



The Flaming Chalice

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

Fall 2023

Worship at UCC

Upcoming Special Services

Join us for these traditional services over the next few months.
For more information on all services see the E-blast.

Harvest Communion, Sunday, November 19

The annual Harvest Communion service is a time to pause in gratitude for all that is our life. With the symbolism of cider and pumpkin bread, we partake in the story of communion and community, abundance and gratitude.

Music Sunday, Sunday, December 3

This traditional December service has become a favorite among members and friends. This service brings us together to enjoy a morning of music highlighting the Unitarian Universalist Community Church music program.

Grief and the Holidays, Thursday December 12

In the season of lights, carols and parties, all is not always merry. Many of us carry grief, stress, estrangement, financial crises, and illness. This service in mid-December offers a quiet reflective space for healing and wholeness. This vespers style service is led by Rev. Donna and the Pastoral Ministry Team.

Christmas Eve Service, Sunday, December 24

Our annual Christmas Eve Service offers people of all ages the opportunity to reflect on the spirit of the season. Join us as we explore the light of Jesus with familiar hymns in this traditional candle lit service.

Upcoming Opportunities in January

Lectio Divina Group: Tuesday Mornings beginning on January 9th on UCC's zoom account

Lectio Divina (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer ... This group will offer readings from various authors and texts and will integrate reflection and sharing. This group will be facilitated by Rev. Donna Dolham and Lori Milner, from UCC's Pastoral Care Ministry Team.

Into the New Year Retreat on Saturday, January 13th, 10:30 – 1:30pm Join us as we head into the new year for this retreat including a brief ritual, time of personal reflection and the creation of a personal vision board. Please contact Rev. Donna Dolham at minister@augustauu.org with any questions. Registration requested, one registration form per attendee: [registration link](#). Lunch will be provided.

Contemplative Worship Services begins January 30th at 6:15pm. A contemplative service will be offered on the last Tuesday of the month through June. This will be an in-person service only, facilitated at this time by Rev. Donna Dolham. If you are looking for a time of quiet reflection mixed with reading, meditation, prayer and music, please join us. This service will be held in the sanctuary.

Upcoming in February

Sunday, February 4th: Rev. Paul Langston-Daley will return to UUCC to offer a worship service around covenant which continues the work of the congregation which began last year. This will be followed by a 2-hour conversation with Rev. Paul as we reflect on the strategies the congregation has engaged in and recenter developing a continued path forward.

Minister's message



Together We Make a Difference...

Dear Members and Friends of UUCC,

The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta is a place where varied gifts and strengths are brought together creating Beloved Community. It has been 3 months since I joined UUCC as your contract minister. So much is going on and such good ministries ground this community in our Unitarian Universalist faith. I was initially drawn to UUCC by your commitment to covenant and ability to share both challenges and accomplishments. Your life together is filled with compassion and delight!

It is a joy to engage in the life of this community during Sunday worship, committee meetings, individual and group meetings. You have been welcoming as I find my way through the busy happenings and projects of UUCC. I've appreciated your generosity as you continue to introduce yourselves, your hopes and your dreams for the congregation and the community. You bring your commitment to justice, voices, singing, facilitation skills, compassion, and art together among other gifts and strengths to create a congregational life where both challenge and comfort invite us into a place of transformation and growth.

I look forward to our continued journey together as we navigate times that remind us how important community is and how important the message of Unitarian Universalism is. May the delight, joy, and commitment to each other and UUCC sustain us as we continue to live into the mission and vision of this community. Together we make a difference...

Love and Light,
Rev. Donna, she, her

Gun Violence is a Public Health Issue: Policy Solutions Can Save Lives

Date & Time: Nov 9, 2023 06:30 PM in Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please join Maine Public Health Association and our partners on Thursday, November 9th, from 6:30pm - 7:30pm as we hear from national and state experts, advocates and policymakers about evidence-based strategies to reduce gun violence and promote gun safety. Speakers: -Shannon Frattaroli, PhD, MPH, Professor and Core Faculty with the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions -Representative Vicki Doudera, Co-Chair of the Maine Legislature's Gun Safety Caucus -Margaret Groban, Board Member, Maine Gun Safety Coalition

Webinar [Registration Link](#)

Board News

This new Church Board is growing together as we practice living within covenant. In so doing, we pay attention to *how* we are in relationship with one another in the same way as the larger congregation is learning what it means to live within our new covenant. When we make it a priority to tend to relationships, being in community together is a deeper, more meaningful, and loving experience.

