



The Flaming Chalice

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

March 2014

SAVE THE DATE!

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2014
6:00 P.M. Fellowship Hall

A NIGHT OF FAITH AND MAGIC **Potluck Dinner and Magic Show**

Members from First Parish, Milton, MA, our mentor congregation for the Leap of Faith initiative, will be joining us for a weekend of discovery.....and a little magic!

Youngsters to Elders are invited to join in a
Welcome Dinner!

Please keep the date open as more exciting information develops.

A Faith Journey by Rev. Carie Johnsen...

Every week in our sanctuaries we take up an offering to carry forward the work of the church. In doing so, we connect ourselves to countless other generations who have gone before us and countless generations who will follow behind us.

Every week in our sanctuaries, in the act of giving and receiving, we bless the legacies shared as we lift up our prayer of thanks with song. From you I receive. To you I give. Together we share. From this we live.

Every week in our sanctuaries, we make a tangible commitment to the ongoing life of this congregation. In the act of putting a dollar or two or twenty in the plate, we say I believe in this faith, I believe in this church, I believe in these people and I want to be a part of something bigger than myself.

Every week in our sanctuaries, we lay claim to a lineage of religious liberals who asked bold questions, challenged unjust laws and practices, proclaimed new beginnings and acknowledged the quest for meaning and purpose.

As March opens we embark on a new theme: History, Heritage, Legacy. May this month be a time to reflect on who we are, what we have been given in all its glories and failings. May March be a time to celebrate what is right and good in our faith tradition and in our faith community, as well as a time to name what is uncomfortable. What part of our story do we proudly proclaim for the world to know? What part of our story do we hold awkwardly? All of life is a paradox, including story, history, heritage and legacy. Just as individuals have shining and shadow moments, so too do religious institutions.

We begin a month of Sunday's with Stewardship Sunday leading the way. The legacy we will leave behind is ours to imagine, dream and make real. Countless generations shaped our faith tradition so we could have a community to come home to every Sunday. Now is the time for us to pledge so that others will know we were part of the visionary leaders at the cusp of the twenty-first century who prepared the way.

The worship planning team for March is excited to lift up the treasures in our traditions, the local and denominational legacies we hold with esteem and praise. Equally, we know there are souls who got left behind and visions that faded along the way. We have perplexing and fascinating stories to share as we bring alive two hundred years of bold pioneers, curious minds and compassionate hearts seeking to live on the edge of religious thought and practice. It is because these others pushed the edges and found comfort in the margins that we have a spiritual home. May this home continue to celebrate our religious diversity and welcome the questioning soul seeking comfort, inspiration, stimulation and community.

Let us embark on a month of Sundays with the legacies of a uncommon denomination as our companion and guide. Join us and let yourself be surprised by what you find.

In faith,

Rev. Carie Johnsen

Religious Exploration Report....

By Rev. Carol Strecker, Director of Religious Exploration

The light is returning and with it the morning songs of robins and white throated sparrows. Spring is coming and with it the promise of new life and renewal - for both the body and the spirit. I always think of spring as the harbinger of possibilities.

Last month Rev. Carie and I had the opportunity to attend a collegial conversation for ministers and DRE's about possibilities for our religious exploration program. It's a timely conversation in a culture where there's so much competition for the time traditionally reserved for church on Sunday morning. Karen Bellavance-Grace, the Director of Faith Formation for the Clara Barton and Mass Bay District of UU Congregations, led us through the litany of reasons the traditional Sunday morning model just isn't working for families anymore including;

- * Both parents work and Sunday is a work day or the only day families have to regroup for the week,
- * Single parent/blended households - split custody often means children spend every other weekend with one parent or the other,
- * Kids are playing competitive sports on Sunday mornings,
- * Kids and families are overscheduled, overstimulated and easily distracted making traditional programs unappealing, and
- * It's hard to get kids out the door on Sunday morning after they've been running all week long...

The list goes on. For whatever reason, we're not able to meet the spiritual needs of children, youth and families who aren't here on Sunday mornings.

These trends are reflected in declining numbers in our Religious Exploration Program. The decline is most pronounced in children 6 and under. Our older children and youth have grown up together in the program. They've developed a sense of community that makes coming to church on Sunday mornings something important, something they value. We have a stronger youth program than many churches because our youth have grown up together here at church. Families with younger children come so sporadically that they don't have a chance to really get to know each other. They don't get a chance to bond and grow together.

