



The Flaming Chalice

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

March 2015



March Theme

Grief, Loss and Acceptance



Rev. Carie Johnsen returns from sabbatical. Welcome back, Carie!

March 1st It Matters What You Believe Rev. Carie Johnsen
Rev. Carie returns from Sabbatical today. She will share some of her experiences walking with her nonconformist ancestors and our Unitarian brothers and sisters in Wales.

March 8th When the Heart Aches Rev. Carie Johnsen
Exploring the journey of letting go, leaving behind and losing what we love.

March 15th So Much to See in the Dark Rev. Carie Johnsen
Exploring the messy reality that wisdom and truth and light are also found in the shadows and dark alleyways of our lives.

March 22nd We All Fall Down Rev. Carie Johnsen
The good thing about being human is we all fall down and get back up over and over and over again. How can we walk more humbly and lovingly with this and other vulnerable aspects of the human condition?

March 29th Palm Sunday: The Set-Up for Conflict Rev. Nancee Campbell
In the Christian tradition, Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week, which culminates in the resurrection of Jesus on Easter. But this day is not to be overlooked because it is fraught with conflicts and tensions, both political and personal, that foreshadow a very difficult week for Jesus.

News from RE....

The weather may be cold and snowy outside, but our RE hearts and spirits are warm! Our children continue to be engaged in projects and lessons that engage the mind and deepen the spiritual connection to each other, their families and friends, and to our community. Chalice Children continue their spiritual journey by learning and discussing concepts of peace, friendship, belonging, and kindness. Ages of Action kids created and completed projects for local animal shelters and hospitals.

The spirit of giving is contagious and the hearts of our youth shine brightly! And our Spirit Play group has begun exploring our 7th Principle, honoring the Earth and all who dwell upon it, by learning about Spirit Animals and Native Peoples who honor Spirit Guides in their spirituality. I have attached new pictures of our RE Kids in Action on the RE board, outside the Fellowship Hall. Enjoy!

Warmly,

Nicole Danielson
Sunday Morning Coordinator!

A Note of Thanks...

A warm thank you for all who filled in for Carie for Sunday services. I particularly enjoyed spending the day with Rev. Kate Braestrup. Her sermon, UNKISSING JUDAS, was so thought provoking and several teared up.

She enjoyed our Elder Luncheon and was able to connect with many of us with laughter and conversation. Her 1:00 discussion was also riveting, as she shared many experiences as Chaplain of the Maine Warden Service. There were 53 of us there to hear her speak. Thank you for making the effort to attend despite the inclement weather.

It was truly a wonderful day.... a gift.

Cheryl Clukey, Social Activities

UUCC Web... www.augustauu.org

The website has been upgraded! Here are some changes. The overall arrangement of material has been modified somewhat into:

Home – Introductory information. This includes cancellations under Quick Notes/News.

Worship – same as previously

Calendar and Communications – The Sunday Announcements are posted here rather than on the Home Page as previously.

Minister, Staff and Church Life – This includes groups with activities, as well as a section on Church Governance with additional committees, the policies and procedures.

Social Justice – similar to previously, with updated information

Visitors, Newcomers & Membership – Similar to previous

Buildings and Rentals – Description of facilities and space usage, various policies and procedures, and information for Weddings.

To “navigate” the website:

Click on the header at the top of the site.

Look at the menu on the left side for the section, and click.

Items on the menu that are preceded by > have subsections that open when the > is clicked.

Some sections have links to additional items, including other parts of the website. The most common is links to *How Our Congregation Works*.

Groups now have their own pages that includes a description and group focus, place to give details about meetings and special activities, and sometimes other sections. For example, please follow the trail to the Board of Trustees:

Minister, Staff & Church Life

>Governance

Board of Trustees

Note the description including a link to the Bylaws for details, the meeting times (and this can include an agenda), the past meetings. The Group Archives gives the most recent meeting notes that then become part of the past meetings. Other groups have similar details.

The information on the website needs to be created and updated by people directly involved with specific sections. Group leaders: Is your section current? Please let me know that you have reviewed it and send updates to web-site@augustauu.org

I am looking forward to hearing from YOU! What have you learned about the church from the website?

Helen Zidowecki

President's Corner...

By: Gary Chapin

In the UU prayer class that ended in December (and will begin again in March, if you're interested), I was blessed to hear the prayers of all members – it was a window into their own cares and comforts, and a mirror for my own. One that struck me particularly was by Annie Voorhees. It began, "God, please don't let me be an asshole ..." I don't have to quote further, but I'll tell you it was perfect.