As you read through this Fall Newsletter, I invite you to take note of the many opportunities in which you might engage with this, our beloved community.

The Board is actively working on the following five goals for the year ahead- as you read them, consider if you wish to participate in any of the related activities or teams.

1. ***Increase our presence in the community through outreach and visibility.*** How present are we in our community? Most certainly, the group that organized the well-attended Saturday Morning Breakfasts for Augusta's Unhoused Community reminds us of what it means to put our UU values and principles into action. So, too, are the UU's who are involved with the Capitol Area New Mainers Program. A few members recently built and installed window inserts in area homes to keep the homes warmer in the winter months. Let's be open to the ways we might be of use to our greater community.
2. ***Develop a vision of how our physical plant should look and be, then develop and implement a work plan to address these needs.*** You may have noticed that, recently, the Fellowship Hall has been painted and spiffed up. The Wayside Pulpit is noticeable with its fresh coat of paint. Another project that needs to be a priority is the porch (roof and façade) of the Judd House administrative offices). We know that our buildings need our care and attention. Let us know what you are noticing.
3. ***Develop opportunities for more engagement in the life of the congregation. Identify many ways for people to support and participate with the UUCB.*** We have ample opportunities for every member/friend of UUCB to partake in the vitality of UUCB. While for some, attending Sunday Service is enough, many others attend Small Group Ministries, Wednesday Yoga, Book Group, Writing to Wake the Soul, Goddess Group, Seasoned Souls, sewing group, monthly luncheons, work crews, occasional movie night, the choir, the UUCB occasional orchestra. Also, many of us find kinship and spiritual grounding serving on the Board, providing for coffee hour or being on a team focused on implementing one of these goals. Please talk to one of our Board Members to learn how you might get involved.
4. ***Develop and implement a safety and security plan:*** please see the report of the Safety/Security Team in this newsletter.
5. ***Complete the by-laws revision and present to congregation for vote:*** A team of four members worked over the summer to conduct a long-needed review and revision of our by-laws. By all accounts, a good time was had by all which proves that UU's find meaning, fun and friendship in unexpected places. The Board will soon vote to call a congregational meeting to vote on the revised bylaws.

If you have any questions or ideas about this information or other Board work, please do reach out.

In gratitude,

Michaela Loisel, Board President

On Behalf of Board Members:

Susan Burnett, Vice-President

Cheryl Ring, Clerk

Nancy Fritz, Treasurer

Harry Grimmnitz, Finance Chair

Hal Booth, Member-At-Large

Jim Caldwell, Member-At-Large

Updates from Music Director



MUSIC AT THE UCC Fall 2023

I am not sure if you heard, but the UCC choir is “bringing down the house”, as spoken by one of the many who have been enjoying the choir’s new growth in numbers and energy!

The UCC choir and orchestra are preparing for Music Sunday which will be on December 3rd. This is always an inspiring and uplifting service for the musicians and the congregation.

The two ensembles will be combining forces to create a beautiful rendition of Tomas Luis de Victoria’s *O Magnum Mysterium*, this is a magnificent composition. They will also sing and play other wonderful classics and seasonal favorites.

We are also thrilled to have Morgan Lee as our new choir accompanist and choir Sunday pianist. Morgan is a treasure!

Our music program is flourishing, we are so fortunate to have so many talented musicians offering their time and talents to our church. This fall we have welcomed returning former members to the choir and orchestra, as well as new members. The more, the merrier!

The UCC choir and orchestra are eager to share music with you: music that will lift your spirits and invigorate your hearts and minds. We are always welcoming new members! If interested or have questions, please email Bridget Convey at: musicdirector@augustauu.org.

All are welcome!

Updates from Church Administrator

Well...here we are well into another church year...and... to
New Minister – TAKE 3
And Staff – MINUS 1.

I have enjoyed getting to know Reverend Donna this past few months and participating in discussions and implementation of new ideas and plans. I am feeling energized about working with her and continuing to develop a solid relationship of trust and mutual respect so that we can do the best possible work for this community this church year.

I am missing my colleague, Monique Bergère as she has moved into a new chapter of her life. I am so happy for her but miss her as a staff member and in our community.

