



The Flaming Chalice

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

May 2011

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

May 1st *What Do I Believe? (9:15 Service)* Coming of Age Youth

Please join us for a multigenerational celebration of our Coming of Age youth. Our CoA youth will share their personal belief statements and we as their congregation will celebrate their spiritual coming of age.

A Bouquet of Unitarians and Universalists (11:00 Service) Rev. Carie Johnsen

Come and be surprised as the choir sings and we enter into the merry month of May.

May 8th Sacred Cows Make Great Hamburger Guest From Answer Nepal

Abstract: The caste system was a state sanctioned form of slavery that still persists in South Asia. For millenia it has stifled all reforms in order to maintain the vested interests of the wealthy upper caste. But the caste system is a natural outgrowth of feudalism and existed even in the West. How, then, did we overcome the caste system? ANSWER has carefully selected and nurtured a generation of low-caste children who are emerging from colleges to modernize Nepal. Much of their work is supported by UU members and churches all across the US

May 15th *Who Belongs Here?* Rev. Carie Johnsen

Immigration and migrant workers is yet another timely issue in Maine and across the country.

May 22nd Together We Thrive! (9:15 Service) Karen Fisk

In this year-end religious exploration event, we will worship together while recognizing some of the important milestones of our children and youth.

*Encountering the Holy:
Multicultural Service (11:00 Service)* Rev. Carie Johnsen
& Worship Team

This multigenerational multicultural service will include the creating of a village tapestry. See note in newsletter. The service will include several pieces sung by the choir.

May 29th *TBD* Rev. Nancee Campbell

Minister: Rev. Carie Johnsen
President: Sheila Comerford
Director of Religious Exploration: Karen Fisk
Administrator: Julie Pelletier
Choir Director: Douglas Barley
Small Group Ministry Coordinator: Kathy Kellison

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Next newsletter deadline is **June 20th**. Please submit newsletter articles by email to Julie Pelletier, UUCC Church Administrator at admin@augustauu.org

A Faith Journey by Rev. Carie Johnsen...

On Saturday, April 2nd a group of members from Unitarian Universalist Community Church accepted the Northern New England District First Annual Courage and Vision award. Kathy Kellison and Doug Rooks spoke on behalf of the congregation. As Kathy closed she offered this statement about our community,

I have told a story about the courage to listen and hear. As long as we remain a community which invites honesty and listens deeply, we will thrive.

Thank you Kathy for these wise words. I ask, or reflect back to all of you, might we have here a maxim by which to set our interpersonal compass. One of my earliest mentors offered the tenant: *speak your truth with love*. What I find most incredible about Kathy's adage is the recognition of the relational nature of speaking our truth in a community setting. One truth is spoken in concert with multiple truths. We are called to not just speak, we are required also to listen deeply and hear the other.

This year has been marked by many occasions to do just that— speak honestly, listen deeply and hear the other. On several occasions the process of creating listening circles did bring closure or healing or movement to an idea, conflict or tension. I would like to say that all opportunities have resulted in profound transformation and healing for all parties involved but that would not be speaking truth to experience. We still continue to be a perfectly imperfect community who shows up. What I consider to be remarkable, are the interactions I have witnessed along the way in our shared ministry.

I have witnessed members of this congregation:

- Speak from their heart even when it was painful
- Speak directly to offensive uncomfortable behavior
- Speak up even when what they had to say wasn't popular
- Challenge a new practice thus creating more process work for committees and staff but resulting in a more widely adopted policy
- Strive to create a democratic process where it previously appeared to be authoritarian
- Listen intently to others even when they didn't agree
- Speak up individually and bow to the collective voice of the community

It is hard to speak up when something sits uneasy in our belly or when our mind ruminates on an idea others generally agree upon or when you see behavior that does not represent our best selves. For some of us it is a huge stretch to bring counter discussions to a group when not everyone appreciates the dissension or to tell someone their actions are offensive or make you uncomfortable. Yet this is exactly what is necessary in creating a culture inclined towards health.

As long as we remain a community which invites honestly and listens deeply, we will thrive.

A culture inclined toward health includes all of the above captured in loving, honest, open, direct dialogue that names what is inappropriate, lifts up awkward interactions, creates opportunity to listen to conflicting ideas, disperses authority and creates systems of accountability for all of us to work within.

A culture inclined toward health is a community that calls everyone; from minister, to staff, to member, to friends, to children to bring a collective voice to a vision of health, responsibility and accountability.

May we continue to thrive and move toward that vision of a culture inclined toward health. And may our journey together delight in the tension and the celebration of all that encompasses.

In Faith, Rev. Carie Johnsen

P.S. If you would like to see the full text of the award, please send an email along to Julie or take a copy off the staff bulletin board in the vestibule.

