

The Flaming Chalice

The newsletter of
The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta
69 Winthrop St.
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*

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December 16-23, 2007

Unless otherwise stated, 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:

December 16 Solstice Celebration 9:15 & 11 am, reception after each service

The holy darkness and the longing for the return of the light, we will celebrate this universal cosmic drama with song and reflections—and participation by the Choir, Annie Voorhees, Lee Devoe, and members of the congregation.

December 23 Worship Services at 9:15 & 11 am

9:15 am Christmas Pageant with Karen Fisk, Director of Religious Exploration

11 am Worship Service with Rev. Lee Devoe, sharing songs & stories of Christmas

Christmas Eve, December 24 at 5 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

We gather to celebrate this season of hope with a service of readings and carols. Diana Scully, Stefanie Barley, and Cheryl Clukey will coordinate our service with participation by members of the congregation.

December 30 poetryloveprosepainsonglaughter One Service at 10 am

Sunday, December 30, brings us to the edge of the new year. Before we step off into the uncertainty that is always the future, perhaps we could all use a bit of wisdom or joy. Please bring and share your favorite poems or readings or songs or even jokes. Or just come and enjoy other people's favorites. For example, Voltaire said, "Let us read and let us dance – two amusements that will never do harm to the world." Jim McKenna will lead the service.

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 12/17/07 Please submit all newsletter articles as WORD documents if possi-



A Letter from Lee

by Rev. Lee Devoe

In the Peanuts Cartoon, Linus shares with Charlie Brown: "All families have traditions. Some families have Sunday dinner together. Some families go to the seashore every summer. When my father is pulling into the driveway, he says 'Home again Finnegan! All families have traditions.'"

Linus' simple reflection reminds us of a simple truth. The power of our traditions does not come from how fancy, expensive, or extensive they are. Our traditions often look as unique as our families. Their ability to evoke memories of home, feelings of love, and our earliest sense of belonging to a human community in their own particular, even peculiar, ways can be a great gift.

Whether your celebrations are rowdy or restful, I hope you will be nourished by simple traditions. Whether your celebrations are firmly fixed or in transition, I hope you will create them with intention. May you rest in the grace of each moment, each opportunity to connect with someone, each opportunity to give something back to life. May it be a time to reconnect with what matters most to you. May it be a time to take good care of yourself and the people around you.

"Home Again Finnegan!" In faith, Lee

Here's to epiphanies great and small
Whenever they occur. A blessing on all
Wise Men and Women. East and West,
Here's to the stargazers and pilgrims
Everywhere, who are still foolish enough
And brave enough to follow their stars,
Who travel by night, who bestow their
Uncommon gifts on us all.

~Patrick T.A. O'Neill

We stand with eyes toward the east,
Awaiting the rising of the star,
And pray that love shall become flesh and dwell among us;
And that compassion shall be born in human hearts.
. . . To celebrate Christmas is to attest
The power of love to remake humankind. . . .

~Edward Ericson

We'll touch the candle of our hearts
To the flame of the Advent Star
And set the light to burn a path
Where the darkened places are.
And some who never lift their eyes
To the stars that flood the night,
May find their way to a Bethlehem
By our candle's friendly light.

~Ernest Sommerfeld
(Don-Paul Sommerfeld's father!)

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Thanks to the initiative and commitment of Beth Whitman, and the energy of Marilyn Karasopoulos, Helen Zidowecki and Susan Burnett (so far) the Open Group of our Small Group Ministry has taken a big step toward increasing hospitality in our community. Beginning after the holidays, we will be offering the Open Group every Sunday at 9:30 in the upstairs of the Annex on Summer Street.

Our intention is to provide an opportunity for those new to our community and long time friends and members to participate in an hour long group. Anyone who wishes to become better acquainted with others is welcome and encouraged to attend. We will introduce ourselves to one another and then enter into a discussion using the format of sessions which most of our Ministry Groups use. Opening words will introduce the topic and then discussion will be shaped by questions related to the reading. We will conclude with closing words and expect to finish so that participants can attend the second church service. One of the above named volunteers will be facilitating each week.

Our hope is that offering the Group every week will end confusion about when it is so that more people will take the opportunity to attend. I want to stress that everyone is invited and no commitment is necessary. Come once or come often! You will be welcome. Try out Small Group Ministry as you try to decide if you want to join

a Group. Come if you are interested in getting to know more people at church. Come if you want to know more about the church. Or just come because it will be fun and interesting.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Kathy Kellison



PLEASE GATHER YOUR DISHES

The Caring Committee extends deep gratitude to the many people who have contributed meals to other church members in times of crisis. Your food offerings were much appreciated. Be sure to retrieve your dishes and other containers from the Caring Committee plastic tub in the coat closet.

Hannah Faulkner
Coordinator
293-9377

NAMETAGS

We are starting a new way of providing nametags. Rather than making people wait for nametags, we have provided blank tags imprinted with the UU Chalice on them, on the table under the nametag rack. People in need of a permanent tag may write their name on one of these imprinted tags, and slide it into a plastic sleeve.