Change continues to be a theme and many changes have been made the past few years. This year though, it seems like change is taking place at the speed of light, well... maybe not that fast... but it seems considerably faster than the usual speed of church. The church develops its own momentum and this year we have been really kicking things up a notch.

I am so impressed with all that is happening in the church – with all the good work that you are all doing to make our community a safe and welcoming space where we can live out our values and share and build community with each other.

So much is happening it is hard to keep up sometimes. But, one thing is for sure, I am glad to still be on this journey with you all. I remain buckled up and ready to ride with you all...

Peace, Lynn

Congregational Engagement Team

Happy Fall from the Congregational Engagement Team (CET). Wait, who are we? We are the reincarnation of the Restorative Justice Committee (RJC).

As you may recall, the Board appointed the RJC, and it started meeting in the summer of 2021. Our charge was to follow up on recommendations made by Rev. Paul Langston-Daley following his Listening Circles in May, 2021. These two congregational gatherings allowed members and friends of UUCC to speak to our two-years of community conflicts in a structured, compassionate manner. Rev. Paul's resulting, comprehensive report began the work of the RJC.

The hallmark work of the last year and a half has been the development of our congregational covenant and a series of monthly, topical, and intimate Sharing Cafés. Our goals are to be in a more loving place, accessing our deeper levels of spiritual health and embracing our beloved community.

Rev. Paul will be back to serve in our pulpit sometime this winter, after having delivered to us a profoundly healing service on October 29th following the mass shooting in Lewiston earlier that week. Following the service this winter, he will offer another session looking at covenant, conflicts, and where we need to go moving forward.

So back to our new name: CET, why that and why did we all carry over from the work of last year? We work well together with a shared commitment to congregational healing. We want to serve, and we look for input from the congregation. We are looking forward to working with and/or assisting the Board in their larger goal of broadening outreach into the congregation.

The Sharing Cafes will definitely continue. They will now be scheduled for the second Sunday of the month. In the next two months you can look forward to discussions about: the joys or concerns over UUCC's work with the unhoused; and learning skills for dealing with episodes when the covenant is "bent" or "broken". We are exploring how to develop guidelines for other church groups wanting to "use a Sharing Café slot" and exploring how the Sharing Café model can be used for leadership development. Lastly, we want to ensure that Sharing Café's explore deep spiritual grounding along with their given content.

We have some other ideas too that we are beginning to flesh out during our monthly meetings. We continue to be a work in process ... that's a good thing ... and look forward to continuing to serve.

The Congregational Engagement Team,
Rev. Donna Dolham, Michaela Loisel, Susan Claska Burnett, June Zellers, and Kathy Ann Shaw

Building and Grounds Committee

Summer and Fall Notes from Buildings and Grounds

Building issues and improvements have kept us busy since the start of our fiscal year.

- The line from the Drew House to the sewer got plugged, just before July 4. (These things always seem to happen before a holiday.) There was so much water that we had to hire Casella to pump out the cellar. We may want to replace the house trap, before we have a new tenant.

- In September a UUCC crew replaced the stairs to the side porch of the Drew House, and jacked up the porch. It looked like the stairs were about to disconnect from the porch. Participants in the project were Harry Grimmnitz, Matt Foust, Angie Blevins, Bill Allen, Dale McCormick, and Jim Caldwell.



- The Fellowship Hall looks so much better. The floors have been stripped and waxed and the chair and pew cushions have been cleaned.

And...thanks again to Stefanie Barley, Ed Democracy, Angie Blevins, Becky Harvey, and Cheryl Ring for additional work in the Fellowship Hall: repainting walls, hanging curtains, and washing floor and chairs.

- Marilyn and Bill painted the walkways.
- We also have a brand new carpet in the church hallways.

Safety / Security Committee

Grant

The safety committee received a "Protecting Houses of Worship" federal grant for \$34,540. Per recommendation by an inspection from FEMA, MEMA and the local police we will be implementing the following changes: better outdoor lighting, an alarm system, new locks with more control of usage, door with security code, new exit door in fellowship hall, impact resistant film on windows, CCTV and shades/coverings on windows. We have three years to implement the grant. At this point we are getting firm bids and working on Environmental and Historical Preservation forms for each aspect.

Goals

We will be developing a Safety and Security Plan and Church Safety Manual. We will be in contact with other churches for input and the Augusta Fire Chief and EMS. We are developing an incident report form to note anything out of the ordinary. We plan to have some type of training on de-escalation.

