

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*

Administrative Assistant: *Margaret Goodale*

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

Church office is open 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tues.-Fri.
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Email: uuccaug@gwi.net
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April 13-27, 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.

Open Small Group at 9:30 AM in Annex

On Sunday:

April 13 **Sacred Space and Holy Ground** **Rev. Lee Devoe**

April 20 **Earth Day: Reflection and Celebration** **Rev. Lee Devoe**

April 27 **Earth Day: Reflection and Celebration** **Rev. Lee Devoe**

May 4 The covenanted groups so vital to the ministry of this congregation are celebrating their tenth anniversary. Please join us as Kathy Kellison and the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee reflect on this experience.

Techno Cosmic Earth Mass

led by Rockland UU Minister, Rev. Mark Glovin

April 26 at 7:00 pm, Watt's Hall in Thomaston

The Techno Cosmic Mass is a revolutionary new form of worship that invokes the sacred into body, mind, heart and spirit. It blends Western liturgical tradition and Eastern and indigenous spiritual elements with multi-media imagery, ecstatic music and dance to create an interfaith, multi-cultural and intergenerational celebration.

\$10.00 suggested donation to cover costs would be much appreciated!

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

Next newsletter deadline is 4/21/08. Please submit all newsletter articles as WORD documents if possible.



A letter from Lee

By Rev. Lee Devoe

Weddings . . . Memorial Services . . . Birthday Parties . . . You might imagine that as a church, we receive calls regularly from people who want to use the building for their rites of passage. But did you know:

- ~ Four different groups of people working to live beyond addictions of different kinds use these buildings every week, including teenagers
- ~ Safety is a real and on-going concern for the men who are gay and meet in our building each week to offer support to each other and to newcomers who might need them
- ~ the Tourmaline Singers, including members from this congregation and the UU church in Waterville, sing together in preparation for the ministry of singing to those in the passage of death and the care of hospice
- ~ New mothers gather in the shelter of our building with La Leche League
- ~ a young girl with special needs meets with her tutor
- ~ with its central location in the state of Maine, our district uses these buildings regularly for meetings of the trustees, program committee, and finance committee
- ~ an occasional phone call comes from Bangor Theological Seminary looking for middle ground between its Bangor and Portland Campuses
- ~ this capital city of Augusta holds people with many needs who, on any day of the week, walk into our church seeking shelter of body and spirit

This outreach is part of the vital ministry of your congregation and its presence in the heart of the community and the capital city of Maine. The plan for revitalization of our church building will well serve the many facets of the congregation's ministry. It will also serve the expansive ministry to the community and the denomination. I applaud the leadership for finding this balance between the practical and the visionary, and for its commitment to working quickly and effectively to be responsive to the needs of the congregation at this moment and in consideration of the long term goals. I'm excited by the prospect of beginning afresh this fall in a fresh space. I hope the light and spacious inspiration of the renewed physical space will echo through the many levels of congregational and community life. I hope you will support this plan generously.

In faith,

Lee

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It's finally starting to feel like spring. Today, the temperature almost made it to 50° and the sun is stronger and the sunlight longer every day. And while they don't look like the strongest flowers around, there are a few snowdrops in our garden that are blooming and some early crocuses around the neighborhood in south facing areas. It feels good, really good, after the winter that's just now waning. Things are hopping at church as well in a good way.

First, I'm very pleased to let you know that Lee Devoe will be our Interim Minister for a third year. Lee has done much to guide our church community through the interim process in a way that has allowed us, and sometimes forced us, to examine who we are as a religious community and what we want this great community to look like in the future. She's helped us to realize that we want to be, and must be, a community that respects every individual who attends our church. Part of this has been to realize the value and need for transparency in all we do so that looking out or in, we see the best of ourselves. Our church health also means that we must actively take care of one another and address any issues that arise in an open, forthright manner. She has also shown us different ways and words to use in our church services. This has ranged from new words for the Old Hundredth to different types of services at holiday times. This is a very important function of interim ministry; to show us new ways and Ideas so that when we make a choice for a settled minister we will have a better idea of how we want our church life to be organized and carried out. It isn't always comfortable to change how we conduct our services but it provides a lens through which we can determine what's best for our church in the long term. So, my thanks to Lee for her wisdom and compassion to date; also for her dedication to our church community for the next year.

The other thing that has me fired up is the plans for the annual canvass and for making our church space more livable and inviting. As I'd mentioned in my last newsletter piece, we had some great meetings to discuss the annual canvass and capital campaign. The conclusion of those discussions was the realization that we must get our church program and budget "house in order" before embarking on the capital campaign. At the same time, we need to make our church more welcoming and accessible to keep up the momentum that we've developed to improve and grow our church facility. So, you'll soon see two things. The first is an aggressive annual canvass goal that allows us to meet the many things that we've said are important as a congregation. This includes fair compensation for staff, increased hours to take care of church business, increased maintenance funds, an expanded religious education program, and keeping up with energy costs. The second component involves renovations to the entry way to make it lighter and easier to move through, redoing the fellowship hall, making the bathrooms accessible to everyone, and expanding the sanctuary seating and adding windows to the sanctuary. It is in recognition that we'll be using our current building for awhile but we need to make it better. Please take the time to look at the heart and work behind the annual canvass and building renovation challenge. It's really worthy of our support, for ourselves and so that we may provide a better religious community to the Augusta area.

