



The Flaming Chalice

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

March 2011

Worship Services Sundays at 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

March 6th

*Nurturing Our Lives with
meditation and mindful sharing*

Marty Soule

Members of the Peaceful Heart Sangha will share some meditation practices that have helped us connect with peace and happiness in today's stress filled world.

March 13th

The Heart of Darkness

Rev. Carie Johnsen

Part one of a four part series responding to the questions of evil and suffering presented by several members of the congregation during the Jan 2nd service *Lingering Questions Awaiting Answers*. In this service we will focus on the question of evil.

March 20th

Economic Justice: Fair Labor

Rev. Carie Johnsen

This service will unpack some of the complexities of present day worker justice issues through the lens of Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes.

March 27th

The Heart of Humanity

Rev. Carie Johnsen

Part two. In the face of evil where is the inherent worth and dignity of every person? Where do we find forgiveness? Where do we encounter the holy?

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President: Sheila Comerford
Director of Religious Exploration: Karen Fisk
Administrator: Julie Pelletier
Choir Director: Douglas Barley
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Next newsletter deadline is **April 18th**. Please submit newsletter articles by email to Julie Pelletier, UUCC Church Administrator at admin@augustauu.org

A Faith Journey by Rev. Carie Johnsen...

Generosity can give you joy, it can remind you of the purpose of life, it can give you a greater connection with the vast expanse of humanity, and it can give you the power to change the world. You, as the giver, have the opportunity to make positive changes in your own life by giving.

Giving reorders our priorities, in sometimes surprisingly subservice ways. Practicing the sacred art of giving helps replace the narrow perspective of "me" with an expansive view of "we." ~ Lauren Tyler Wright, "Giving – the sacred art"

We have now officially entered the 2011/12 Canvass Campaign. This is the time when members and friends of Unitarian Universalist Community Church are asked to search within their hearts to discern and ascribe a monetary value to what they receive from their faith community.

The message of the morning: Giving reorders priorities. Making a yearly pledge to a faith community is much more than a transactional affair. It is far more than one more thing we cross off our to-do list.

It brings joy! Powerful, transformative, life-affirming, life-giving joy!

It gives us purpose! It broadens our fire of commitment!

It changes lives! It transforms lives from "me" centered to "we" centered.

And It saves lives! It saves lives!

Imagine for a moment a time when you have been transformed by "church" albeit Sunday Service, a Celebration of Life, a vigil, a committee meeting or rebuilding the future, literally or metaphorically.

This is a congregation that pledges on average \$1240 per family. The most common annual pledge is \$1000. In an economy where people are struggling to make ends meet, the members and friends of this congregation step up to the plate to make sure the budget is providing fair compensation for their minister and staff and paying their fair share dues to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Northern New England District.

In January the Board of Trustees were asked to consider extending the health benefit to the part-time staff at UUCC. I witnessed a solution focused Board who sought to 'do the right thing'. Your Board of Trustees moved toward fiscal responsibility with an eye on economic justice at home thus providing a model of leadership for the congregation, greater Augusta, the state of Maine and world community.

As we closed the service with the choir singing "Get Together" by the Youngbloods, the space in the sanctuary was filled with a joyous and resounding chorus of "everybody get together try and love one another right now." Those gathered then stepped into the vestibule and dropped off their pledge for the upcoming fiscal year.

UUCC is indeed an expansive view of "we" where making positive changes begins with saying YES to the *sacred art of giving!* May it always be so!

It is, as I have said before, a privilege to serve as your minister. In Faith, *Rev. Carie Johnsen*

From the Director of Religious Exploration ...

Anti-bias, anti-oppression, multicultural education is part and parcel with Unitarian Universalist Religious Exploration. This fact is one of the many reasons I am here, and I would hazard a guess, why you are here.

I recently took a class on preventing harassment of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning young people, and was asked to rate my own institution from 0 to 10 on safest to least safe for GLBQT kids. Among the many schools also present, my rating of 0 was unique. Interestingly the facilitator said he figured anyone rating their institution a zero was walking around with blinders on.