Members of the team include Jim Caldwell (committee chair), Susan Claska Burnett and Nancy Fritz (grant overseers), Harry Grimmnitz, Bill Allen, Angie Blevins, and Rev Donna Dolham.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Claska Burnett.

Settled Minister Search Team

Our Search Committee for the new UUCC Settled Minister began last spring 2023. The UUCC Board called members of the Congregation to hear their choices for the new Search Committee for the Settled Minister. Six of us were chosen: Stefanie Barley, Nan Bell, Angie Blevins, Harold Burnett, Kevin Kane, and Debbie Mattson. At the Annual Meeting in June the membership approved the slate, and we met over the summer to begin planning for the search.

It is a complex journey, involving numerous steps that are required by the UUA to access their team of qualified candidate ministers. Some of the steps involved thoughtful discussions of who do we want to be as a Congregation and what type of qualities do we hope for in a minister. Some of the steps seemed to just satisfy the bureaucratic rules of the UUA.

The major steps included meetings with UUA staff, a Retreat in September, a Congregational Survey, Meetings with Church members to obtain their input in the process (the Sharing Café provided some great and thoughtful feedback), a negotiating team of three is preparing a compensation package (now in process and will need UUA approval by next month), create a documents packet that includes important Church information like the Bylaws survey results, covenants, etc.; create a Congregational Record which is more a collection of descriptive information about the church and the community.

The bulk of the information about the church needs to be submitted to the UUA by December 1 so they can review it and then pass it on to prospective ministers. The ministers also must have all their information sent at the same time. Then the UUA allows the ministers to access the church data in December and January.

The ministers will decide which churches they wish to pursue, and hopefully some will contact us in January. After we review information from ministers who contact us, we decide with whom we wish to have Zoom interviews. Those Zoom meetings happen in late January, 2024 and from that we hope to have 3 or 4 serious pre-candidates who we bring for weekend visits to Augusta in February and March. They visit on the weekend with Search Committee members but not other church members. So, they visit in secret and have interviews and meals with us and then give a guest sermon at one of the area UU churches (not ours so they remain unknown to everyone but we 6 Searchers).

From the time together we choose our top candidate, second and third choice. The Ministers rank their choices and then "Offer Day" occurs in early April when we hope for the best match. We then plan a busy Candidate Week in late April or early May when the new minister acts as our minister for a full week with two church services. We finalize agreement on the compensation package and work details and the final Sunday service is followed by a Congregational Meeting when the members vote if we want to "Call" the minister to our congregation. A vote of 90% or more is the hoped-for outcome.

We are on a journey, it is our journey together, a journey to our better selves, a journey to a better UUCC (paraphrasing Rev Debra Haffner).

Pastoral Ministry Team Report

Greetings from the Pastoral Ministry Team! Guided by the minister, our team serves the community by providing rides and meals and offering compassionate listening in times of need. In the spirit of outreach, we are currently exploring online options for publicity, accessing services, and recruitment of volunteers. We are also updating our pamphlet, which will soon be available in church as well as online.

Our team meets monthly to access and organize responses to pastoral needs beyond those met by the minister. We are delighted that Lori Milner has joined us this year; her compassion and energy strengthen our team. Peggy Lamb continues to make beautiful hand-made cards that support folks in times of sorrow or celebration. Helen Zidowecki, Lori Milner, and I provide ongoing support to some individuals and minister to others as needs arise. Please let us know if you need pastoral services or support.

Conversely, if you can provide occasional rides or meals, please contact me or another member of the team. The rewards are many, including a stronger connection to individuals in the community and the joy of knowing that you have made a positive difference in someone's life.

We are ever grateful for our current volunteers, whose generosity continues to flow when others need help. It is a blessing to be part of such a caring community.

Martha Pelletier, Chair

Other PMT members: Reverend Donna Dolham, Reverend Helen Zidowecki, Peggy Lamb, and Reverend Lori Milner

Communications Work Group

Communication keeps us connected. Transparency keeps us engaged.

The Newsletter

We are continuing the three newsletter-type publications throughout the year. We are the current chapter of our history! The Fall *Flaming Chalice Newsletter* is an introduction to startup activities of the church year. Thanks to the contributors of articles to this edition.

The Winter *Newsletter* will focus on how our work and ministries have evolved during this church year. The Spring *Newsletter* will be the *Annual Report* with a focus on the "Story of Our Church Year". This schedule is intended to give anyone interested in connecting with us information of opportunities available. What we are doing, where we are going, and how we may get there.