We've all been at the point, when the idea of being the best person you can be is no longer anywhere near possible – you just hope you can get through with being the worst person you can possibly be.

Annie Lamott, who wrote one of the books we discussed in the prayer class, is the Muse of the Flawed. Her books are full of stories of folks failing to live up to their own minimal standards of being human – which is, in itself, a very human thing – and the Grace that she encounters when this happens.

This isn't martyrdom or the romanticizing of foibles. It's just human. Being forgivable (i.e., to have failed) ... may be a necessary part of being human. And encountering Grace ... may be a way to exalt in our humanness.

I'm getting a little nervous as I write this. Am I going too far for the Board President of a UU church?

I have done more than my fair share of failing as a human being, and it's come to my attention that there are a lot of places where I am supposed to be able to encounter Grace. Almost none of them work for me, for whatever reason.

Where do I encounter Grace?

In many unexpected places, certainly. And within the walls of our church. I encounter Grace being among you folk. Both in the "spiritual" parts of our work – the sermons, and ritual, and prayers, and conversations, and songs are definitely Grace-full – but also in doing the work, greeting or serving, figuring out money with the Board, hiring new staff, and pledging to the Stewardship campaign. Doing the work of the church, the best we can.

I'm not sure how to connect these thoughts. There's something about doing the best you can for the best reasons, and knowing that everyone around you is doing the best they can. That's Grace. It provides comfort. I find it here, with you all.

Gary Chapin

Social Activities...

DINNER and A MOVIE

Friday, March 20th, at 5:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary

FINDING VIVIAN MAIER: A Documentary

The SOCIAL ACTIVITIES Committee will host "Dinner and a Movie" for a minimal charge on Friday, March 20th. The movie will be *Finding Vivian Maier*, a documentary is about a mysterious, single woman who spent many years as a nanny to families in NYC and Chicago. After her death, boxes of over 100,000 photographic negatives were found in a storage unit thrift auction. Upon closer examination it was discovered that she was an extraordinary photographer and that no one had been aware of her talent during her lifetime.

This documentary is her intriguing story. Most of her photographs were of people of poverty in large cities. To go along with this theme we will serve hearty soups and stews with bread and salad.

For more information, please contact Cheryl Clukey (441-0337) or Judy McCown (897-3683). We request that you make your reservation so we will know how much food to prepare. To register please contact the Office

Administrator, Lynn M. Smith, 622-3232 or admin@augustauu.org.



UUCC/St. Mark's Suppers...

St. Mark's Partnership/ Neighbor to Neighbor

Jenny Mckendry: Chief non-cook and bottle washer

February's public supper went very well. We served pasta with spaghetti meat sauce and meatless as well. We were the support crew for Gay Patterson of St. Barnabus.

Thankyou to the hardworking volunteers:
Youth: Charlie Caldwell, Phyllis Clark, Sedona Kmen and adult R.E. leader: Monique McAuliffe, Adults: Cheryl Clukey, Phil Brzozowski, Marilyn Dunn, Cheryl Abruzzese, Ida Gammon-Wilson.

Bakers: Janet Sawyer (Delivery by Brad Sawyer) and Martha Bentley. I know I've forgotten some volunteers and apologize. Our efforts to provide free meals and a social gathering for neighbors could not go on without you. Thank you for your efforts, you are appreciated!

St. Mark's Episcopal Church has been closed down. Their congregation is now affiliated with Prince of Peace Lutheran and visits area Episcopal churches. Their former parish hall building will continue to provide space for us to offer public suppers, it houses the Augusta Food Bank, the Essentials Pantry (free toiletries) and Addie's Attic (free clothing bank). That building is temporarily named the Outreach Center until a new name is chosen.

Next Month:

We will lead the supper on Saturday, March 7. Menu: Mac and cheese, plus more. We'll bake some in-house and ask for more from the congregation. Have fun in the snow, perhaps celebrate Mardi Gras!

UCC AUCTION & CAFÉ

Friday evening, May 15, 2015 beginning at 5 p.m.

The goal is 100 donations. Everyone can donate SOMETHING!

Some ideas for Auction donations

AN EXPERIENCE: Host a musical evening or play reading, a trip to a State Park, a play, a concert, a museum, a film or a whale watch on the ocean. Donate time at your camp, lead a bird walk, plan a picnic, a kayak outing, or organize a birthday party. Invite some children to your farm. Keep in mind that what is a common event for you may be a rare treat for someone else. Some people, for example, cannot or do not drive, especially at night.