That statement gave me pause. Was I missing something? Were the children and the youth of this church throwing around phrases like, "That's so gay!" and threatening each other because of differing sexual identities? No! But are more subtle slights occurring? Are there phrases used, stories told, pictures shared that do not embrace the vast diversity of our world? It is true that sometimes there are still a few giggles when I talk about a family with two moms or two dads, but we are conscientiously working on helping all of our kids recognize there are many different ways for families to be families.

Later, I asked my RE mentor if she thought I was incorrect in assessing our community as safe for LGBTQ people. She said, "I am certain your community is not the same as a school atmosphere, not even close. UU Congregations are counter cultural, Karen."

Counter cultural. Yes, in a culture rife with dichotomy, with "normal" and "abnormal," with "right" and "wrong," we acknowledge and embrace the gray areas, the mysteries, the different as good.

By the way, I learned that the first step to prevent harassment is to make it clear that saying mean things to people is not OK. The second step to preventing harassment is to build a community that honors and respects diversity. We want our schools to do this; we are already doing this within our RE program, but more importantly within our homes.

I took another class today, which helped us all focus on how to help prevent girl fighting. The facilitator said girls are fighting the way they are because they are influenced by media, which tells them they need to be better than the next girl, and jealous of her if they are not. The way to prevent this, our facilitator said, is to promote respect for each other, and appreciation of the individual strengths each of us have.

In other words, be counter-cultural, invite all people to support and affirm one another's positive attributes instead of beating them down. And, again, I believe we do just that within this church community and within our families.

But I will say this. Media is insidious. It permeates our lives and those of our children unless we very actively work against it, countering the culture. If you see an advertisement that demeans or pigeonholes someone, point it out to your child. If you hear your children say something that is less than what you hoped for, call them out and help them understand the implications of their statements. Or if they repeat something they heard another say that confused them, talk about it. Help them see when the ideas they are accessing are not fair or kind.

My daughter came home from school livid. In social studies they were watching a video about music from around the world. When a group of Arabic women ululated, the substitute teacher laughed and said, "One of your classmates called that the cry of the terrorist." My daughter did not know what to say. How do you counter a teacher?

How indeed do you counter a whole culture of intolerance and ignorance? One step at a time, from a safe, strong foundation: your family and your faith community. Another step is to be aware that you might be tripping up regardless of your good intentions. Vigilance is always necessary, and persistence, and forgiveness.

Yours in faith, Karen

From the Explorers Classrooms Ages 6-8: What We Can Do to Make the World Better

1. Use both sides of the paper. Paper is made from trees and trees are animals' homes.
2. Not use batteries. They don't compost.
3. Recycle more that you throw away. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle"
4. Plant trees so animals can live in them in case their homes have been destroyed.
5. Help at church to teach UU beliefs.
6. Be patient and kind
7. Grow our own food.
8. Put trash in the trash can. Don't throw gum on the ground, it doesn't compost and animals choke on it.

Adult RE ...

Goddess Continuing ~ March 6, 2011 2:15-2 p.m.
How Our Thirties, Forties and Fifties Influence Who We Are Today

March 20, 2011 ~ 12:15-1:15 p.m. Celebration:
Spring Equinox: Balancing Being and Doing This is open to the congregation Join Us! We will have readings, music, movement, stories.

The New UU ~ Alternate Thursdays,
6:00-8:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Those who have become part of the UCC community within the last 3 years are urged to participate, and the course is open to the entire congregation. It provides opportunities for members of the congregation to share with newcomers what it means to them to be a Unitarian Universalist. It gives newcomers a chance to examine their own personal stories in the light of our Unitarian Universalist tradition and heritage. It provides a chance for newcomers to the congregation and long-timers to connect. It provides an explicit invitation to become a member. The planned topics by date are as follows:

March 17	Overview and Worship
March 31	Where Do We Come From? Our UU Roots
April 14	How We Grow in Faith ~ Philosophy Of Religious Education/Exploration
April 28	Social Justice Philosophy and Practice
May 12	How Are Decisions Made? Governance and Polity
May 26	Functions and Relations

See the more detailed description on the Adult RE Bulletin Board, along with the sign-up sheet. It is preferable that participants attend all sessions, but please sign up even if that is not possible. You may also contact the church office or Helen Zidowecki (582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com)

Faith in Action ...