Website Updates

We are working to keep the UUCC website current. If you find information that needs to be deleted or have information to be included, please contact Helen Zidowecki. E-Blasts and The Flaming Chalices are posted as they are published.

There are two Social Activities pages on the UUCC website. One is general description of the groups involved in "Connections by Day of the Week." The contributors are on that page and the most current program details are in the E-Blast. The second Social Activities page is the work of the Social Activities Committee and the special events that are scheduled.

To access the website:

--Go to www.augustauu.org

--The titles of broad sections are in bold at the top of the page. Click on one, "Minister, Staff & Church Life," for example.

On the left of the page is a menu. Click on one, such as Minister, to open.

If there is a > next to the title on the left, click for more listings.

Review of Policies

The Communication Work Group will organize a review of the "How Our Church Works" policy and practices manual during the current church year. This review will give committees, task forces and other groups an opportunity to describe their functions. Copies of the "How Our Church Works" binder can be found in the Committee Room next to the mailboxes and in the church kitchen.

Contact: Lynn Smith, Administrator; Kathy Kellison, Helen Zidowecki, Chair

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has oversight of multiple areas of the church's fiscal health.

Finance:

- The final FY 22-23 budget was reviewed. Highlights were:
 - Fundraising was \$14,104, 158% of budget.
 - Offering income from in person services was \$5,109, 255% of budget.
 - Net carryover was \$23,103.
- UUCC has made the final payment to Revision Energy for our Solar Farm share. We financed this purchase by loaning ourselves \$23,500 from the unrestricted Mark Goldberg bequest. In September, we began repaying our loan at 4% interest.

Fundraising:

Keep your eyes open for announcements in the E-blast for upcoming fundraisers including:

- A November Pie Sale.
- A Holiday Boutique in early December.
- The Hannaford card program remains in full swing. If you haven't participated, you should talk with any of the many members of our church community who do.

Stewardship:

The Stewardship chairs are beginning to plan for the Annual Appeal. It offers members and friends of UUCC an opportunity to make an end of calendar year additional financial contribution to support the church in its work.

The Finance Committee:

Betty & Terry Cairn – Stewardship
Marilyn Dunn – Invested Funds
Allison & Karen Foust – Fundraising
Nancy Fritz – Treasurer
Harry Grimmnitz – Chair
Wick Johnson – Planned Giving
June Zellers – Member at Large.

History Committee

Beginnings and reasons

The History Committee was started 20 years ago by Ron Le Blanc and Barbara Thurlow, then Church Administrator. A primary function is to acquire, catalog, archive, maintain, and preserve historic records, artifacts, and historic items belonging to the Unitarian Universalist Community Church. We are continuing to organize the History materials.

With the changes in the use of space and in leadership structure over the last few years, the role of the History Committee may have been somewhat obscured. One of the functions is to advise regarding the collection and disposition of church artifacts. We look forward to collaborating more with the leadership and committees so that our role is transparent. Description of the History Committee is on the UUCC website.

The Wayside Pulpit stand has been painted and some repairs have been done. Thank you Richard for this. Thanks also to Angie Blevins for the quotations.

The History Committee will be reviewing and indexing the collection of books that are housed in two areas.
1. History specific to Augusta churches and in depth historical Unitarian and Universalist materials are located in the bookcase in Judd House Conference Room. This can be accessed by appointment made through the church office.

2. Information more general in nature (UU Women's history, historical events throughout the year) is in the General Library in the Committee Room in the church building.) These items can be signed out.

For additional information, please contact: Richard Bridges, Chair (207-626-8134 H, 207-458-3784 C, Auglaw@roadrunner.com)

Social Activities Committee

The two Social Activities pages on the UUCU website have been updated. The pages can be accessed from the Home Page: www.augustauu.org

--Click on "Minister, Staff, Church Life" in bold at the top.

--Look on left margin. Listings are alphabetical. Scroll down to Social Activities and click. This will bring you "Connections by Day of the Week" This is the description events that occur at least monthly.

-- The next page has activities from the Social Action Committee. Click on the > next to Social Activities on this page or on [Social Activities Committee](#).

A group of women from UUCU attended "PAINT NIGHT", a modern version of "Steel Magnolias" with modern day issues, on October 22 at the Public Theater in Lewiston.

