

The Flaming Chalice

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



Interim Minister: Rev. Lee Devoe

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Director of Religious Exploration : *Karen Fisk*

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January 20, 2008-February 3, 2008

Unless otherwise stated, Sunday Services and Religious Exploration are at **9:15 & 11:00 AM**.
Nursery care is available from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon.

On Sunday:

January 20

What Makes a Hero?

Rev. Lee Devoe

On this weekend when we honor the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, I will lift up the heroic dimension of life and members of the congregation will speak of heroes they have known – famous, infamous, and obscure. Our service will include participation by Brenda Sawyer, Sarah Schultz-Nielsen, and Dan Sorensen, as well as Annie Voorhees and the Choir led by Doug Barley.

January 27

Yen for Zen

Rev. Lee Devoe

What is the unique voice that Zen Buddhism brings to the religious spectrum? This Sunday you are invited to meet zany Zen masters, kooky koans, and enter into the topsy-turvy world of Zen.

February 3

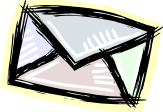
Love and Action

Rev. Lee Devoe

This Sunday we will explore the connection between love and action and the process of self-discovery spurred by active engagement with the world.

Our thanks to Barbara Thurlow, Elva Ingraham, Hannah Faulkner, Cally Stevens and Mary Perkins for helping to get this newsletter out on time.

Next newsletter deadline is 1/28/08 Please submit all newsletter articles as WORD documents if possible.



A Letter from Lee

By Rev. Lee Devoe

Congratulations! The face of worship has changed at UUCC – and you have done it, through intentional individual actions to move in the direction of your vision.

When I first arrived at UUCC a year and a half ago, one of the first things I noticed was the imbalance in attendance at Sunday worship services. The early service was full, with few seats for newcomers or latecomers. The later service looked empty, sometimes having as few as ten people after the children and choir left. Noting that your building and staffing vision are predicated on growth, I was concerned about this situation. Newcomers at the first service would wonder if there was room for them in this congregation. They might feel uncomfortable packed into a pew with people they don't know. At the later service, newcomers might have thought this was a declining church. On occasion, I have spoken to newcomers after the second service and, in mentioning your plans for a new building, received a confused look and the question: "Why? You have plenty of room!"

I spent some months wondering what to do about this imbalance and considered some drastic, though creative, actions – including creating two very different worship services each week or having different music at the services. And now . . . we don't need drastic action. Kathy Kellison switched the Sunday Morning Drop-In Small Group Ministry to run during the first service so participants can attend the second service. Marty Soule moved meditation, which used to run during second service, to Sunday evening. Individuals and families have also made the switch from first service to second service. This is good news for being a welcoming place for people to discover – and stay! It is good news for growing into your building vision.

Wayne Clark, the Director of Congregational Fundraising Services for the UUA, came to Augusta this week and met with leadership to offer guidance in launching a feasibility study and capital campaign to fund the building vision. It was a productive meeting, answering many questions with concrete actions that can move us relatively quickly into these processes - since so much preparatory work has already been done. At this point, given the need to raise money, the summer of 2009 is the soonest possible date for ground-breaking on Phase One of the new building which includes an expanded Fellowship Hall and classrooms.

The new Sanctuary will be built during Phase Two. Since Phase One will be ready for use in 2010 at the earliest and, realistically speaking, there will need to be an additional capital campaign for Phase Two, a new Sanctuary is not on the horizon anytime soon. Let me say that again: Sunday Services will be held in the current space for many years to come. So . . . what shall we do? What would you like to see in the Sanctuary and its current building? A new coat of paint? New banners? Meaningful artwork? A refreshed fellowship hall? New bathrooms? Sandy Hayman and Dale Freise have joined Bill Allen and Jim McKendry on the Building and Grounds Committee. Leadership will be discerning priorities and making a plan for maintenance and renewal. Please offer your input through the insert included in this newsletter. Return it to the box on the table by the nametags or mail it to the church office.

Let's give this tired building the attention it deserves. Give yourselves the space you deserve. Let's act as if we're going to be here for awhile . . . because we are.

In faith, Lee

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

I find it interesting that sometimes conversation just flows when I meet someone new. I know that there are folks in this world who share my sense of humor and I value the time I spend with them. I don't know why I find it easy to talk with some people and hard to talk with others; the same with laughter. Some folks just bring out the flow of words and some evoke jokes and quips. These are people who are easy to be around and they are the folks I choose to be around. In making the choice to spend time with people who are 'easy' in these ways, I make my life easy. I also pass up challenges and opportunities to grow.