Augusta Warming Center (on Front St. near gazebo) needs creamer, sugar, coffee, hot cocoa mix, cream cheese, warm adult socks. Please bring donations to warming center or to church - Faith in Action committee will collect items beside red wagon in coat room. The Center is also looking for volunteers Mon - Sun 9 am - 4pm until March 30. Please call Center directly if you are interested: 441-1434.

Church Display Case ...

March 6th and 13th display case will be **Peaceful Sangha** by Marty Soule

March 20th and 27th display case will be **Fundraising** by Judy McCown, Bruce Bierce

Individuals, Committees, Programs, Groups within UCC are invited to contribute displays for 2-4 weeks in length. This is coordinated by the Thursday morning SGM group. Please contact Helen Zidowecki (582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com) to schedule your display for May 1st and 8th, June 5th and time during the summer.

Nonviolent Communications ...

Nonviolent Communication Level I Training
May 21-22, 2011 At UCC

Note: On Friday evening, May 20 from 6:30 to 7:30 is a FREE 1 hour Introductory session that is open to all whether they register for the training or not. (Those who are undecided about attending the workshop could attend this and then make a decision as to registering for the 2 days.)

Also brochures will be out soon and will be available at the church. In the meantime, you may contact Helen Wing if you are interested in attending (685-3804, hcranewing@localnet.com)

History Committee...

History Committee meeting ~ March 11 from 10am-noon. We will be working on the presentation of UCC history for the NEW UU Workshop on March 31. Contact Helen Zidowecki (582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com) if you are interested in participating in the work of the History Committee. Items for the History Committee can be left in the tray in the Committee Room (next to coat room)



A Note from the Board President ...

Dear Friends,

Last week I read something which I found intriguing. Apparently some astronomers were investigating a dust cloud in space recently. These astronomers were checking the cloud out to determine whether or not the dust cloud contained amino acids, which could tell us about life in the galaxy. Apparently they did not find the amino acids they thought they would, but instead found a complex organic molecule called ethyl formate. To make the discovery even more intriguing, ethyl formate is the central ingredient in the flavor of raspberries and the smell of rum! Think about that, if you will, that out in space you can smell lovely fruit and a Caribbean cocktail! I don't know about you, but when I think of space I think of a cold, dark forbidding place-not summer gardens and drinks with umbrellas! So apparently, while we can measure the ethyl formate in this cloud, where it came from and why it smells like raspberries and rum is a mystery.

Clearly, we live in a wonderful and mysterious world. A world where science, in which the world is knowable and able to be investigated, and spirituality-a world where we cannot measure and observe data, co-exist. Some folks on the Science/Belief continuum fall squarely on the science end while others inhabit the other side. The evolution/creationism discussion immediately comes to mind. I prefer to inhabit somewhere in between-where science is essential, but there is still room for the power of what is unknowable. That is why attending services at the UUCC can be so rewarding. No one expects that what is shared from the pulpit to be unquestionable truths. We forge our own path to spiritual enlightenment, and everyone gets to arrive at the destination in their own way.

So next summer when you enjoy the first bounty from your raspberry bushes think of it as a metaphor for science and mystery, or maybe just as dessert!

See you in church.

Sheila Comerford

Church News ...

Men's club meeting ~ Wednesday March 9, 6:30 pm
Ordering out for Pizza. Topic "Birth control is not for women only". Now that the Federal funding is cut should our church raise money for Planned Parenthood?

Sacred Dance Workshop ~ Saturday, March 12th
12:00 ~ 3:00 p.m., UUCC Fellowship Hall ~ facilitated by Christine Little

Come and explore the unlimited ways that you might express yourself in movement. How might you commune with the Divine? Express your spiritual nature? Explore your religious convictions? Lift up your questions?

Whether you are interested in a one time exploration, or might consider creating a Sacred Dance group here at UUCC, please consider attending this workshop!