From the Director of Religious Exploration ...

At a time when my gratitude overflows, I wonder at where to begin shining a light. Hmm, OK, I will begin with the Easter Multigenerational Service. For me it was brightest at the juncture of the children engaging in the Spirit Dance, while backed-up by a multigenerational chorus, and the youth holding up the illustrations for the Time for All Ages. What I saw there was enjoyment, pure, complete enjoyment. Each young person knew their task and was ready to meet it with confidence and happiness. And, at our time of passing the peace, when the buzz of conversation reached joyful-noise level, I was so moved yet again by the complete enjoyment we were all finding with each other in community, in connecting over ordinary miracles, in worship together. And it was not just the actual worship that moved me, but the individual parts that came together to make that multigenerational worship happen. The musical ensemble's moving welcome; Christine's nurturing of the children's vision for the spirit dance; Liza reaching out to our congregation members; Josh and Charlie's choice of poem, Sue's creativity with song writing and egg hunting; Sara and many youth's helping hands with preparing the Easter Brunch. This was an example of teamwork that is fueled not only by our UU faith, but also by our love for each other and our hope to create worship that truly engages all ages. Wow.

And speaking of WOW, my beautiful quilt is such a remarkable expression of teamwork and of thoughtful loving-kindness. I have it hanging in my living room and haven't stopped taking time to look at each square, note each detail, and marvel at both the effort and the support it represents. There is not a thank you big enough for this gesture. But I will say thank you—a heartfelt thank you—all the same.

And how about the remarkable Peace Jam Service? Our Peace Jammers spoke of small acts of kindness and peace being powerful enough to change the world, especially when they are multiplied a hundred times over by Pay It Forward action. The talent and passion and responsible action of our youth is inspiring, may they continue to move forward in their work toward peace for all.

More is on the way, the Coming of Age service and the RE Recognition service will also speak to the building of beloved community. May the abundance of gratitude continue . . .

Yours in faith,

Karen



"'Tis like the birthday of the world,
When earth was born in bloom;
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume:
There's crimson buds, and white and blue,
The very rainbow showers
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,
And sown the earth with flowers."
- Thomas Hood

A Note from the Board President ...

Dear Friends:

The economic downturn of the past few years and the change of administration and leadership in Augusta have members of our congregation, our neighbors in Central Maine and many of our fellow Mainers worried about the well-being of those less fortunate in Maine. While we do what we can in our church community, the Board and Carie felt that the UUCC needed to tell our elected officials directly how we feel about the decisions being debated in Augusta now. The following letter just went out to all the legislators in central Maine. We urge you to write and speak to your representative and senator as well. Remember, democracy is not a spectator sport, and our voices can be heard.

My best,

Sheila Comerford, President Board of Trustees

Dear :

The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta is a vibrant religious community of over 200 members, with roots in Augusta that go back over 179 years. Our members hail from Winthrop, Hallowell, Sidney, Gardiner, Augusta as well as many other towns in central Maine.

The Board of our church is very concerned with the impact many of the components of the pending state budget will have on those who can least afford it. Budget items such as a reduction in eligibility for MaineCare parents with incomes of 200% of poverty cut to 133% of poverty, cuts to General Assistance, reductions in program assistance for Medicare and a strict 5 year cap on services on the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program all will have a devastating long term impact on Maine's struggling families. Under the proposed budget a father with diabetes earning \$11 an hour would be very likely to lose his health coverage. And state workers, whose wages are actually lower than their private sector counterparts and whose pay has long since been frozen, will see their pay cut another 2%.

We understand that economically we are struggling as a state. As a congregation we try to help in any way we can. We give generously as a congregation to the local food banks and community dinners. We allocate one collection a month to "sharing the plate". We also donate 15% of our fundraising each year to an outside cause. We know that during bad economic times our leaders are sometimes forced to make hard decisions about where public money is allocated. We hope you consider carefully the impact cuts have on the neediest among us.

We have read that the governor's budget proposes to increase the threshold on the estate tax for wealthy Mainers from \$1 million to \$2 million, which would result in \$30 million in lost revenue. This is very disturbing to us as a faith-based community. Taking from the poor to give to the rich is not a practice that any religion we know of ascribes to, and hardly can be portrayed as promoting the general well-being of people in Maine. We hope you will eliminate this from the budget.

In closing we'd like to thank you for your public service. We know that being a legislator is often difficult, requiring you to weigh competing priorities daily. We'd also like to thank you for keeping the debate respectful. Dehumanizing rhetoric has unfortunately been used by a few to justify hurtful policies. And finally, we wish you wisdom and compassion for the decisions ahead.