A SERVICE: An offer to help in some way: Join a work crew, prepare a meal, help paint a room, wash a car, wash some windows, repair a bicycle, rake leaves, groom a dog, mow a lawn, photograph a family or pet, help clean a house, plant a garden, stack a wood pile, offer child care or elder care, provide transportation to Maine Medical Center or other destination.

AN ITEM: Something homemade from your kitchen or that you have otherwise grown or created: A promise of vegetables, fruits, fresh eggs, pies, bread, cakes, pickles, casseroles, jams and cheese. Your own photography, paintings, jewelry, note cards, quilt, braided rug, or other hand crafted items.

A donation from a Maine business or restaurant of food, gasoline, oil, wood pellets, meals or other items. As of January 25, receipts have been available on the Fundraising Bulletin Board to give to the donor. Please obtain the address of the business or restaurant so that we can send them a nice thank you letter from the church.

And don't forget gift cards!

Please fill out and give this form to Hannah Faulkner or Terry Cookson Cairn, or place it in the envelope on the Fundraising Bulletin Board in the Fellowship

MY DONATION TO THE UCC AUCTION, FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2015

Name: _____

E-mail and Phone _____

Donation: _____

Estimated Value _____

I will bring sandwiches _____ or baked goods _____ for the Café.



Peaceful Heart Sangha

We will have an **“Introduction to Meditation” from 5–6:15 on Monday, March 16** at UUC. This will be a time for sharing about our practice and for answering questions. All are welcome. If you are interested in learning more about mindfulness meditation, but this time is inconvenient for you, please contact Marty Soule (martysoule@gmail.com or 685-9270) and we can arrange a different time to have another gathering.

We practice mindfulness meditation together every Monday from 6-8:30 PM at UUC and every Thursday from 8-9:30 AM at River Studio, 332 Water St, Hallowell. This month we will share the Five Mindfulness Trainings on March 9 and have a celebration of our 7th year as a sangha on March 2.

For those who are teens or young adults or young at heart, there is a new website that you might enjoy: mindfulnessforteens.com

Recently I had the opportunity to practice with a Dharma Teacher in Ottawa who spoke about the benefits for the earth of not eating meat – maybe for half our meals per week. **This could have a larger positive effect on climate change than getting rid of all our cars.** At the same time, I recently re-read a message from my Dharma Teacher, Joanne Friday, reminding me that there are no absolutes in our practice. I thought you might like to see some of her message:

It is very moving to be a part of a community that is attempting to live in harmony, looking deeply enough to cut through and collapse seeming dualities, and practicing inclusiveness and interbeing.

Thay [meaning “teacher”, referring to Thich Nhat Hanh] describes inclusiveness as the ability to accept a person with differing views, exactly as they are, without any expectations that they will ever change. He added that when we can do this, we can create enough spaciousness so that they can change if they choose to.

I remember Sr. Chan Khong, sharing that Thay has been very clear that there are no absolutes in Buddhism. She said that many years ago the Vatican had sent out a petition against abortion for Thay to sign. They felt that in light of the first Training [Reverence for Life], Thay would surely sign. He would not sign it, saying that there are no absolutes. He said that every decision must be made by looking deeply at what will cause the least amount of suffering for all involved. This can be different for every individual. The only absolute is that we will experience the consequences of whatever actions we take.

Clearly, not eating meat is very important to Thay. I also remember Sr. Chan Khong saying that Thay had shared that he would rather have dinner with carnivores than self-righteous vegetarians.

We are all doing our best to live in integrity and using the Trainings as our North Star. We all have our own karma, cultural and familial conditioning, and trans-generational habit energies which, in my own case, are being transformed extraordinarily slowly. I have found that by practicing looking deeply and developing understanding and love for myself, instead of criticizing and judging myself, little signs of transformation have emerged. I have found that when I can accept myself as I am with no expectations that I will ever change and hold myself with love and understanding of the depth of my challenges (knowing that I have all of this in common with 100% of human beings), I can have more love, acceptance and compassion for myself and everyone else. There are no dualities...we are all on the Path.

May all of us love one another and listen to each other.

May all of us see each other with the eyes of compassion as the precious wonders of life that we are.

Display Case...

The engaging and delightful display on “Play and Laughter” is being extended through March. Thanks to: Steve Dunn, Sandra Leinonen-Dunn, Judy Gallant, Bruce Bierce, Judy McCowen, Susan Shaw, Ward Shaw and Cheryl Clukey, their Small Group Ministry for sharing their thoughts and memories.