Cheryl Ring
Membership Committee



Thank you to all our friends at the UCC and the wider community for all your support this past fall.

We really appreciated it.

Love,
Daniel, Jill, Gabriel
And Isabella

Please Note: There will be no Music Jam on Wednesday, December 26th.

FREE MESSAGES STILL AVAILABLE

Catherine Leary still has slots open. Grab a set of four massages for yourself during this stressful season or give up to four massages (each!) to a friend or family member for a gift. (We will make you a gift certificate.) Call 621-2384 to make an appointment.

WAYSIDE PULPIT

“Here is the test to find whether your mission on Earth is finished: if you’re alive, it isn’t.”

~Richard Bach





BUILDING OUR NEW CHURCH HOME 71 WINTHROP RENOVATIONS

We are making great progress, particularly thanks to the generous work provided by so many of you in the congregation. Some recent projects we have done are insulating the attic, tearing out the old furnace, rebuilding the bulkhead, insulating the basement, tearing down the old porch, and laying down some tile.

We've lost count of how many people have helped so far, but its more than 50 different people, whose labor since last May has saved the church many, many thousands of dollars.

Our contractors are almost done building the new porch, the wiring is almost complete, and the new furnace goes in by the middle of December. We have worked hard to get competitive estimates for all this work, and we've got some good deals.

We can still use your help as we close in on the finish line. We will be sheetrocking on the 15th and painting, we hope, soon thereafter. Any skills can be put to use. We can use carpentry skills and plumbing as well any others you may want to offer up.

Workdays: December 15th & 29th: 8 to 4

Got time during the week? Give Hal Booth a call at 623-8383, he can find projects to fit your time and talent. Let us know if you can make it, or if you have questions.

Maggie Ricker (maggiesway@aol.com / 623-9943), Wayne Ladner (waladner@gwi.net / 737-4993)



Web Visitors

By Maggie Ricker

Each website has a place where the web administrator can check the statistics. When a webbie thinks no one is noticing the fruits of his or her labor, this is where we go for solace. I recently checked the statistics on our UUCG website and received the encouragement I needed.

From January to the end of November, the UUCG web site was visited by 2738 individual visitors; an average of 11.48 people per day. The most frequent time for someone to visit the site is between 5 and 6 p.m. on a weekday; the least frequent time is 5 – 6 a.m. The days on which we have the highest number of visitors are Sunday, Monday, Friday and Wednesday, in that order.

The statistics page also shows the countries from which we receive visitors. This is one of the most interesting aspects for me. Our website has guests from the U.S., Canada, Australia (20), Germany (14), Mexico (9), UK (3), Italy (2), China (2) and one each from Netherlands, Brazil, Israel and the Russian Federation.

Information like this helps to offset days, like today, when for some reason I **cannot access** our website to update it. I spent 4 hours preparing the newsletter, calendar of events, RE newsletter and the Month of Sundays worship calendar...and can't get onto the site to put any of it up. In cases like this, to save my sanity, I employ the Scarlett O'Hara problem resolution model, "I'll think about it tomorrow!"

I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends

By Maggie Ricker



I'm a tough old bird and my endurance is pretty good. However, for 2 Saturdays a month, since May, I have been coordinating and setting up the food for the workers at 71 Winthrop Street. I'm beginning to get a bit weak in the knees and need to ask for assistance.

The first work day, more than 50 people came in to work and even more dropped off food. Now we're down to about 8 to 10 regular laborers and there is a group of about 6-8 people who contribute food.

For the November 17th workday, Diane Smith's Small Group took over preparing the luncheon meal. Alice Gifford always provides cookies; Dot Bell is a frequent side kick for prep and clean up; Roberta Record has come in and cleaned up a couple times (both times a wonderful surprise). Helen McKendry sent in a hearty chili. Nancy Fritz and Jane Gilbert have brought in deli trays of sandwich fixins. Others have dropped off bagels, doughnuts, drinks, chips and desserts. Words don't adequately express how much I appreciate the help.

I don't make phone calls any longer, as I was receiving a definite 'enough already!' vibe. But the work goes on. And the need for help goes on. The laborers are putting in between 6 and 8 hours of hard work every other week end, often during the week as well. The building has heat now (thanks to the skill and dedication of Hal Booth) and will have lights soon as well. That means work can continue through the winter.

So I now ask for someone to help at least one Saturday a month. The routine has worked itself into a pattern:

- Arrive between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. to make coffee and set up food.
- Go back by 11:30 a.m. to put out/heat up food, or if none has been donated, go purchase lunch (reimbursable).

Return around 2:00 p.m. or later to pick up food, do dishes, straighten kitchen. This is the longest part. For one person, it takes about 1 to 2 hours, depending on what was made for lunch.

Can you help? What about your Small Group? Do you have family members or friends who would give up part of a Saturday for a very worthy cause? You won't need to make phone calls (unless you want to). I'll continue to make the flyers.

Please call me at 623-9943. I would dearly appreciate the help.

Thanks, Maggie

The next work days are December 15th & December 29th.

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