"let it be a dance we do..."

Protecting All Our Youth: How People of Faith Can Increase Safety and Respect for LGBT Youth ~ Tuesday, April 5, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **The Religious Coalition Against Discrimination** in collaboration with The Center for Preventing Hate is hosting this one day conference April 5th, 2011 in Augusta. Speakers include Stephen L. Wessler: Executive Director, Center for Preventing Hate and Rev. Steve Clapp, President of Christian Community, is the author or coauthor of over forty books on congregational life. Please let Rev. Carie Johnsen know if you are interested in attending as part of a UUCC team. Cost \$25 per person.

April New Member Events ~
Mark your calendar!!!

New to UUCC Dinner and Orientation
Thursday, April 7, 2011

New Member Welcoming Ceremony
Sunday, April 10, 2011

If you are interested in becoming a member at Unitarian Universalist Community Church please plan to join the dinner and orientation on April 7th. These events offer new comers a chance to get to know the minister and members of the congregation while considering the opportunity and responsibilities of membership.

Upcoming Events ...

Come to the Cabaret! This year's ultimate FUN-raiser ~ Friday, March 11th ~ 6:30 p.m.

The ever-surprising Annie Nessen Voorhees and company invite you to an evening of spectacular music and fun! Bring the whole family! Bring a dessert!

Performances will be held in our own Fellowship Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta, Maine

Be there or be square! (don't be square.)

Dinner and Book Discussion ~ A delicious dinner spiced with stimulating conversation will be held on March 19th at the home of Nancy Fritz and Jane Gilbert. Posters containing all of the information are displayed throughout the church. There is a sign-up sheet on the Fundraising Bulletin Board for reservations.

Silent Auction/Service Auction ~ This event is scheduled for Friday, April 29th. Mark your calendars!

Dessert Theater ~ Friday, May 27th ~ Start off the evening with a wonderful dessert at Fellowship Hall, followed by "The Importance of Being Earnest" at the Gaslight Theater in Hallowell. More information coming soon!

The next **Annual Inside/Outside Yard Sale** has been scheduled for Saturday, June 25th

Thank You ...

Whoopee Pie Festival. Thank you to Bob Rand and the Men's Club, Annie Voorhees and Joseph Stone, Hannah Faulkner, Mary Rand, Joe LeFerriere, and to all of the whoopee pie bakers and crafters, and others who participated in making the Whoopee Pie Festival fun and successful. Bob's efforts were truly impressive! The proceeds from the Festival were \$255.

Fundraising ...

The Church Cookbook is progressing nicely!

On-Going Fundraising Activities

CLYNK bags are available in a basket near the church entrance. Please take one, fill it with your returnable cans and bottles and take it to Hannaford's. Proceeds are given to the Church. FMI please contact Hannah Faulkner.

Books on tables and shelves in the Fellowship Hall are for sale: \$.50 for paper backs and \$1.00 for hard covers. Do you have any previously read books at home or any books on DVD? Donations are always welcome. Please talk with Hannah for more information.

Fundraising will be the theme in the hall display case during the last two weeks of March.

For more information on fundraising please contact Judy McCown or Bruce Bierce, Fundraising Co-Chairs at : jsembierce@myfairpoint.net or bbierce@myfairpoint.net or 897-3683.

Buildings and Grounds ...

Building and Grounds annual spring yard cleanup is scheduled for March 26th, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. with April 9th as a rain/snow date. Please help rake, weed and mulch. Please bring gloves, rakes, and a five gallon bucket if you have one. Signup sheet in the fellowship hall.

Mowing Volunteers ~ Building and Grounds is looking for two more mowing volunteers. Richard Bridges and Marilyn Dunn have mowed the church properties for the last two years and are still willing to mow. However, it would be greatly appreciated if two more people would step forward so it would be a once a month job for each. The lawn mower is provided and stored in the garage. Please call Marilyn at 512-5382 or email at maine2007@hotmail.com.