The theme for April is “Sustaining Earth”. The displays are usually for the full month. They are put up the Saturday before the first Sunday of the month, and taken down by Tuesday following the last Sunday.

Please contact the church office or Helen Zidowecki (hzmre@hzmre.com, 582-5308) to schedule your display.

Seasoned Souls to Meet...

Seasoned Souls is a group of mature women and men who gather twice a month to candidly discuss the various issues related to aging. This confidential gathering is open to anyone 65 and older who is willing to participate in the frank, and often humorous, conversations associated with growing old. We will meet on March 4th from 10:30 a.m. until noon in Fellowship Hall. On March 18th we will be meeting in the front living room of Drew House from 10:30 a.m. until noon.

History Committee...

The History Committee meets the Second Thursday, March 12nd from 10 a.m. to noon in the Drew House. Also, check out the revised History section on the website (Minister, Staff & Church Life; then >History in the menu on left side). The timelines for the ministers in our history (alphabetical) and the timelines of the 3 congregations (Unitarian, Universalist, and UCC) are now available. When were the congregations started? Where have their buildings been located? How many names have we had?

Contact: Krista Zidowecki (582-5308, kaz@hzmre.com) for more information.

Fundraising News...

EQUINOX CHOCOLATE AUCTION AND POTLUCK SUPPER

Hold the date **FRIDAY, MARCH 27th** for an evening of fun and laughter. Bring your favorite entrees and salads to the 5:30 p.m. **POTLUCK SUPPER** in the Fellowship Hall. Following the meal we will enjoy our **2ND ANNUAL CHOCOLATE AUCTION** in the Sanctuary, just in time for the Spring Equinox and a Bunny Parade. Chocolate creations and other special treats for the Auction are welcome. For more information, please contact Hannah Faulkner at 293-9377 or hannahuu3@fairpoint.net or Terry Cookson Cairn at 445-2942 or tlcnatu-ralhealth@yahoo.com.



The Parade is Just about Over...

I bet it's a strange thing to be a minister. It's a strange thing we ask them to do, to set themselves apart from us to then devote themselves to inspiring us to be better people. That seems to be the deal as far as preaching on Sunday goes. They must walk such a fine line all the time, trying to be the right amount of touchy-feely, trying to be noticeably spiritual, trying to use The Bible the right amount, which for UU's seems to want just a very little. I'm guessing that it's strange and hard. It's been nice to see several of them go by, one after another during the past several weeks. I'm left with the impression that our ministers are a very nice group of people.

We saw ministers in all stages of their development, from new, to retiring. We got some Bible readings, we heard some God talk in the masculine. We almost got to see a minister wear robes, but I think I messed that up by not saying reflexively "Oh yes! Our Rev. Carie wears a robe all the time." On the whole I think we got the Sermon sandwich every time, which is to be expected from visitors. "Sermon sandwich" is a technical term, if you didn't know. It goes like this: "hymn-Sermon-hymn", and it is a fine way to do things.

The bit of a report I've heard about the last few weeks is that we showed up for church about as much as we usually do in this kind of weather. It seems safe to say that we didn't generally resent the idea of visiting ministers filling in for Rev. Carie while she was away. One nice thing is that, as fine and good as the visiting ministers were, I find myself grateful that Rev. Carie is our minister and very much look forward to having her back. Now I have to say about that Kate Braestrup... well, she is sort of a rock star isn't she, but then Rev. Carie knew that when she booked her for the gig. We can hope that Rev. Carie has had a fine sabbatical. I was witness to some of the hard work she did throughout the past year on her own without a complete supporting staff (a situation elegantly and successfully resolved in the eleventh hour), so I know a real break for her is very well deserved. We will have her back soon enough, and when we do let's recall that it is a strange and a hard thing that we ask her to do for us.

Noah Gottlieb
Sabbatical Committee

Unitarian Universalist Community Church
P. O. Box 8
Augusta, Maine 04332-0008

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit all articles as an attachment in a Word document using Arial, font size 11. Don't forget to give it a title and sign it, and send it as an email newsletter@augustauu.org with the article as an attachment. Photos of church activities welcome!

Deadline: March 16.

Minister: Rev. Carie Johnsen

President: Gary Chapin

Sunday Morning RE Coordinator: Nicole Danielson
Youth Advisor: Monique McAuliffe

Administrator: Lynn Smith
admin@augustauu.org

UU Office hours: Monday and Tuesday 8a.m.-4p.m.
Thursday-noon-8pm

Choir Director: Bridget Convey
Office Hours

Small Group Ministry Coordinator: Kathy Kellison
Office: (207) 622-3232