I value the time I spend talking with people who see things differently from the way I do or who have information or experience that I don't. The experience makes my life richer and fuller. Nonetheless, I tend not to seek them out. I find them serendipitously. I suspect I am not alone in this. It's easy and safe to be around kindred souls. It's risky to reach out to those who are somewhat different. And so we settle into our comfortable thought patterns and beliefs and find people to reinforce those patterns.

For those of you who find yourselves identifying with these observations, I would challenge you to become involved with Small Group Ministry. If you are not able to join a group which meets regularly, consider the Open Group on some Sunday when it fits your schedule. Sit down with people you don't

know well and have a conversation about Curiosity, as three people did on January 6, or on Solitude, scheduled for January 13.

Even in a community such as the UUC, we find plenty of challenge from others if we take the time to seek it out. With the new Open Group, it has just become easier to expand our perspective.

The Open Group occurs every Sunday at 9:30 upstairs in the building, next door to the church on Summer Street. Ask anyone who has been around a while where the Annex is. We would be very pleased to have you join us.

Kathy Kellison

HISTORY COMMITTEE

The History Committee is meeting on January 28, 10 AM to Noon in the Annex. As we do the inventory of our historic items, we are looking for the stories behind them. Join us in this venture. We will be talking with some long-time members as we complete our quest.

If you have questions about the committee, contact Helen Zidowecki (582-5308 or hzmre@hzmre.com).

WAYSIDE PULPIT

"Let yourself and not your words preach for you."
~Henri Frederic Amiel



CAKES FOR THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

*Helen Wright, Becca Herron,
Helen Zidowecki*

**Mondays, January 28-
February 25
6:30-8:30 PM Fellowship
Hall**

This new revision of the feminist theology curriculum that revolutionized UUism 20 years ago is being offered for women and older girls. The session titles as planned are:

- January 28** The Sacred Female
- February 4** In the Name of the Mother and the Daughter
- February 11** Woman Power
- February 18** The First Turning: the Shift from Goddess to God
- February 25** Reclaiming Women's Heritage of Peace

To participate:

For questions, contact Helen Zidowecki (582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com). Sign up on the sheet by the RE Bulletin Board in the hall, or at Fellowship Hour January 13 and 20.



On Becoming A Welcoming Congregation

By Maggie Ricker

The Federal Government isn't the only entity holding a significant election this year. The Augusta UUC Congregation will be asked to vote on whether to apply to the UUA to become designated as a Welcoming Congregation.

Are you one of the many who have wondered, 'just what the heck is a Welcoming Congregation? Will it mean I have to act differently? Aren't we already welcoming? And what is all this fuss anyway? No one in this church would ever say an unkind word to anyone!'

Well, you aren't alone in your questions. The Welcoming Congregation Task Force wants to answer every one because we want to win your vote in June.

In 1970 the UUA General Assembly adopted a resolution to end discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals. UUA leadership heard from many individuals who felt profoundly unwelcomed, unaffirmed and unsupported in their local congregations. Anonymous surveys of thousands of UU individuals further revealed many negative attitudes, deep prejudices and profound ignorance about bisexual, gay, and lesbian life and persons. It soon became apparent it isn't enough to simply say, 'we don't discriminate against gays and lesbians'. While an important statement, it's not only passive, it ignores bisexuals and transgender people, who often consider themselves 'invisible' in today's world. What does it look like when put into action? What would that look like in day-to-day life?

As with any change it works best when everyone has the opportunity to become educated about the issue and to be able to express their opinion about it. The UUA created the Welcoming Congregation Handbook in 1990. It sets out actions churches can take to make their congregational environment more welcoming and nurturing to sexual minorities. There are 13 guidelines created that set out commitments, actions, suggestions for congregational life and community outreach.

Leading up to this year's congregational vote, the Welcoming Congregation is offering a series of workshops on the topic, designed to allow people to voice their questions and opinions on the process and the topic. The service delivered by the Welcoming Congregation Task Force on October 10 and the one on November 4th by Keith Kron were both part of this year's educational process. Now we are offering a **January 25th and 26th weekend workshop**, followed by a series of four Monday evening workshops in March and April. Each workshop will be different from the previous, but will include a brief 'catch up' session at the beginning, if people are unable to attend the entire series.

January workshop cancelled.

We have distributed flyers in the order of service and have placed posters throughout the church detailing the workshop dates. There is a registration sheet in the Fellowship Hall in the Welcoming Congregation Folder on the wall under where the Board minutes are posted.

