

The Flaming Chalice

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



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Website: <http://www.uuccaugustame.com>

Interim Minister: Rev. Lee Devoe

President: *George Lapointe*

Director of Religious Exploration : *Karen Fisk*

Administrative Assistant: *Margaret Goodale*

Ministerial Associates: *Susan Burnett, Janet House, Marty Soule, and Helen Wing*

April 29-May 13, 2007

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:

April 29 *Simple Happiness*

Rev. Lee Devoe

What's so simple about happiness? We'll try to find out on Sunday!

May 6 *The Principles At Work*

Rev. Lee Devoe

with congregational members Don Macomber and Kathy Kellison

How are the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism integrated into your life's work? Congregational members Don Macomber, a prosecutor, and Kathy Kellison, a licensed social worker with a therapy practice, will share how they use UU principles in their professional work.

May 13 *The Shelter of a Story*

Rev. Lee Devoe

Who can resist: the family vacation disaster storythe story of perseverance through hard timestales of the family hero or villain or eccentric? The stories that families tell reveal what they believe about themselves, as author – and UU – Mary Pipher has explored so well in her book *The Shelter of Each Other*. Our service will consider how we live in the shape of the stories we tell. Bring your mother – or mentor! – whoever handed-down to you those soul-shaping stories.

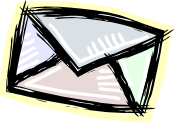
Looking Ahead: **May 1: Search Committee Applications Due!**

May 12: Coming of Age Service & Celebration
Everyone Welcome 6:30-8:30 PM

June 3: Annual Meeting of the Congregation
including election of the Search Committee

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 5/7/07 Please submit all newsletter articles as WORD documents if possible.



“What else aren’t we talking about?”

This question was asked in the informational meeting held to discuss the recent departure of Ray Long as director of the choir. It continues to echo through our community in the form of other questions. What are the forces in a congregation that keep people silent? Is it a sense of being polite? Or being merely individuals? How do secrets affect the congregation? How do secrets serve the status quo? These are some of the questions that have been asked since the meeting.

It is a time of loss and sadness and confusion. It is a time of questioning what it means to be in right relationship within the congregation. I will meet with the choir this week to ask what they need as a community, to sing songs of healing, and to take the first tentative steps toward the future.

The conversations were awkward and the decisions were hard, yet the leadership of this congregation was willing to engage and to take responsibility. (It is not always so in congregations – and the inability to take action harms everyone, including the institution.) To have leaders who are trusted and are also trustworthy is a true gift. To have a congregation who will listen, even with their loss, is an equal gift.

I hope this loss will count for something. I hope it will lead to authentic conversation about your experiences in the congregation and your hopes for the future.

What would you like to talk about?

In faith,

Lee

What is a “Safe Congregation”?

by Rev. Lee Devoe

In recent communications to the congregation, the term “*Safe Congregation*” was used and was greeted by a resounding cry for an explanation.

Safe Congregation is a term used by our denomination, and others, to denote practices and policies that promote healthy boundaries in congregations. It seeks not just to prevent abuse but also to nurture right relationship. Healthy boundaries, of course, include sexual boundaries. The *Safe Congregation* policy adopted by this congregation several years ago focuses primarily on preventing the sexual abuse of children. *Safe Congregation*, in general, refers to the behavior of the whole congregation – all ages and members, including the paid staff and clergy but not limited to it.

Sexual harassment is commonly thought of as pressure for sexual favors in exchange for a benefit, such as keeping a job or getting a promotion. It also includes more subtle behavior, such as repeated sexual advances, talking about sexual activity in public, and sexual jokes or gestures. It is helpful for a congregation to consider what it means to be a “sexually healthy faith community” and to create a covenant together.

In 1995, our association of congregations (UUA) put forth a resolution stating the need to create safer congregations. Since then, resources have been developed for use by congregations, including the *Safe Congregation Handbook*. More information and resources can be found at these websites:

www.uua.org Search: *Safe Congregations*

www.religiousinstitute.org The website of the *Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing*

It includes a “*Self-Assessment: Characteristics of Sexually Healthy Religious Professionals*”

I will also be ordering materials to make available to people without internet access, for use by congregational leaders, and to facilitate a process of education and conversation within the congregation.

Please speak to me or a member of the Committee on Ministry if you have questions or if you would like to have a conversation as a community about a particular topic. Thank you for doing this hard work of being in community - Lee

What is a “sexually healthy faith community”?

From the *Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing*

“A ‘sexually healthy faith community’ is committed to fostering spiritual, sexual, and emotional health among the congregation and providing a safe environment where sexuality issues are addressed with respect, mutuality, and openness. A sexually healthy faith community promotes the integration of sexuality and spirituality in worship, preaching, pastoral care, youth and adult religious education, and social action programs in the community. It makes a commitment to a sexual ethic that is not based on a double standard and understands that dealing with sexuality is an issue of spiritual wholeness. By addressing sexuality openly and holistically within the faith community, it models that sexuality and spirituality are inextricably connected.”