I think these things provide for a new period in our church's history, a spring of rejuvenation and refocus that will make us all proud and make for a better place of worship at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church.

See you in church,

George



RELATE YOUR EXPERIENCE – DOCUMENT OUR HISTORY

On February 5, 2008, the Committee on Ministry hosted a gathering where we tried to find ways to help the congregation advance the process of healing with respect to events that took place during the tenure of our former minister. Two ideas emerged.

First, people felt a need to express, in some meaningful way, the reality that they experienced as a result of the conduct of our former minister and the revelations that have come to light since his departure. Second, a concern was raised that this shared experience would quickly fade from the congregation's collective memory, leaving the work of healing unfinished and the institutional memory of our church incomplete.

To address these concerns, the Committee on Ministry invites each of you, if you wish, to write down your own narrative and forward that writing to the Committee on Ministry. Tell how you experienced our former minister's tenure and how recent revelations about events during that time have affected you. It is our hope that the process of doing so will promote healing.

These writings will be collected and made part of the congregation's collective history. They may or may not figure in future healing work that the Committee on Ministry is considering, but for now they will stand as a concrete testament to our shared experience and as a bulwark against repetition of the mistakes of the past.

Please forward your personal story to the Committee on Ministry, UUCC, 69 Winthrop Street, Augusta, Maine 04330. If you wish, feel free to ask that your experience remain confidential within the Committee on Ministry. Such requests will be honored.

Committee on Ministry
John Pelletier
Janet Sawyer
Jane Gilbert
Jim Spicer

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Unitarian Universalists use the phrase 'the priesthood and prophethood of all believers' from time to time. It refers, of course, to our practice of recognizing that each of us matters. Clergy members are no closer to God than we. (They really are not gifted with more inherent worth and dignity.) Clergy also are no more knowledgeable than we of great truths. (They are not further ahead in the individual search for truth and meaning.) Today I want to explore the 'pastorhood' of all believers.

The last Flaming Chalice discussed some of the changes we might anticipate as we become a larger congregation. We can expect less personal attention from a minister who has moved into the role of mentor from that of pastor. I do not believe we will get much less pastoral care overall, however. In our congregation, we all take care of each other and it happens in many ways.

On Sunday mornings, we express our Joys and Sorrows. How often have you thought to speak to someone after the service about their sharing only to find the crowd around them so thick you cannot get to them? We begin many committee meetings with an opportunity for personal sharing, which we call 'check in'. Everyone present knows if something is going on in your life that could be a distraction from being fully present at the meeting. We have a Caring Committee which invites us all to reach out with visits, meals or transportation for someone who is in distress. Our trained Pastoral Associates are available if

you ask or if someone else speaks up for you. These are among the ways we care for one another.

Small Group Ministry provides an opportunity for ongoing connection and pastoral care in the context of a more intimate setting. As groups of seven to nine people meet on a regular basis over weeks and months, a depth of caring develops regardless of how similar or different people are. As members share the events of their lives and participate in discussion of the topics, a web of connection is formed which lasts even after people step away from their groups.

When Small Group Ministry was new, I watched at coffee hour as the unlikeliest people seemed to be talking together. I realized that they had become friends as a result of being assigned to the same Ministry Group. I began to see the power of Small Group Ministry to knit our community into closer connection as disparate people got to know one another in depth. Now we have the Sunday Open Group. Already friendships are developing as attendees are discovering common bonds. It only takes once to learn that someone else in the congregation shares something that you think is unique to you and perhaps has made you feel different and separate from the rest. In my mind, this discovery of connection and belonging is an important element of pastoral care.

I believe that all of these examples of pastoral care will continue in our community no matter how much we grow. We will always be the church of community and caring.

I invite you all to visit the Open Group on Sunday morning at 9:30 in the Annex. We would love to find that the room is too small!

Kathy Kellison

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY OPEN GROUP SESSIONS

- April 6: "Mentors"
Marilyn Karasopoulos
April 13: "On Lying"
Beth Whitman
April 20: "Spiritual Goals"
Kathy Kellison
April 27: "Science and Religion"
Helen Zidowecki
May 4: "Being Alone"
Marilyn Karasopoulos

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



CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES

Address Change:

Moore, JANE
106 Water Street
Hallowell, ME 04347
831-3472
moorjn1@aol.com

Add to Directory:

Roman, RACHEL
73 Old Winthrop Road
Augusta, ME 04330
512-8191 (H) 624-8833 (W)
rachelroman@hotmail.com



HISTORY COMMITTEE

UCC HISTORY OPEN HOUSE AND REFRESHMENTS

Monday, April 28, 2008 2-5 PM
Fellowship Hall, 69 Winthrop Street

Calling those with longer association with Unitarians and Universalists in Augusta! Please come and help us identify and confirm some parts of our history, and add your stories to our history. For those with shorter connections, come and see some of our artifacts, photos, and puzzles – and hear some of the stories. The notebooks of historical articles will be on display.