It all sounds a little gloomy until you turn things around -- and here's where new life, renewal and the promise of possibilities come in -- asking, "How do we meet the spiritual needs of children and families who aren't here?" Religious Exploration looks very different if you can take it out of the Sunday morning box and spread it around so it's available at times and in places where people can access it.

Making worship and learning opportunities available via the web is one important way to move out of the church building and into people's homes. But there are also other possibilities; offering a story hour using a book with UU values for young children and offering homework for older children at a local library a couple of afternoons a week. There's also hosting a family and friends pizza party on a Wednesday evening that begins with a table grace that reflects UU values. After dinner there are a variety of RE opportunities for all ages. These are just a couple of ideas Karen included in a model she calls "Full Week Faith". The central idea being that we offer opportunities for worship and spiritual growth at a variety of times and in a variety of places more likely to reach more people than we're reaching now.

There are a lot of good things about the way we do church now, but the reality is that if we don't broaden our horizons we won't be reaching people who desperately need the message of love and service that Unitarian Universalism has to offer. Entertaining real possibilities for how we might do that in the midst of our changing world is exciting -- like a breath of spring after a long winter. Stay tuned -- the promise of possibility is on the horizon.

Faithfully Yours, Carol

Connections Come in All Shapes and Sizes...

By Doug Rooks, President

As we continue to explore during our Leap of Faith year, with the return visit of the Milton, Mass. team coming up April 4-6, I am still often asked what this is all about. Well, for one thing – perhaps the main thing – it's about connections.

When we visited the Milton church last November, we were greeted with a wonderful pot-luck dinner – and yes, we are planning to return the favor on Friday evening, April 4, with one of our traditionally abundant and diverse potlucks.

The dessert, however, was rather plain. Vanilla ice cream. With chocolate sauce – but what chocolate sauce! Somehow, engrossed in conversation, I managed to miss dessert, but I heard about it afterward, several times, with the same glow to the description.

Later that evening, I arrived at the apartment of my hosts, Chris and Dottie Pitt, who live just over the town line in Dorchester, in a magnificent old six-story brick building, beautifully restored. It turned out to be the original Baker's Chocolate Factory, built in 1927, which those of a certain age will remember was once the nation's dominant chocolate maker. It's still in business, though in reduced capacity, as a Kraft brand after moving to Delaware in 1965.

On the walls were various remembrances of Baker Chocolate, including some of the classic 1920s ads. I'd like to report that the scent of chocolate, or perhaps just cocoa beans, was still on the premises, but my sense of smell is no longer that acute.

When we talked that evening, Chris mentioned that he'd be making a new batch of chocolate sauce the next day for his daughter's forthcoming wedding. It was one of five batches needed to honor the occasion. Putting two and two together, I asked whether it was the same chocolate sauce that was served at the church, and if I could have a sample. It was, and the taste was indeed as remarkable as advertised.

On the trip home, the topic of chocolate came up again, and then lay dormant for a while. When we had a brainstorming session later about how to begin our annual stewardship campaign with a Leap of Faith accent, the idea of a chocolate auction quickly rose to the top. I was still a little slow on the uptake, however, and it wasn't until someone asked whether it might be possible to secure a donation of Milton chocolate sauce that I made the next connection.

It was possible; Chris was preparing a "live" batch during – you guessed it – the Milton church's annual chocolate auction, and generously sent two jars to Maine. You will be able to bid on them at our auction on March 1, and he's also thoughtfully included the "secret recipe" as a bonus.

Despite our relatively brief acquaintance with Milton and its members, I'm convinced that the relationship between these two churches will become strong and lasting. The UUA is encouraging the regionalization of staff among the four New England districts, and our ties with Milton may become part of a much larger synthesis of New England UUs over coming years.

But of all the connections we may make, chocolate will certainly not be the least of them.

Musings... from your Intern Minister

By Sharon Piantedosi

It's hard to believe I have been your intern minister for half the church year! That's right, I began my internship on September 3rd. This seems to me to be a good time to take this opportunity to tell you the nuts and bolts of a ministerial internship. I will start by saying that academic learning takes on new meaning when grounded by practical experience. The Ministerial Fellowship Credentialing (MFC) committee's philosophy of ministerial formation is based on the integration of theory and practice, commonly understood as critical practice, or "praxis". The MFC believes that an internship is central to preparation for the ministry. The best professional training includes an intensive practical experience under a qualified supervisor in a congregation and/or community-based setting.