Watch for details in the E-Blast and announcements for these upcoming events:

Friday, November 17, 5:30 pm will be the Harvest Dinner

Friday, December 1, Social Activities and Fundraising/Finance present "Poetry and Soup" evening.

In planning for December, "The Dallis Virus Club"

Contact: Cheryl Clukey, 207-441-0337 or cherylclukey5@yahoo.com

Social Justice Committee

In January 2023 the Board of Trustees voted to approve the request from the Social Justice Committee to open Fellowship Hall each Saturday morning to provide breakfast to our unhoused neighbors. The idea to do so was generated and mulled over during a Sharing Café, expressed as hope that our church could minister to the neighborhood. At the same time, South Parish Congregational Church, another church in the neighborhood, opened an Overnight Warming Shelter in their annex. Guests of the shelter left each morning at 7 AM, in the dark and cold with nowhere to go on Saturdays and Sundays. A couple of our church members toured the empty shelter during the day and returned at night to speak with the guests and to learn if a Saturday breakfast would meet their needs. They said, "Yes, definitely yes."

St. Michael's Parish, Temple Beth El, and the Vassalboro Quaker Meeting joined us in this ministry. We all began tentatively, not knowing what to expect. Even though our confidence has grown, we continue to learn more about our neighbors.

On May 1, 7 AM the Overnight Warming Shelter closed for the season with plans to open November 1. We asked again, "Do you still want to come to breakfast?" The same answer was repeated: "Yes, definitely yes."

Again, we were tentative, not knowing what to expect. As the summer wore on, more and more people showed up. Some Saturdays we served 40 people in person plus provided “to-go breakfasts.” We added take out sandwiches for their lunches—peanut butter with grape jelly or meat, cheese, mayonnaise and honey mustard. One of the guests asked for three; another asked: “You mean we are allowed to have more than one?” Our answer: “Yes, definitely yes.”

Some guests arrive before 7 AM and help us set up. Other early arrivals wait for their first cup of coffee. When we have had a very busy morning, some guests stay and help us with the clean-up. All guests, express gratitude for the food, the volunteers, and the church.

Often there is a request for a tent, a dry sleeping bag, underwear and socks, shoes, and clothing. We have been able to meet some of these needs.

We are also providing wound care, sometimes by a volunteer medical professional and other times by handing out bandages and antibiotic lotion.

A community has grown—a community of interfaith volunteers and unhoused and fragilely housed neighbors. Together we share food, conversation, laughter, anger; we grieve untimely deaths caused by overdose and gun violence; we celebrate birthdays.

The Social Justice Committee is grateful that our church has created and sustained this ministry. The congregation is generous with the use of the Fellowship Hall, space for food storage, items to sustain and celebrate with, and individual monetary donations.

Worship Committee

How Worship Associates Came to Be

Every Sunday morning at UUCC you will see a lay Worship Associate taking part in the service alongside the worship leader. It was not always so. As best we recall, the practice of having Worship Associates began with Rev. Lee Devoe, who served as our interim minister before Rev. Carie Johnsen. Prior to that time, the Worship Committee existed primarily to advise the minister on worship and help find people to fill the pulpit on Sundays the minister did not speak. Sometimes the minister would ask someone from the congregation to help with part of the service, but it was not a consistent practice.

Now many UU churches have Worship Associates. As Liz James wrote in the *UU World* in 2020, "In Unitarian Universalist congregations, ministry is not seen as a thing that only ordained ministers do.... Even preaching at the pulpit—something long associated with ordination—is a shared privilege and responsibility." Having Worship Associates participate in services grows out of our UU commitment to sharing responsibility for ministry and worship.

So what exactly do Worship Associates do? In the days leading up to a service, the Associate works with the worship leader on the details of the Order of Service. If the worship leader is a guest the Associate helps orient them to the UUCC. The Associate also develops a script for their own speaking parts in the service. (We have standard scripts available to use and adapt.) On Sunday morning they arrive early to meet with the worship leader and set up the laptop for the Boxcast stream. During the service, when they are not at the podium, they monitor Boxcast, noting participants and responding to the chat. After the service they take care of the offering with the tech assistant and tidy the sanctuary. They either lock up the church or make sure someone who is staying later takes responsibility for doing so.

