

The Flaming Chalice

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



Interim Minister: Rev. Lee Devoe

President: *George Lapointe*

Director of Religious Exploration : *Karen Fisk*

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March 23-April 6, 2008

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:

March 23 Easter Sunday

Rev. Lee Devoe

Please join the Religious Exploration Committee & the Junior Youth for an Easter Breakfast starting at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

March 30 From Judgment to Compassion

NVC Study Group

All our lives we have learned to blame, criticize, and judge - others and ourselves. The study of **Nonviolent Communication** provides a guide for learning another, more compassionate, model where we practice listening for human feelings and needs - our own and others.

Members of our NVC study group will share their thoughts about the impact of this practice in the quest for more compassionate - and life enhancing - connections.

April 6 The Whisper of Stars

Rev. Lee Devoe

I love this faith and its unique way of being rooted in the past and open to the future. This first Sunday in April we will consider our Stewardship, exploring the many ways we care for our congregation, and launch our annual canvass. I will offer you my perspective on why I think this movement is the best investment for your precious time, money, and love.

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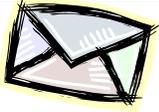
March 21, 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary

Spring Sing! led by Annie Voorhees

Old Favorites, Rounds, Broadway, Folk!

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 3/31/08 Please submit all newsletter articles as **WORD** documents if possible.*



A Letter from Lee

By Rev. Lee Devoe

Transition is hard enough when you understand the leap you need to make. How much harder it is to navigate terrain when you don't know how to read a topographic map and so don't understand the lay of the land you're venturing into. So much of this transition time we share has been well charted. A new minister will bring a new leadership style. Changes in worship will naturally occur because if the minister is uncomfortable with the flow of the service, everybody will be uncomfortable! In addition to "normal" interim changes, the congregation has experienced unusual challenges to its identity and the perception of its history. Added to these many layers is yet another transition: "the pastoral to program shift" as it is familiarly called. It is a process that is empowering and transformational for the congregation, yet is rarely achieved without turmoil, even crisis, particularly if the transition remains unnamed and is not consciously embraced.

A pastoral congregation is a clergy-centered organism. The pastor is expected to relate to everyone and growth of the congregation is most often dependent on the popularity of the minister. The "relationship" orientation of these congregations is expressed by its focus on offering comfort and celebrating community in worship and other arenas of congregational life. It thinks of itself as really friendly, but it is mostly so with itself. It pretends to be a one-celled organism and has a preference for decision-making as a whole. There tends to be resistance to change and defensiveness towards anything that is seen as threatening to how the community has related to each other.

A "program" church acknowledges that it is a many-celled organism. It is in sharing a common purpose that it feels unity among its many centers. With this expanded sense of identity, the program church is excited by the possibilities that come with change. It creates organizational structures that maximize effectiveness. Its preference is for a multiplicity of programming and it trusts multiple decision-making bodies. In this system, the role of clergy shifts from personal "friend" to mentor. The role of the minister is to mentor and motivate, to be a team leader with an emphasis on recruiting, coordinating, training, and evaluating. Spiritual and numerical growth come through articulation of a vital vision, relevant to our times, and excellence in carrying out a dynamic ministry.

As this congregation navigates this time of transition and prepares to enter the Search process, an understanding of the differences in these systems and their implications for professional ministry is critical. The Trustees and Committee on Ministry have been engaged in this discernment. Now it's time to broaden the conversation. I will leave materials on the bulletin board, in addition to sharing them with committee chairs and other leaders. Please start, or continue, the conversation in your committee or other niche of the congregation. How have you experienced tension between these two models? What are the implications for the functioning of your group in moving towards a "program" model? How can we work to preserve the spiritual comfort and celebration of community that drew so many of you to the congregation while moving towards an organizational structure that is more effective and vision-oriented? How will the congregation define its priorities for ministerial leadership given its perception of its place on the pastoral-program shift continuum?

Please ask me questions! I'd love to talk with you about these models.

In faith, Lee

Differences in orientation between pastoral and program congregations

Expressed by Rev. Robert Latham

in *Moving on from Church Folly Lane: The Pastoral to Program Shift*

Issue	Pastoral	Program
Personal Need	Everybody should know I have a need	I need to let people know I have a need
Decisions	I should be in on most decisions	I must trust others to make the right decisions
Growth	We don't want to get too big	Where will we put the people?
Annual Meeting	Let's dissect everything	Let's not micromanage
Community Goal	Fulfilling my personal hopes	Reaching others with our ministry
Minister/s	Relate to me	Mentor me
Pledging	We must justify the spending	I will give toward the vision
Vision	We need to strengthen our community life	We need to reach beyond ourselves
Staff	Why isn't the present staff sufficient?	We can't do it without more staff
Attitude	We must include everybody	We must be more effective
Question	Am I being served?	Is the world being served?
Framework	The practical	The potential

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

There have been a couple of interesting, productive, forward looking meetings in the past few weeks that I want to tell you about. They've addressed the upcoming annual pledge drive to put together next year's budget and the feasibility for the capital campaign. We've had the good fortune of working with Wayne Clark of the Unitarian Universalist Association; Wayne has assisted many, many churches with annual and capital campaign issues. These two meetings have involved good, hard discussions that bring out the best in our church community with a combination of good sense, intellect, and love for our church in a way that fires me about this religious community of ours.