Although an internship will not make an intern a seasoned minister, it does offer opportunities to develop ministerial skills in a supportive setting and with an experienced supervisor. It provides an environment in which to integrate historical and theological understandings with the practice of ministry—developing skills, self-awareness, confidence, ease in relationships, and a sense of vocation.

My internship is a nine month, full time church year, but there are internships that are part time over two church years. The elements of an internship are as follows. First, the Internship Supervisor: The mentoring minister supervisor must be a Unitarian Universalist minister in Final Fellowship. The MFC expects the internship supervisor to meet weekly with the intern. Carie and I have a standing meeting time every Tuesday afternoon. Then there is the Internship Committee: My committee consists of five ---Linda Findlay as the chair, and the other members are Jennifer Johnson, Mary McKeen, Mel Morrison and Grace Thomas. We meet monthly. Next is a Learning and Service Agreement. I consulted Carie, and my internship committee and developed my learning and service agreement that ensures a broad exposure and experience in all areas of learning required of interns by the MFC. Lastly there are evaluations. One evaluation is due at mid-term and is completed by Carie, myself, and my intern committee. There is a final evaluation completed

once again by Carie, myself and my intern committee at the end of my internship and this is submitted to the MFC.

Teaching churches are wonderful places to learn because the atmosphere of acceptance encourages an intern to stretch capabilities without fear. The leadership opportunities I have taken on have brought more confidence to my skills, and there is no better experiential learning.

My internship has truly been transformative for me as I have interacted on personal and program levels with you, my teaching congregation. I have been and continue to learn about every aspect of church life through you.

Blessings,
Sharon

Learn to Write an Ethical Will...

Many of us have made plans to distribute our financial assets after we die, but have we planned for our spiritual legacy?

In this session, local clergy will join together to discuss writing an ethical will. These wills have roots in ancient Jewish tradition and allow us to leave a moral and spiritual legacy for our loved ones.

After learning a little bit about ethical wills and studying some examples, we will have some time to begin writing our own ethical will. After the session we will join together for a potluck lunch.

When: Saturday, March 29th 10am-noon (lunch to follow)

Where: Temple Beth El—3 Woodlawn Street in Augusta

Bring: A dish to share for the potluck lunch. Please do not bring meat or seafood. Fish and dairy products are fine. These requirements are in keeping with Jewish dietary laws.

Goddess Continuing/ Earth Circles...

Goddess Continuing/Earth Circles meets on selected Sundays, 12:30-2:30pm in the Fellowship Hall (unless otherwise noted).

What difference does identifying the deity as female make to women and men?
Older youth and adults, all genders are invited to participate in activities.

Join us on **March 23** for “**Spring Equinox and On Goddesses and Gods, Continued”.**

We are surrounded by *mystery*. Because the mystery is beyond our ‘control’, we attribute *power* to the mystery, including the concept of “deity”. We explain mysteries in terms of what we know, what we have experienced or what we need. What is the deity or mystery that is meaningful to you?

This session will include Goddess/God and You match!

The ongoing *Goddess Continuing/Earth Circle* activities are outlined in the lilac brochure on the table in the vestry. The special offering this spring is **Cakes for the Queen of Heaven**, a feminist spirituality course. There are 18 participants in the 5 sessions.

For further information, contact Helen Zidowecki at 582-5308 or HZMRE@hzmre.com



Nonviolent Communications...

The **Nonviolent Communications (Also known as Compassionate Communications) Practice Group** is meeting on the first and third Fridays of the month from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in the Robbins Room. The meeting dates for February are March 7th and March 21st.

The group is open to people who have taken Nonviolent Communication Training programs, or who are/have been in a practice group. Others may attend, but there is an expectation that they will attend training when one becomes available.

Contact Helen Wing at 685-3804,
hcranewing@roadrunner.com

Display Case...

Theme for February and March: “People of Faith -- UU History and Heritage”.