Excerpt from the *Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing*

“We come from diverse religious communities to recognize sexuality as central to our humanity and as integral to our spirituality. We are speaking out against the pain, brokenness, oppression, and loss of meaning that many experience about their sexuality.

Our faith traditions celebrate the goodness of creation, including our bodies and our sexuality. . . .

Our culture needs a sexual ethic focused on personal relationships and social justice rather than particular sexual acts.

All persons have the right and responsibility to lead sexual lives that express love, justice, mutuality, commitment, consent, and pleasure. Grounded in respect for the body and for the vulnerability that intimacy brings, this ethic fosters physical, emotional, and spiritual health. It accepts no double standards and applies to all persons, without regard to sex, gender, color, age, bodily condition, marital status, or sexual orientation. . . .”



SAFE CONGREGATION, WELCOMING CONGREGATION

Our church has had much discussion lately about what it means to be a Safe Congregation and a Welcoming Congregation. Our UUC Congregation has made a commitment toward both policies and it's worth spending some time to consider what these things mean and to recommit our Congregation to these important issues because it will make our church community a safer, fairer place that lives up to the ideals in our statement of purpose.

Our church adopted the following mission statement a number of years ago to publicly express what our church stands for and what it means to be a member of the church.

*Enhance Spiritual growth;
Provide a respectful religious home for all ages;
Join in celebration and friendship;
Be a common voice for justice;
Share the light of our principles with the wider community*

Soon thereafter, we adopted a Safe Congregation policy that broadly states that our church must be a safe place to allow members and their families to live and thrive in our religious community. The Safe Congregation policy has two important components. First, it means making our church a physically safe place for all those who come here. This means kids and adults—it means everyone. The second important part is that being a Safe Congregation means that members of our church community must feel safe and comfortable in taking part in those activities in their church that they want to. Folks must be able to choose how they want to manifest their spiritual paths, free of anxiety or intimidation.

The Welcoming Congregation effort is equally important in ensuring that our Congregation is truly welcoming to gay, lesbian, and transgendered individuals.. The folks working on the Welcoming Congregation initiative are bringing issues and activities to the Congregation so that our actions and words match our goals when it comes to gay, lesbian and transgendered individuals. It's a thorough process that should make us all reflect on our actions and words as they're seen by others within and outside our church community. The Welcoming Congregation Task Force will continue its work for another year before asking the Congregation to formally become a *Welcoming Congregation* in June 2008. They'll give us an update on their activities and plans in the near future.

These efforts can be hard work and should cause all of us to reflect on ourselves and our church community. At the same time, putting them to practice and in our hearts will make us a better, affirming religious community that lives up to our ideals and dreams.

See you in church, George

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

As I wrote in my last column, Unitarian Universalist congregations have adopted a covenant to 'affirm and promote' seven principles. Many individuals have adopted these principles as a compass to guide ethical decision making. Of course, it takes practice to use these guideposts in life and I believe that Small Group Ministry provides a perfect practice arena.

Our second principle, the affirmation and promotion of 'justice, equity and compassion in human relations' calls us to move beyond how we treat one another and move to a higher level of awareness of how our lives interconnect with others. This principle encourages mindfulness of the broad implications of our actions.

I am certainly guilty of 'tunnel vision'. I can believe that I am acting with the best of intentions and toward the common good, but alone, I cannot be aware of the many implications of my actions. Building trust in a number of other people and being open to hearing their thoughts about my life can broaden my awareness and increase the likelihood that I am acting in the way I intend. Hearing others' honest reactions to my story can help me stay on my intended path. Small Group Ministry provides a terrific opportunity for just this kind of exchange. Together we support one another in the attempt to express our best selves in what we do.

The work of justice making in

this world is not a simple task. It is not a task that any of us will accomplish alone. We need the strength of others, we need the encouragement of others. In as much as justice making is not a short term undertaking, we need companions for the distance. As our Small Group Ministry survives and thrives, we offer excellent opportunities to find companions for this work of justice making.

'Justice, equity and compassion'. There can never be too much of these qualities in the world. As you consider your commitment to affirming and promoting justice, equity and compassion, consider the support you will receive from participation in Small Group Ministry.

All who are interested are invited to an hour long Small Group Session on May 13 at 11:00 in our Annex on Summer Street. Please feel free to speak with me if you have questions regarding Small Group Ministry.

Kathy Kellison



HISTORY COMMITTEE

Thank you to the History Committee for the service on Sunday, April 15, on celebrating fifteen years of consolidation of the congregation. Copies of the order of service are available in the office for anyone who is interested.

The next meeting will be on Monday, April 30, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon in the Olsen Room in the Annex.

Helen Zidowecki

WAYSIDE PULPIT

"What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

~Mary Oliver



Meditation

Our last two sessions of meditation for this year will be on April 29 and May 6 from 1 – 2:30.

May the damp snows melt to feed spring flowers.