The first recommendation of this discussion is that we should concentrate on meeting the goals of our annual church needs before embarking on the capital campaign. This doesn't mean that we won't do a capital campaign. Rather, that we should have our church program budget in order first which makes sense if you think about it. This also doesn't mean that we won't have a capital campaign; it will just be a couple of years out. At first, I didn't like this idea because we've put so much heart and promise into the new building planning but, at the same time, I heard many comments to the effect of "how can we do this when we have problems meeting our ongoing obligations". Wayne Clark agreed completely with this notion and talked us through how to make this happen.

For the annual financial commitment process, we thought that a couple of ideas are really important. First, we want to have the resources to attract and hire the best settled minister possible. We have had the good fortune of seeing a number of ministerial styles over the past three to four years and we want our next settled minister to reflect our church's values and dreams. To get the best settled minister for this congregation requires that we can competitively attract and compensate the minister. Another important component of getting a new settled minister is to have enough resources to conduct the best search process possible. These are commitments that are worth making for our church community.

Second, we will meet the goals for staffing and programs at our church in a way that serves the needs of our church community and treats staff fairly as we've already committed to in our acceptance of our long range plan. This will result in a better kept church facility and more support to the many committees that make our church strong.

Last, we'll make some changes to the current church building to make it a more livable, inviting space. Among the ideas on the table are (1) opening up the entry way, (2) for the sanctuary paint, maybe some windows high up and taking the wall out between the Robbins Room and Sanctuary to allow seating for more people, (3) expanding the nursery room, (4) redoing the bathrooms, (5) redoing the fellowship hall, (6) updating the kitchen including a new dishwasher, (7) the church roof, and (8) painting the outside of the church. These are all things that we've heard discussed as ways to make the church more useful and inviting.

It's a plan that concentrates on the funds needed for our ongoing activities and will build up to the new church facility. It will give us a building that is more inviting, and useful, in the interim. It will give us the support we need to keep our church community vibrant and meeting our commitments. I'm jazzed up about it because it makes sense and supports the programmatic foundation of our church.

It won't happen without the support of all church members; we'll succeed to the degree that we all commit to making our church community better. You'll hear soon about the details of the annual financial commitment process which will be kicked off on 6 April. We need your help to make it happen so stay tuned and think about all the great things going on in our church that deserve our support.

See you in church,

George

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

How many of us have had the experience of feeling immediately at home in a Unitarian Universalist Church? I have heard it often. "If I had known this church existed, I'd have been here years ago!" "I was amazed to find a church that felt so right from the minute I walked in." "I felt at home from the very first service I attended." It is a wonderful feeling; that sense of comfort and belonging. And yet, I worry when I hear someone who is new to us making those comments. I think it is easy to make assumptions about other Unitarian Universalists based on that initial impression.

It is easy to assume that everyone sees fundamental issues of life and belief the same way the speaker does. (I would challenge each of you to describe a Unitarian Universalist, and see how many assumptions you have made.) The danger is that when an issue comes up which highlights the differences in our community, it is easy to feel betrayed or disappointed in a major way. "This is not the church I thought I was joining!" "I never thought a Unitarian Universalist church would..."

I have been thinking more about this as a result of the discussions that have occurred in the Open Small Groups I have attended on Sunday mornings. One week we discussed what it was that brought us to the church and what holds us here. We had very different answers, based on very different life experiences. It was extremely helpful to me to be reminded that although we create one impression as a church community,

in fact, there are many individuals who make up the community. It is very difficult to be a community which always reflects the entire variety of thought and belief which we hold. We are in constant tension between the voice of the community and the voices of individuals.

I believe that one of our spiritual practices as Unitarian Universalists is to strive to live with that tension. We need to speak our own beliefs, we need to listen to the beliefs of others, and we need to work to find a collective voice which encompasses all of our voices to the greatest extent possible. When the community does not speak for you, you need to reach to find your own way to stay tuned into the message that does connect you to the community.

I offer Small Group Ministry as a very important place for that work to happen. In the groups in which members are together for months and years, the sharing is very deep. In each group that now forms on Sunday morning, there is an opportunity to stretch and to understand. I am grateful to everyone who shows up at the Open Group ready to take a risk and create a community if only for an hour.

I know that it is easier to stay in community with people with whom I disagree if we have had respectful and honest discussions of our differences. I know that Small Group Ministry provides building blocks for the foundation of our church community.

Join us!

Kathy Kellison

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY OPEN GROUP SESSIONS

- March 30: "Spring Equinox: Yin and Yang. Exploring balances in our lives"
April 6: "Mentors" Marilyn Karasopoulos
April 13: "On Lying" Beth Whitman
April 20: "Spiritual Goals" Kathy Kellison
April 27: "Science & Religion" Helen Zidowecki

All are welcome to join us in the Annex at 9:30!