If you have questions about the process or the workshops, please speak with a member of the Task Force: Chair, Maggie Ricker, Marion Blaszie, Terry Cookson, Ida Gammon-Wilson, Priscilla Jenkins, Joan Mohlar, Keith Morgan-Davie, Don Paul Sommerfeld, Dan Sorensen, Jim Spicer, Helen Wing, or Helen Zidowecki. We hope you will consider joining us for at least one of these workshops!

Thank You, Pledgers

Thank you to the following members and friends who have fully paid their pledges that support our current operating budget:

Nate & Nicole Benoit	Wick Johnson & Ruth Simmons Johnson
Harold Booth	Marilyn Karasopoulos
Richard Bridges	Ron LeBlanc
Bill Bryant & Patty Cumler-Bryant	Jim McKenna & Jane Orbeton
Phillip Brzozowski	Bo & Heide Munro
Harold & Susan Burnett	Cathie & Gary Nielsen
Jim & Susan Caldwell	Judith Nisbett
Lisa Clarcq & Thomas Liscord	Ward & Susan Shaw
Sheila Comerford & Stephen Gove	Tim Sniffen
Mary Jean Cowing	Dan Sorensen
Barbara Crowley	Faith & Rudy Soria
Michele Dooling	Jim Spicer
Rebecca Dorr Holman & Daniel Holman	Mildred Stengel
Marilyn Dunn and Tom Waddell	Cally Stevens
Douglas & Linda Findlay	Joseph Stone
Bill Goldberg	Marie Wendt
Harry Grimmnitz & Marty Soule	Lois Whitcomb
Pat & Ray Halperin	June Zellers
Dorothy & Sanford Hayman	

Contributing to our church from one's financial resources is both a privilege and a responsibility. Our annual operating budget depends on the generosity of members and friends in order to accomplish those things which our church community values, such as providing fair compensation to our minister and staff, purchasing oil and other necessities to operate our buildings, buying resources and supplies to enhance our religious exploration program, providing a music program, offering nursery care, and conducting the search for our next settled minister.

If you have not made a financial commitment for this year and would like to do so, you can contact either the church president, George Lapointe, or the church treasurer, Nancy Fritz. Pledging at all financial levels is critical to our future as a liberal religious voice in the Augusta area.

Nancy Fritz, Church Treasurer



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Stay inexpensively with fellow UUs and make new friends! We list more than 200 UU hosts all over North America who invite you to be a guest in their home. For a copy of the 2008 *UU're Home* and a year's access to the website listings, please click on "become a member" to pay by credit card on our secure site or mail us a check for \$25 and your email address.

Paula Robbins and Jean Reese, Publishers



Join the UCC Greeting Ministry

As Chair of the Membership Committee, I would like to start a new ministry at our church, called the UCC “Greeting Ministry” – and am looking for volunteers who would like to participate and help form this ministry.

As the UCC continues to grow, it’s time to review how we have traditionally provided welcoming hospitality as people enter church on Sundays and to endow this part of our church service as a ministry in and of itself.

The objective of the ministry will be to ensure that all people feel welcomed as they enter the church, and are assisted with any questions they may have, and helped to feel comfortable, whether they be long-time members, or visiting for the first time. Lee is interested in developing such a ministry, and will help us examine how we greet people now, and identify ways in which we could improve our efforts in this regard.

Please let me know if you’re interested in participating in such a discussion, and in the ministry itself. All are welcome (of course!)

Cheryl Ring - cring21@verizon.net

Happy New Year, All!

Focus on the Augusta Food Bank

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Augusta has been holding a “Food First Sunday” for about 10 years and has an even longer connection with the Augusta Food Bank. As the price of energy climbs, the need to stretch food budgets increases and this is exactly what Gay Patterson of the Food Bank writes to us.

“The statistics for November 2007 are as follows: we have 372 clients of which 43 were first time clients. These 43 took home food to feed 88 people. The total number of children served was 248; the number of persons served was 789. We provided enough groceries to prepare 16,569 meals.”

She says that the food bank’s special need this month is soups.

PLEASE, if you forget to bring food on Food First Sunday, bring it ANY Sunday! The box is in the Fellowship Hall near the Social Concerns bulletin board which is near the door which goes out to our “backyard”. And checks are always welcome!



Unitarian Universalist Community Church
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Augusta, Maine 04330

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You are invited to

Values Discernment
with the **Committee on Ministry**

Sunday, January 20, 12:15-2:00 PM
including Soup & Bread Lunch

Tuesday, January 22, 6:00-8:00 PM

Please be part of this important process.
Come to one of these conversations.