The Buildings and Grounds committee is going to roof the garage on Sat, May 14 (Rain date Sat June 4). We have people who will be up on the roof of the garage but we need others to help move shingles and load construction debris into trailers. If you can help out for 4 hours, either 8 AM to noon or 1 PM to 5 PM we can put you to work. A free lunch will be served in the Fellowship Hall from noon to 1 PM. We also need a few people to donate lunch and help serve / clean up. Please call Tom Waddell at 512-5382, send me an email at us1863@roadrunner.com or use the sign-up sheet on the B&G BB in the Fellowship Hall.



Unitarian Universalist Connections...

Spring Conference & Annual Meeting of the Northern New England District of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Friday, April 1 and Saturday, April 2, 2011

- ◆ Friday Evening, April 1 - Multigenerational Celebration of April Fool's Day with *Rev. Mara Dowdall*, Montpelier, VT; *Karen Fisk*, Augusta, ME; *Kim Paquette*, NNED. What is the story behind April Fool's Day?
- ◆ Saturday Morning KEYNOTE: **The Heart Needs Courage**, *Rev. Dr. Tom Chulak*, Lifelong Unitarian Universalist, Parish Minister for over 30 years, Denominational Leader.
- ◆ This is a family event. The Red Jacket Inn has a large indoor water park and Wii activities. Childcare is available for workshop events.

Full flier, with information on cost is on the Adult RE Bulletin Board. Workshops are as follows:

- ◆ The Heart Needs Courage, Continuing Conversation, *Rev. Thomas Chulak*, *Rev. Mary Higgins*.
- ◆ Building Courage and Hope Towards Environmentally Sustainable Community, *NNED Environmental Sustainability Task Force*.
- ◆ Small Group Ministry for All Ages: UU Humor, *NNED Small Group Ministry Committee*.
- ◆ Building Community Through Music in Worship, *Sarah Dan Jones*
- ◆ Congregationally Based Justice Work, *Rev. Karen Brammer*,
- ◆ A Taste of Harvest, *Angela Matthew and George Anderson*

Registration information can be found on the bulletin boards, NNED website (www.nned.uua.org) Early Registration is due March 11th. Final registration is due March 23rd.

If you would like to carpool, contact Helen Zidowecki at 582-5308 or hzmre@hzmre.com

Peaceful Heart Sangha ...



On Sunday, March 6 we will share our meditation practice during services at UUC. On Monday, March 7 we will have our usual first Monday Children/Family meditation from 5:30-6:15 and then, during our regular meditation time of 6:30-8, we will celebrate our 3 year anniversary with a Tea Ceremony. PHS will also share in our UUC display case in early March.

Four members of our sangha strengthened our connections by sharing a great weekend trip to Blue Cliff Monastery in February. We had wild weather from spring time warmth to deeply chilling roof rattling strong cold winds - gentle snow flurries with sunshine peeking through to 3 inches on the ground & more coming down as we prepared for our drive home. We joined the monastic community for 5:30 am sitting meditation, stick exercises, delicious Vietnamese meals, working meditation, walking meditation, Deep Relaxation, Dharma Sharing, and a private PHS visit with monastic brother Phap Tri on Saturday. Several of us chose to practice Noble Silence for much of the weekend – leading to a deeper personal practice experience. On Sunday we joined the wider community for a Day of Mindfulness with a talk by Thich Nhat Hanh transmitted from Plum Village in France. Later we explored snowy paths by rushing icy streams & had a long brisk walk around the surrounding countryside. Traveling and practicing together was a lot of fun. Consider joining us on a future trip.

FYI: Thich Nhat Hanh will be leading a 5 day retreat at Blue Cliff in October. It is a great way to discover this practice and to experience a closer connection to an incredible teacher who is now in his mid-eighties.

*Unitarian Universalist Community Church
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From the Administration Office

Website Redesign ~ If you would like to help with the redesign of our website please contact Julie during Administration hours. Thank you!

Pledge Payments ~ When making a pledge payment by check, please write “pledge” on the memo section of the check. This will insure that your pledge payment is applied correctly to your yearly contributions.

Monthly Calendar of Events ~ is available for viewing at augustauu.org or by request at admin@augustauu.org. Thank you!