HISTORY OF THE FEMALE DIVINE — Series of classes and discussion groups led by Dr. Joseph Laferriere and Helen Zidowecki. We shall explore the history of female goddesses in ancient cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Europe, and India. Historical and anthropological approach, emphasizing how these goddesses fit into the cultures and lifestyles of the people who worshipped them. Thursday evenings from April 17 through May 29. Open enrollment; everyone invited. Please tell us if you are interested so we can make sure we have a big enough room. Joe@butterfieldhouse.biz or hzmre@hzmre.com

HISTORY COMMITTEE

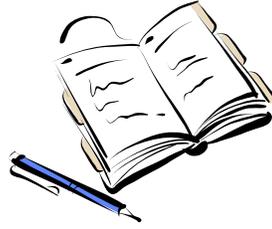
The History Committee is meeting on Monday, March 31 from 2-4 PM in the Annex. Please note that the committee has changed the meeting time from morning to afternoon.



INVITATION

FANNIE CAMPBELL's
90th BIRTHDAY
OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, March 29th, 2 PM
at
UU CHURCH
69 WINTHROP STREET
AUGUSTA, MAINE

Everybody who knows Fannie or would like to get to know her, please come to her birthday Open House. Fannie grew up in this church.



CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES

Address Change:

Greenlaw, Jill
Ucci, Daniel
89 Ledge Hill Road
East Pittston, ME 04345

Email Address:

Karl Dan Sorensen—
sokarldan@roadrunner.com

WALK TO STOP HUNGER

The Maine State Credit Union will be sponsoring the 3rd annual Walk to Stop Hunger on Saturday, April 26 at the Kennebec River Rail Trail.

Our Shelter Manager, Garry Clark is excited to be this year's team leader for Bread of Life, but he doesn't want to walk alone! To be part of our team, please give Garry a call (626-3479) and he'll add you to the roster. He can mail you a registration form and pledge sheet, or you can obtain them at www.mainestatecu.org/hungerwalk.htm. The more people who participate with us, the more we can earn.

Once you've registered, start collecting pledges from your family, friends, and co-workers. Anyone raising \$100. or more will receive a Walk to Stop Hunger t-shirt. There will also be prizes awarded for the individual and team that raises the most money. There is no registration fee for the walk, but participants are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to donate. There will be a Fun Run for children 4-10 years old.

Call Garry today to join!

Karen McGuire, Office Mgr.
Bread of Life Ministries
157 Water Street
Augusta, ME 04330
(207) 626-3434



A new bud has emerged from the snow.

The UCC Meditation "Sangha" (community of practice) meets in the sanctuary every Sunday from 6:30 – 8 PM.

Join us any time.

Dress warmly, comfortably. Bring a cushion or bench, if you like.

Benches and chairs are available.

We sit and walk in meditation.

We are reading Peace is Every Step by Thich Nhat Hanh and sharing our experiences – related to the reading, our individual practice, or our lives.

Childcare is available.

Questions? Marty Soule 685-9270, martysoule@verizon.net

**First Spring Conference of the
Northern New England District
&
Annual Meetings of the
Northeast District of the UUA & the
NHVT District of UU Societies**

Friday, April 11—Saturday, April 12, 2008

New England Center of the
University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH



Keynote Address: “Better Together”



The Rev. William G. Sinkford is the seventh president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (June, 2001). Bill’s presidency has been distinguished by his social justice work, particularly his efforts to defend oppressed peoples. Among other causes, he is an outspoken critic of the war in Iraq, a nationally recognized champion of equal marriage rights for same-sex couples, and a passionate advocate for the people of Darfur. A Deeply spiritual man, Sinkford calls on Unitarian Universalism to reclaim a language of reverence. Bill has been a supporter of the congregations and the districts in our visioning for a new district.

Bill’s invitation to meet with Youth: *“A chance to interact with the youth of Northern New England District is an opportunity to see our future unfold—not just the future of Unitarian Universalists, but of all humankind. Our young people hold the energy, vision, and strength the world needs for healing. I am honored to take part in such a dialogue, and look forward to our discussion.”*

Historical Celebration! Sharing Good News! Banner Parade! Singing!

There will never be another district conference like this one! We will have a Keynote address and Conversation with UUA President, Rev. William Sinkford, on Saturday. We look forward to having all congregations in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont together. Ensure that your congregation is represented at the inauguration of the Northern New England District ~ bring your church banner and share Good News from your congregation! Honor past district staff, former district presidents and transition team members at the Reception on Friday evening. Children and youth will be part of the celebration and have special programming.

**REGISTRATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE AND ON THE DISTRICT WEB SITE(S) www.nhvt.uua.org (NH-VT) www.ned-uua.org (NED)
THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS **MARCH 27TH.****

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Change in Date for Workshop – Pastoral Care Training

The workshop scheduled for Tuesday, March 18 will now be held on April 8.

April 8: Marty Soule, Helen Wing, Susan Burnett—will talk about their experiences as Ministerial Associates. Lee will share resources and strategies for healing.

The “Grieving” Workshop with Brenda Sawyer will still be part of the series but will fall on a later Tuesday evening. The series will be extended to May 6.