summer, but also something related as a winter project. However, we are always aware that whatever was done or is to be done, was or will be accomplished because a great group of people so often turn away from their own needs to serve the needs of others.



Church Events

Newcomer Conversations, Sunday December 4, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Come for church, stay for Building & Grounds luncheon at noon and then attend Newcomer Conversations with Rev. Carie Johnsen

All guests and newcomers are invited to attend Newcomer Conversations with Rev. Carie Johnsen and the Membership Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church. This is a time to bring your questions and curiosity about who we are and how you can become more connected to the community. For those who are ready, there will be an opportunity to sign the membership book.

Elder Lunch ~ Won't you join us on Sunday, December 11th (after second service) for our monthly Elder lunch? We don't check your birth certificate....."elder" is self-defined!

Mark your Calendar! Next elder lunch will be held on Sunday, January 8th. Hope to see you there!

Fundraising ...

This autumn has been a very busy time for Fundraising. Our first event was the Dessert Theater on September 2nd which earned **\$113**. Following that was the Cookbook Launch on October 23rd for which 28 contributors prepared recipes for sampling. Since that date we have sold 188 copies resulting in a profit of **\$1,213**. The Chowder Luncheon was held on October 29th and the proceeds from that were **\$188**. Hannah's Boutique, on November 12th, has earned **\$416**, and the 39 pies donated to the Pie Sale at Longfellow's Greenhouses on November 19th were sold for **\$586**. In addition to these large events, Charlene Cleven donated **\$42** from the sale of her cards, **\$100** was deposited from the CLYNK program and **\$9** was donated for books in the Fellowship Hall. **The combined total is \$2,667**. Ten percent of this amount will be given to the Faith in Action Committee to be used for charitable work; the remainder is directed to the General Fund to be used as needed for church expenses.

Many people were involved in these efforts and everyone's participation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Bruce Bierce and Judy McCown, Fundraising Co-Chairs
bbierce@myfairpoint.net and jsmbierce@myfairpoint.net

Goddess Continuing ...

Invites you to join the Winter Solstice Celebration on Wednesday, December 21, 5:30-6:30 pm at the church. This is the longest period of dark in the earth-based calendar. Celebrate the gifts of the dark that we take into the increasing light of the upcoming days. Music, readings, reflections, light food of the season.

History Committee ...

The next History Committee Meeting is Thursday, December 1, 10:30-noon in the Annex. We will be continuing discussion on naming the buildings and spaces, as well as other projects.

Reminder: Please remember to clip news items related to church members for our ongoing scrapbooks – capturing history as it happens. These contributions can be put in the History Committee mail slot in the Committee Room.

Leadership ...

A UUCC Committee Needs You ~ The good news is that each of the UUCC's 16 standing committees now has a capable chair. But several committees are in need of new members to achieve their goals. If you are a church member, you are eligible to serve on a committee. There are diverse opportunities, and there's sure to be one that matches your interests.

The **Comprehensive Long-Range Planning Committee** is now examining the church's physical plant and facilities with an eye to assessing and meeting the congregation's many needs. It has three vacancies. If you are interested, please contact the chair, Jeff Janell, at jeff.janell@roadrunner.com

The **Membership Committee** plays a vital role from the moment a newcomer enters the door. It includes the Sunday Greeting and Hospitality functions. At the moment, the committee needs a hospitality coordinator to make sure the ever-popular coffee hour between services runs smoothly. It also needs several committee members to assist with outreach. Contact the chair, Jim Caldwell, at jscaldwell@roadrunner.com

Finally, the popular Elder Lunch, which serves about 40 seniors the second Sunday of the month, October to June, needs volunteers to help prepare the food. Contact Marty Thornton at marty.thornton@gmail.com

The Leadership Council (made of of representatives from the board and the committees) has charged the Music Committee and the Religious Exploration Committee to make a decision regarding the potential replacement of the piano in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to be a part of this discussion and decision, please email Pam Lombard or Claire Curole by December 5th. Thank you.



Nonviolent Communication ...

The Practice Group meets on the *first* and *third* Fridays, 10:15am-12:15 is for those who have taken at least Level I training and/or been in a practice group. We encourage people who wish to join the Practice Group to take a training as soon as possible.

- ~ December 2 Topic is Attitude
- ~ December 16 Topic to be Announced

**Introduction to Nonviolent Communication* for those without experience with NVC, but open to anyone, will meet the *second* and *fourth* Wednesdays, 10:30am to 12:30pm. The NVC Practice Contact: Helen Wing at hcranewing@localnet.com or 685-3804.

Peaceful Heart Sangha ...

Newcomers are always welcome to join us for our Monday 6:30 – 8 meditation practice at UUC.

With the beginning of the New Year, we will try out a change in our reading practice. We will be buying bulk copies and sharing the reading of *The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings*. People will be invited to read a few pages on their own at home. Key passages will be shared. Others may want to share favorite passages or parts that they didn't understand. People will be welcome to join us whether they choose to do the reading or not. If you are interested in joining us for this book reading, please let us know.

We plan to have the **January Intensive** again this year. This is a time when we choose certain practices or readings that we commit to do for 1 month. We each decide what will be the most helpful practices for our lives. We gather at the beginning and at the end of this period to share our practice.

We will be showing the DVDs of **Thich Nhat Hanh's Dharma Talks** from the October retreat at some point – possibly in January.



For those who are interested in joining the wider Maine Buddhist Community from many traditions:

The Maine Buddhist Gathering would like to invite you to come together for an evening of shared meditation practice, followed by a community potluck dinner.

We will gather on Sunday, December 11th at 5pm at the Guild Hall of the Parish Cathedral at 301 Congress Street in downtown Portland.

We hope that you will come, and will invite friends and family who would like to connect to others who practice in the Buddhist tradition. Those new to practice or those that are interested in learning more about practice are warmly welcome, and encouraged to attend.

Please bring a meditation cushion and pad, and a vegetarian dish to share.

Free off-street parking is available in the Cathedral parking lot. The entrance is off of Congress Street.

For additional information, please feel free to call or email Maggie Miller at [207-671-7714](tel:207-671-7714) or maggiemiller513@gmail.com

*Together in the Dharma,
The Maine Buddhist Gathering Planning Committee*

Unitarian Universalist Community Church
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From the Administrator



Rev Carie Johnsen now has a professional facebook account. Please friend her at RevCarie Johnsen and stay informed about ministry events at UUCC. Yes RevCarie is one word.

*Newsletter articles are due the third Monday of each month. The next newsletter deadline is **December 19th**. Please submit newsletter articles by email, no later than 9:00 a.m. to Julie Pelletier, UUCC Church Administrator at admin@augustauu.org. Thank you!*

Minister: Rev. Carie Johnsen
President: Sheila Comerford
Interim Director of Religious Exploration: Pat Gardiner
Administrator: Julie Pelletier
Choir Director: Douglas Barley
Small Group Ministry Coordinator: Kathy Kellison

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