We are seeking items from the larger congregation to display. For example, the art from a Monday evening Small Group (Martha Nabor) session plan, Create Your Tree, is incorporated into the current display. The session plan is on the UUCC website.

Items can be contributed ongoing. Labeled items can be left in the Display Basket in the Committee room or given directly to Helen Zidowecki or Abby Lourie.

Thank you for your participation.

New UU Classes...

Tuesdays, February 25th and March 11th
6:00 - 8:00 p.m. In Fellowship Hall

Are you new to Unitarian Universalism? Are you new to Unitarian Universalist Community Church? Are you curious about this odd and wondrous faith, this uncommon denomination? Do you have questions about what it means to be part of a liberally religious and diverse faith community? Do you want to meet other members, friends and newcomers? Are you hungry for connection with other people within the larger UUCC community? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this class is the next step in your journey of connection and belonging. Please join Rev. Carie Johnsen and Nancee Campbell for these classes to meet other UU's, explore your spiritual odyssey, and find community. We encourage newcomers to attend these classes and we also welcome attendance at one or two.

Sign up for this class by calling the church office at 622-3232 or send an email to admin@augustauu.org. We look forward to getting to know you and helping you to find a religious home that is both meaningful and connected.

Membership Matters...

A Welcome Dinner for new members and newcomers to our faith and UUCC will be held on **Friday, March 21st, at 5:30** in Fellowship Hall.

Please plan on joining Rev. Carie and other members of the church community in sharing good food (prepared by members of the Membership Committee) and conversation as you share your journey with us. This will be a great opportunity to get together before the **New Member Ceremony to be held on Sunday, March 23rd**.

Please RSVP to Jim Caldwell at 582-8658, or jscaldwell@roadrunner.com.

Our Community Needs Help!

The Essentials Pantry, located at St. Mark's Church, supplies home and personal hygiene needs to people who are unable to afford these items. The need in Augusta has been great this winter, and the Pantry was completely cleaned out of certain items by the beginning of February. Our Church has generously donated needed goods in the past, and right now the Pantry is in need of the following:

*** toiletries *** soap *** toothpaste ***
toothbrushes *** toilet paper
*** powdered laundry soap *** sanitary
napkins *** tampax *** children's and adult
diapers

And perhaps you have read in the newspaper that **The Augusta Food Bank** (augustafoodbank@gmail.com) is in dire need of donations. They can use non-perishable items food items that will be distributed throughout Augusta's low income community. Any donations to either the **Essentials Pantry** or the **Augusta Food Bank** can be left in the little red wagon in the front coat closet and volunteers will transfer them to the St. Marks.

If you have any questions, please contact Jenny McKendry at 622-4501



Sustain Our Flame All Church Dinner...

"There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

-- Margaret Wheatley

Do you like chocolate, fellowship, and fun?

Then, please join us for **SUSTAIN OUR FLAME ALL CHURCH DINNER** on Saturday March 1, 2014 at 5:30 PM. This is an Annual Pledge Campaign and Leap of Faith kick-off event. It is a Tables for Twelve, Lasagna organized potluck.

Help us make it a success by offering to bring salad, bread, lasagna, or dessert for 8. Or perhaps you can help with set up or clean up.

Annie Reiter is coordinating the dinner food. Please let her know what you would like to bring. Email estherpearl67@gmail.com or call 622-2945.

Of course we need chocolate for the chocolate auction. Gary Chapin is coordinating the chocolate auction and he wants to know "what is your favorite chocolate indulgence"! Judy McCown is bringing an **especially dark & moist chocolate layer cake with butter cream frosting and shaved chocolate**. Yummy!

Contact Gary at accordeonaire@aol.com or 458-1726.

At this family friendly event you can count on good food, good fun and CHOCOLATE!!!

Our Challenge: to articulate who we are and our purpose in a way that inspires a people of faith toward a sustainable future.

Membership Ceremony...

**Sunday, March 23rd at both the
9:15 & 11:00 services**

Our Membership Welcoming Ceremony is a way of celebrating those who have chosen to become members of UUCC during the past few months, and also to invite those who have begun to be part of our community, to consider whether they might like to join at this time.

Membership is a journey of belonging, deepening one's commitment to our church community. Membership is a way of participating more fully in the life of this congregation. Membership is a commitment to share one's time, talents and treasures with the congregation. Membership enables you to vote during congregational meetings, and to help shape the direction of our spiritual journey together.