And we will introduce the UCC History Question Box.
What are you curious about in the history of the Augusta churches?

If you have questions or would like more information, contact Helen Zidowecki at 207-582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com



Spring is Here—Have You Heard

Peepers?

Tradition has it that the first UCC person to hear the peepers wins the honor of housing the brass peeper statue for the year. Even more important: the first person who hears the peepers heralds the real and true arrival of spring and prompts a church-wide celebration!

So, listen carefully. If you hear the peepers singing their song of spring, call the church office (623-3232) and leave a message stating your name, the date and the time you heard our tiny loud friends.

Happy listening!

Spring 2008

Women & Religion Retreat “Wings, Set Me Free”

The Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont UU Women’s Spring 2008 Retreat, “Wings, Set Me Free” will take place the weekend of May 30-June 1, at Rockraft Retreat Center in beautiful Sebago Lake, Maine. The price per woman for the weekend, which includes two nights, six meals, and many wonderful workshops is: \$120 for rustic Carriage House bunk-house accommodations and \$140 for a bed in the Main House or Carriage House.

Registration forms are available in the church or the office now and the deadline is April 25th. For a sneak peak of what is planned please visit our blog at www.uuwomenandreligion.blogspot.com!

CHILDREN'S MONTHLY **"SANGHA"**

The Sunday night meditation group is thinking of starting a monthly children's "sangha." The children's group would meet at the same time as the adult meditation group, Sunday evenings 6:30 - 8pm, and would be open to children ages 5 and older. Parents would be welcome to accompany their children.

Meditation is a wonderful way to practice attention, focus and appreciation. Meetings would involve periods of listening, deep breathing, movement, relaxation, and refreshments in the form of "eating meditation." Songs and stories from the Buddhist tradition would also be included, with related discussions.

We will talk about this possibility after the meditation group on Sunday, May 4. Interested parents can also call Miranda Phelps, 873-0689.

INTRODUCTION TO NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Nonviolent Communication, a model developed by Marshall Rosenberg, is an approach to communication based on the human needs and feelings that underlie our behavior. Rosenberg's work began during the 1960s civil rights era, and seeks to teach a means of developing empathy as a basis for communication rather than the models of blame and judgment we have all learned so well. **On April 27 at 1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall**, Helen Wing will be offering a 2 hour **Introduction to Nonviolent Communication**, with an opportunity for some **Soup and Bread at 12:30 pm** before the viewing at one o'clock.

This model is sometimes

referred to as "compassionate communication" as it seeks to enable people to connect with the needs in themselves and others in order to inspire a compassionate response. All are invited. Feel free to also invite friends in the larger community who may be interested. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

AUGUSTA FOOD BANK UPDATE

by Sarah Schultz-Nielsen

I recently attended the Augusta Food Bank's Board of Directors' Annual Meeting at St. Mark's Church on March 18th. I volunteered to attend the 5 meetings per year on behalf of our church as a congregational representative. The UU church supports the bank financially as well as with actual canned goods for their shelves.

According to statistics compiled by the food bank's data coordinator, 2,446 individual Augusta residents were served in 2007 at the food bank. This number represents a little over 13% of the city's population, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. This equates to over 335,000 lbs. of food! On average, 250 children a month are fed.

The food bank is run by a group of faithful volunteers. Their efforts, combined with our efforts as a church really help our community. I plan on participating in the 5k Walk to Stop Hunger walk sponsored by the Maine State Credit Union, on April 26th along the Kennebec Rail Trail. Please let me know if you'd like to pledge me, or join me. I have additional forms. All proceeds for the walk

(including the entry fee of a non-perishable canned good) will be donated to area food pantries.

Please let me know if you would like to see the notes and minutes from any of the meetings. I can be contacted by email or phone: sarahschultznielsen@gmail.com or 582-6017. I will keep you posted!

HISTORY OF THE FEMALE DIVINE

Joseph E. [Laferriere](mailto:Laferriere@celunion@hotmail.com)
(celunion@hotmail.com or
645-5209), Helen Zidowecki

**Thursdays, April 17-May 29,
6:30-8:30 PM Fellowship Hall**

For more information and to register, contact Joe Laferriere or Helen Zidowecki, or see the table in the Fellowship Hall between services on April 6 and 13.

This survey of female deities from the earliest time to the present is open to adults and older youth. Attendance at the full series will provide continuity, but attending less than the full series is possible. It would be preferable for anyone interested to attend the first session for the general overview and as many other sessions as possible. Each session has a presentation followed by discussion and dialog. There will be artwork, items relating to the various traditions, musical offerings and opportunity for reflection.

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| April 17 | 1. General Overview. |
| April 24 | 2. Egypt. |
| May 1 | 3. Mesopotamia |
| May 8 | 4. Greece and Rome. |
| May 15 | 5. Germanic/Norse
and Celtic |
| May 22 | 6. Hindu |
| May 29 | 7. Christian Europe +
America |

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