Sincerely,

*Sheila Comerford , President, Board of Trustees of Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta
Reverend Carie Johnsen , Minister of Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta*

Church Related News ...

A Village Tapestry ~ During the May 22nd multicultural service *Encountering the Holy* we will be creating a village tapestry. Dan Sorenson will create a multi-textual woven frame to hang at the front of the sanctuary. Members attending this service are encouraged to bring items of significance to weave into the tapestry during the service. Please note items will not be returned. Suggestions include items from nature, favorite quotes or readings, mementos. We will also have a basket of items for you to choose from during the service.

Wanted: Service/Program Coordinator for Summer ~ Summer programming and worship attendance at UUCC is growing. Last summer the number of children and adults participating in nursery care, summer spirit play and worship ranged from 40 to as high as 80.

Last month the board supported a recommendation by a review team (Worship Chair, RE Member, Spirit Play Coordinator, DRE and Minister) to pay a small stipend to a summer coordinator. This team recommends that a centralized coordinator will better ensure a high level of integrity with the quality and safety for summer worship services and children's programs.

The role of the Summer Coordinator will include: Scheduling two nursery care workers weekly, one spirit play teen and one adult spirit play volunteer. Providing oversight and support to nursery care and spirit play as needed. Support the teen workers with the implementation of safe congregation and RE policies. Coordinate summer worship services between the office administrator, the worship leader and worship associate. Unlock and lock building every Sunday, ensuring all lights are off and candles extinguished.

If you are interested please contact Rev. Carie Johnsen at (508)221-5295 or email her at: revcariejohnsen@gmail.com

Small Group Ministry ...

I count on my church to support me in resisting the pull of our dominant culture. I come week after week to be reminded that how we live in the world matters and that others share my values, values that are not necessarily endorsed in the wider world. I value communication and connection. I want to hear and understand others and I want them to respond similarly. I do not want to be shouted at or spoken over; nor do I want that to happen to others.

Small Group Ministry has made an essential contribution to the culture at UUCC in which communication happens. We listen and hear one another, thanks in part to the opportunities so many of us have experienced in our ministry groups. We have had important conversations in an intimate setting where respect and confidentiality are paramount. We have learned again that "we need not think alike to love alike". Respectful communication has moved from ministry groups to committee and membership meetings.

Our ministry group model has primarily been one of a group of people meeting regularly once or twice a month to talk together using a format designed to focus discussion on a topic of spiritual growth. New members joined groups as space opened when someone left. We have had significant success with this model. However, as happens, we are finding the limitations of this method of providing Small Group Ministry. There is not always an opening to accommodate someone who is interested in joining a group. We do not always have a trained facilitator when we have enough interest to begin a new group. Some groups have faltered because of internal dynamics leading to the group's fading away.

In keeping with its mission to maintain Small Group Ministry as a vital part of congregational life, the Steering Committee is planning to explore these and other issues. We hope to consolidate the strengths of this ministry while adapting to the changes in our congregation in recent years so that Small Group Ministry continues to support and sustain our congregation collectively and its members individually. Given the energy and dedication of you, who are UUCC, I think we can expect good things to come. I invite anyone who is interested in becoming involved in this conversation to speak with me or reach out to any member of the committee. (Michael Conley, Liz Nitzel, Linda Findlay, Janet Sawyer, Diana Scully.)

Kathy Kellison
Small Group Ministry Coordinator

Buildings and Grounds ...

Critical need for Summer St. Renovation Volunteers, April 30th! Walls will be ready for sanding by April 30th. For us to remain on our time schedule we need your help! Our goal is to have the classrooms up and running for May 6th. This will not happen without a large crew of volunteer sanders on April 30th! A large crew means a few hours of work! Sanding in the morning, lunch, clean-up in the afternoon. Work starts at 9:00 a.m. We are getting weary and it would lift our spirits to know you are coming. Please call Tom or Marilyn at 512-5382 (let it ring – it will forward to Tom's cell) or email at us1863@roadrunner.com.

Other ways to help:

April 25-29th, 9:00-2:00 p.m. – help mud walls.

May 1-14th – help paint. Contact Marilyn for assignments

May 7th and 14th – Two painting shifts: 9:00-12:00 p.m., 1:00-4:00 p.m.

The roofing of the garage on the 14th of May will be rescheduled after the Summer St. project is complete. If you had planned to work on the garage please help paint the annex interior instead.

Membership Committee....

When someone new walks through our doors – how do we help them feel at home? The Membership Committee will explore this question with a series of “tips” in the next several newsletters. Last newsletter we discussed: **Introduce Yourself** and **Wear a Nametag**.

Make Room in the Pew

When people sit towards the middle of the pew, it allows a newcomer to comfortably find space and feel welcome. When people sit next to the aisle, newcomer may have to ask you to move or to step past you to find an open seat. This can be a little uncomfortable for many people to do, especially on their first visit.