To become a member, we ask that you express that intention in a visit with the minister and by signing the membership book. If you are interested in exploring membership at this time, please schedule an appointment by calling Rev. Carie at 207-623-3663 or sending her an email at revcariejohnsen@gmail.com



Social Activities...

ADULT ART CLASSES

Several UU's have asked Social Activities to offer Adult Art classes.

We heard you!

WIRE SCULPTURE

On Wednesday, March 12th, 6:00-8:30 p.m., Don Kerr (a Winthrop UU) will offer a wire sculpture class. Don is a longtime artist who creates incredible small (4 inch) to very large (5 feet high) wire sculptures that capture animal and human/spirit. Limit: 6

ENCAUSTIC

PAINTING

On Sunday, March 30th, Noon-4, Marcia Berkall of Whitefield will offer an art class in ENCAUSTIC PAINTING. Encaustic is an ancient art technique of hot wax painting. Heated beeswax is mixed with pigment and then applied to a variety of surfaces created by collages, photos, paintings etc. COST: \$20. Limit: 6

COME PLAY WITH US!

Fundraising...

Charlene Cleven makes beautiful greeting cards for any occasion. Her prices are reasonable, and she donates all proceeds to the UU Community Church. Between October 1, 2013 and mid-February 2014, she has donated \$218.50 to the church from sales of her cards. If you have an event coming up, please E-mail Charlene at charlene@mailbug.com in advance so that she can make a special card just for you.

On February 9, twenty-one adults and children attended the Beech Hill Cross Coun-

try Ski and Snowshoe Outing in Wayne. We enjoyed healthy outdoor exercise, fellowship with vegan cocoa and chili around a campfire, and a crisp winter day in the Maine woods. Everyone had fun, and our church received a \$35 donation.

AUCTION NEWS

Scheduled for **FRIDAY, MAY 9th**, we send A WARM THANK YOU

TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED SO FAR.

EVERYONE ELSE: WHAT TALENT OR CREATION WILL YOU DONATE?

Please see or contact Hannah Faulkner (293-9377 or hannahuu3@fairpoint.net) or Terry Cairn (445-2942 or tlcnaturalhealth@yahoo.com) as soon as you can to tell us what your talent contribution will be. We aim to sell \$10,000 worth of goods and services. Are you an artist, a baker, a quilter, a writer, a jewelry maker, a woodworker, a musician, a logger, a babysitter, a language or dance teacher, a gardener or an elder companion? Which of your talents would you like to share with the people from the general public who will attend our widely publicized

Forms are available at the Fundraising bulletin board or Hannah and Terry.

BRING IN A RESTAURANT OR HOTEL GIFT CERTIFICATE DURING MARCH

If you are a person who enjoys restaurants, Terry and I suggest that you bring us a gift certificate for the auction from your favorite restaurant or hotel during the month of March. Treat your family to a dinner at the restaurant during March. Before you leave, ask the manager for a gift certificate for UUCC in support of our work in the community. We have forms available for you to fill out and give to the business as an acknowledgement for the gift certificate. See Terry or Hannah for further information.

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

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit all articles 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 to newsletter@augustauu.org with the article as an attachment. Photos of church activities welcome!

Next edition submissions due March 18.

Minister: Rev. Carie Johnsen

President: Doug Rooks

Director of Religious Exploration: Rev. Carol Strecker
Office hours-Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am-4:00p.m. or by appointment

Administrator:

admin@augustauu.org

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

Thursday-noon-8pm

Choir Director: Joelle Morris

Intern Minister: Sharon Piantedosi

Office Hours Tuesday and Thursday-10:30a.m.-3:30p.m.
or by appointment

Small Group Ministry Coordinator: Kathy Kellison

Office: (207) 622-3232

Minister's Office Hours:

Monday 12:00 - 5:00 Beginning Feb. 3rd
Tuesday 12:00 - 6:00
Thursday 4:00 - 6:00

Friday is my Sabbath. I do not attend to emails, phone calls or meetings. For pastoral emergencies please call my cell phone (508-221-5295) and I will return your call at soon as possible.

Minister's Study:(207) 623-3663 (Office)

(207) 395-8051(Home)

(508) 221-5295 (Cell)

revcariejohnsen@gmail.com