There are no special requirements for being a Worship Associate – just a commitment to helping create meaningful worship and a willingness to work as a team. Our Worship Associates have included both longtime members and newcomers. Currently they are Nan Bell, Sara Hodgkins, Priscilla Jenkins, Kathy Kellison, Lori Milner, Marty Peters, and John Seksay. Priscilla, Marty, and John also serve as tech assistants, along with

Angie Blevins. As chair of the Worship Committee, I am grateful for every single one, and for the ministry they provide in helping make worship accessible and meaningful for all of us.

– Karen Allen, Chair, Worship Committee

Small Group Ministry Updates



In the Annual Report in June 2023, we included this statement regarding the service component of Small Group Ministry:

“Through commitment to our groups, we have commitment to the congregation and the larger UU community through Service. Joint activities are a way to learn about each other’s interests, increase the connection with the congregation. Our service supports the congregational functions (buildings and grounds, meals and hospitality, programs) and enhances connection with the wider UU world. ... We are looking for multiple ways of providing service that engages the interest and abilities of the participants.”

In preparing for the Small Group Ministry Service on October 22, we considered these guidelines for assessing how we do service that is inclusive. These guidelines can be used planning service throughout the church:

*How can or did the planned service *involve* the group members? Consider resources (time, money, transportation, health, etc.) and various ways for group members to participate. Who is included/who is not included? For example, raising money implies that someone is able to contribute financially, which may not be the case.

*Are the activities *that are or were selected of interest to the members of the group*? Did the group connect with the activity on a meaningful level?

*How does or did the service activity *enhance the spiritual development* of the group members and/or the development of the group itself?

*What need will or did the service *help fill* in the congregation or community?

The October 22 Sunday Service included a Service Collage with presentations of the five groups. We are planning on developing a “Small Group Ministry Service Options” section of the Small Group Ministry section of the UUCC website with notes of what has been done and suggestions. Service in its many forms is prevalent at UUCC: service by individuals, SGM and other groups do a service, and other configurations to provide service.

The scripted version of the Sunday Service on October 22 will be on the SGM section of the UUCC website at <https://augustauu.org/minister-staff-and-church-life/small-group-ministry/>. If you would like to learn more about Small Group Ministry, or have a suggestion for a service project, you are welcome to contact the co-chairs Linda Findlay at linda.findlay@gmail.com 207-377-8028 or Helen Zidowecki hzmre@hzmre.com 207-582-5308, or anyone involved with SGM.

Seasoned Souls

Seasoned Souls is a study/support group of adults over 65 years of age that meet to talk openly about topics related to the aging process.

Life on ZOOM during Covid had interrupted many of the social patterns of our church community groups. Seasoned Souls is addressing some of the balance of ZOOM and meeting in person.

Seasoned Souls has realized that they have a backlog of birthdays that need celebration! The group is compiling a list of birthdays and will bring back the tradition for their group with 2 cakes for the Coffee Hour on November 5th. One cake will celebrate those who have a "Big 10" birthday (like 80th), and the other to celebrate group members and their current ages. There are plans afoot to have cards sent to members every month going forward, reviving what used to be a very happy connection for the members of the group. We hope you were able to join us on November 5th as we rebooted to a pre-Covid tradition for Seasoned Souls!

Using ZOOM during Covid provided a way for Seasoned Souls to keep in touch when we were not able to meet in person. We continued both options as we were able to return to meeting in person. On the 2nd Wednesday monthly we meet in the Fellowship Hall and on the 4th Wednesday, we meet in the UCC Zoom room.

FMI: please contact John Seksay (netmote1@gmail.com or 317-69-3636) or Stefanie (mstefbarley@gmail.com or 629-8890)

Read, Learn, Share Book Group

We are booklovers who meet regularly to discuss the book we have read for that session. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at noon between October and June. Some of us are in Fellowship Hall at the church and some are in the church Zoom room.

We choose our titles collectively. In June, anyone who is interested can submit a title for the ballot. We then do a ranked choice vote to decide what we will read. We alternate between fiction and nonfiction.

We are an open group. No commitment is expected. Although a core of us attends nearly always, we are glad to welcome someone just once if a particular title catches your fancy. Discussions are lively, interesting and not contentious. The goal is to share different points of view and come to see each book from a variety of perspectives.

Our titles for this year are:

October: Fellowship Point by Alice Elliott Dark
November: Rough Sleepers by Tracy Kidder
December: Horse by Geraldine Brooks
January: Rooted: Life at the Crossroads of Science, Nature and Spirit by Lyanda Haupt
February: My Antonia by Willa Cather
March: The Creative Lives of Animals by Carol Gigliotti
April: Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan
May: Our Migrant Souls by Hector Tobar
June: Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus.