Summer RE Retreat August 10-11

To everyone interested in the growth and development of our church's Religious Exploration Program: we will hold a retreat from 5pm on August 10 - 4pm on August 11 to share ideas and enthusiasm for the upcoming RE year. All are invited, and teachers are particularly encouraged to participate. Activities will focus on our Unitarian Universalist Identity and will leave you energized for the start of RE programs in September. Please mark your calendars for this day of celebrating our RE program. Watch this space for the location.

Hilary Neckles

THE BIENNIAL SERVICE AUCTION!!!

*Bring a dessert to share
and*

**Join us on Saturday, April 28th
Starting at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall**

We prefer to collect contracts for services you wish to auction off to benefit the church by Wednesday, April 25th. However we will accept last minute services or items up until Saturday, April 28th.

You may also email descriptions of your donations to Peggy Barnes at peggybarnes@verizon.net

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The **Biennial Church Service Auction** will be held on April 28. One item being auctioned is a work crew of 7-10 people for 1 day. This is a fun way to help out a member of our congregation (the highest bidder) and raise money for the church. No special skills required.

The workday will be coordinated between the work crew and the winning bidder and will likely occur later this summer. If you would like to volunteer for the work crew, please sign up in the Fellowship Hall or contact Brenda Sawyer at nicaphile@hotmail.com or 582-5816.



Spring is here and so are the Peepers?! If you hear our dear little friends announcing spring, call the church (622-3232) and tell us what time and date you heard them. The first to hear the peepers gets to take care of the golden peeper statue for the year!

If you have peeper or frog models or stuffed animals, please bring them (as a loan) to Karen so we can decorate the sanctuary and young UU worship area for this auspicious day!

Karen Fisk

COMING OF AGE AT THE UCC

What do our young people think about life, justice and mystery (and many things in between)? If you want to find out and help us all celebrate the coming of age of an amazing group of teens, please join us for the Coming of Age Service: Saturday evening, May 12th from 6:30 to 8:30 at the UCC. Our service will be followed by a celebratory reception.

WANTED

Does anyone have a simple piano keyboard that they are not using that I could purchase at a reasonable price? If so, please contact me at 441-0337.

Thank you, Cheryl Clukey



Construction Zone



Help Wanted For Demolition Derby Round One

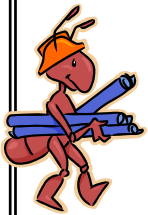
The day has come.

After all the meetings, the research, the thinking, the talking, the decision-making, it's time to push up our sleeves and begin the prep work for the construction of our new building. The first task is to prepare 71 Winthrop Street for church use. In this case we will have to tear down before we build up. Therefore, **Demolition Derby ~ Round One will take place on May 12th.** The job list is extensive: from tearing up linoleum to tearing out molding to removing a bathroom door, lavatory, sink and tub, to painting and reinstalling the molding and much, much more. Some jobs need strength and skill. Some need patience and endurance. Wayne Ladner is Phase I Clerk of the Works and will be responsible for task assignments. Maggie Ricker will be calling people to establish times and to confirm assignments and availability.

We decided this would also be a good time to hold **UUCC's Spring Talent Day** on May 12th as well. So in addition to Demolition Derby Round One, we will hold a spring cleaning and building maintenance day on the UUCC grounds, inside and out. This part of the day will be headed up by Bill Allen.

While many hands make light work, it also makes for hungry tummies. Therefore we will also need serious food and people to help set up, serve up and clean up. There is work for everyone!

Saturday, May 12th will be a very exciting moment in our journey of growth. The Building Construction Committee encourages everyone to be part of this momentous occasion by choosing to be part of Demolition Derby Round One. Dust off your hard hat, hammer and work boots! You will be receiving a phone call soon.



SOCIAL CONCERNS

Thank you to all who have decided to participate—and those of you who have long participated—in supporting our local farmers with farm shares. Our “Be a Good Apple” Tree is not yet ready but it will indeed have quite a few apples on it! And, the number of farmers represented at Augusta Farmers Markets and other local markets is increasing. If anyone sees a list of farmers' markets, please clip it and post it on our bulletin board. We will also eventually have a more or less complete list of local farms and farm stands available soon!

The symposium, *Who Owns Maine's Water?*, has been postponed until Fall. Please just become conscious of the issues surrounding the full public access to clean drinking water in Maine – at normal water prices vs. the commercialized variety.

On Sunday, April 29th, immediately following our second service we will have a soup and bread followed by a movie. We have had some trouble locating the one we wanted so we will announce the final selection in the Sunday announcements. AND, our final movie event of the season will be on Sunday, May 27th.

Don't forget our growing film library. It is in the little room across from our nametags and under the window. If you have questions about how to use it, just ask any member of the Social Concerns Committee.

Speaking of the committee, we will be meeting on May 22 at 5 PM. At this meeting we will establish next year's meeting times and outline our events. Anyone interested in joining the committee, please join us if you can or contact chair, Priscilla J. Jenkins at 377-9011 or at church.

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Of Augusta
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**WE, THE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS OF THE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION,
COVENANT TO AFFIRM AND PROMOTE:**

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth
in our congregations;
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process
within our congregations and in society at large;
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.