Member-at-Large ...

UUCU Planned Gifting ~ There are many creative ways to help define your legacy to our church. Please remember us in your estate planning process. There are guidelines the church has in place regarding the acceptance of bequests. Please contact Peter Mendall for details.

Adult Religious Exploration ...

Goddess Continuing: ~ Becoming Women of Wisdom, 12:15-2:00 p.m., Annex

May 1 Celebrating with the May Pole between Services. Planning Crowning Ceremony for UUCU Women

May 15 Grandmother Wisdom

Church Display Case ...

Individuals, Committees, Programs and Groups within UUCU 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.

Thank you to Tom Waddell and Marilyn Dunn and to Sunday Small Group Ministry for their displays during the month of April.

Be sure to look for the following displays in May and June!!

Welcoming Congregation ~ May 1st and 8th by Helen Zidowecki, Phyllis Cudmore

Religious Exploration ~ May 15th, 22nd, 29th

Nonviolent Communications ...

Nonviolent Communication Level I Training
May 21-22, 2011 ~ Fellowship Hall, Augusta UUCU

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.) Brochures will be out soon and will be available at the church.

For more information, contact Helen Wing at 685-3804, or hcranewing@localnet.com)

Upcoming Events ...

Rail Trail Cleanup/Walk: Join RE Committee and Faith and Action on May 1 for a Picnic and Rail Trail Cleanup/Walk. We invite UUCU members of all ages: Meet at 12 noon in Fellowship Hall. Bring your own sandwich and drink. We will provide cookies, gloves, garbage bags. Questions? Call Rebecca Dorr at 685-7337

Flowers for Mothers Day ~ Honoring Our Foremothers: Wouldn't Mother's Day be a wonderful time to honor our mothers and grandmothers who are gone but still cherished? All are invited to contribute flowers in their mother's/ grandmother's memory for the Mother's Day service on May 8. To do so, please:

1. Contact church administrator Julie Pelletier to give her the name of the person you are honoring. Julie can be reached by phone at 622-3232 or by email at: admin@augustauu.org
2. Please note that Julie is in the office from 8-4 on Mondays and Tuesdays, and from 8 - 12 on Saturdays. If you call at another time and leave a message, be sure to slowly spell the name of the person you're honoring, so it's printed in the bulletin correctly.
3. Drop off your flowers at the church on Saturday, May 7 between 10 am and noon.
4. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Betsey Remage-Healey, 622-2084 or remagehealey@gmail.com.

Elder Lunch ~ May 8th, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Fellowship Hall
"Elder" is self-defined ~ Lunches are delicious!
Life Small Group Ministry session will follow Elder Lunch at 1:00 p.m. The session topic is Humor Through Our Ages.

It's a Cabaret! Presented by Social Activities Committee and Annie Nessen Voorhees. This year's ultimate FUN-raiser ~ Friday, May 13th @ 6:30 p.m. Performances will be held in our own Fellowship Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta, Maine

The fifth annual **Dessert Theater** will be held on **Friday, May 27th**. Dessert and Coffee (or Tea) in the Fellowship Hall will be followed by *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Gaslight Theater in Hallowell. Reservations/pre-payment for tickets will be required. Additional information and reservation forms will be available on the Fundraising Bulletin Board after May 1st. Donations of desserts will be needed.

For more Information contact:
Judy McCown or Bruce Bierce,
Fundraising Co-Chairs
jsmbierce@myfairpoint.net or
bbierce@myfairpoint.net

Fundraising ...

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



The **Annual Inside-Outside Yard Sale** is scheduled for Saturday, **June 25th**. Items can be placed in the garage. Please be sure that donations are clean and in good condition. The Yard Sale is very labor intensive and many volunteers will be needed. If you can help, please sign up on the sheet on the Bulletin Board.

Advance order forms for the **UUCU Cookbook** (*The Fellowship of Food*) are available on the Fundraising Bulletin Board. Your pre-payments will be placed in a special account to help pay for the cost of printing when the book is ready to publish.

The **CLYNK program**, the **Book Sale**, and **Hannah's Boutique** are ongoing fundraising activities organized by Hannah Faulkner.

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

From the Administration Office



Administration office will be closed May 28th and 30th for the Memorial Day Weekend. We will be open Tuesday, May 31st for regular business hours(8:00-4:00 p.m.). Due to the holiday, please submit Order of Service information for the May 29th service no later then 10:00 a.m. Monday, May 23rd. Thank you! Have a safe and happy holiday weekend!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

2011 Annual Town Meeting

June 5th

Meeting will be held during 10:00 a.m. Service