If you have any questions, please reach out to June Zellers at jzellers@roadrunner.com or Kathy Kellison at kell6787@gmail.com.

GODDESS/EARTH CIRCLES

Goddess/Earth Circles usually meeting on the fourth Sunday of the month from 1-2:30pm, unless noted, in the Fellowship Hall. All ages and genders are welcome. The schedule of gatherings will be included on the UCC website and in the E-Blast.

This fall we started looking at the resources that we have gathered and developed over the years with the intent of making them more accessible to the Goddess/Earth Circles participants and the total UCC community. Resources are found in the General Library in the Committee Room and on the website Minister/Staff/Church Life section.

We are increasing the use of several resources this year. The first one is music in our gatherings, from electronic sources, our own CDs and books, and instruments (rattles, rain sticks, drama). A members is creating a listing of selections, and contributions are welcome.

A second focuses on earth-centered spirituality, including how this relates to Unitarian Universalism. We are exploring *Pagan and Earth-Centered Voices in Unitarian Universalism*, by Shirley Rank for possible discussions that would be open to the congregation.

These include earth celebrations and some specific themes. For example, the September theme was on balance. This lead to the focus for the Wisdom Books in October to focus on Wisdom and Balance. Feeling out of balance? What resources do we have to get back into balance?

Wisdom -- a way of knowing: Balance -- a way of being.

How do balance and wisdom change through the phases of our lives?

How do we find our own balance through spiritual practice?

Looking Ahead:

October 29 --Celebrating Samhain: (meeting is at 2:00-3:30 to accommodate church schedule)

Third Harvest --come in costume, especially with witch's hats; bring symbols of the season for decorations, light foods for sharing

The Veil Thins, Honor those who have gone before. Starting a Memory Book of Goddess/Earth Circle participants.

Sharing Wisdom and Balance Book – and introducing Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom.

November 26 theme is gratitude along with the distribution of the Wisdom Books.

December 31 Gathering focuses on the change of the year, hope and wishes and foretelling that is ahead.

We decided to offer Croning in the spring rather than with Samhain, to give more time in discussion and planning. Please let your interest in being Croned be known! See Croning ceremony – see April 2023 service on UUCC website at <https://augustauu.org/minister-staff-and-church-life/goddess-continuing/> Contact Helen

Contact for more information and interest in Croning: Helen Zidowecki (207-582-5308. hzmre@hzmre.com)

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONNECTIONS

On October 14, UUCC hosted a day long retreat for Board members from congregations around Maine. In addition to our leaders, people came from Auburn, Brunswick Bangor and Rockland. The facilitators were Wren Bellevance-Grace and Erika Barron from the UUA's Northeast Regional Office. Staff from that office are available to help congregations with leadership and skill development as well as trouble shooting when we face challenges.

For this workshop, we worked with our congregational team exploring what makes us excited about serving our church, what challenges we face adjusting to changes in the larger culture and how we might begin to address those challenges.

Toward the end of the day we joined teams from other congregations to get to know one another better and begin to form bonds that might lead to more collective work in the future.

It was a good day of fellowship and learning!

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

Newsletter Submissions

Submission Deadline for WINTER newsletter is February 19th

Submissions received after this date may not be able to be published.

Please submit all articles as an attachment in a Word document using Arial font size 11. Don't forget to give your article a title and sign it. Send an email to newsletter@augustauu.org with the article as a word attachment! ***Photos of church activities are welcomed! *** You will receive a confirmation e-mail of receipt of your submission.

Contract Minister: Rev. Donna Dolham

Board President: Michaela Loisel

Rev. Donna Dolham

Choir Director: Bridget Convey

Contact information for Committee chairs and other leaders can be found in the UUCC directory or obtained by contacting the Church Administrator.

Call or email to set up an appointment:
(207)623-3663
minister@augustauu.org

Church Administrator: Lynn Smith

Phone: (207)622-3232 or email:

<mailto:admin@augustauu.org>

Contact the minister for pastoral emergencies by phone. She will return your call as soon as possible.
(207) 701-1581 (pastoral emergencies)

Office hours: 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. (Tues, Wed & Thurs)

No office hours: Monday or Friday