



The Flaming Chalice

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

Spring 2020-21

Worship at UCC

Sunday Services each week at 10:00 A.M. on Zoom

Worship Themes

May Story

June Play

<<< Information on Sunday services is included in the Weekly E-blasts. >>>



Note from the Worship Arts Team

Bettina Lehovc will be our summer worship minister. Bettina's background is in journalism. Her career experience includes being chief writer and editor of a newspaper section on Faith and Spirituality. She is finishing up a nine month internship with the UU collaborative Ministry on the coast of Maine. Ellsworth, Belfast and Castine are under this umbrella. She hopes to be received into preliminary fellowship in the fall.

On February 28, 2021, Bettina led a service at the UCC. It was entitled the Ethic of Risk. She will begin leading services on May 23, 2021 with her last service approximately August 1, 2021. Besides leading our worship, Bettina will also be available for memorial services or weddings as needed. She is looking forward to serving UCC as our contract worship minister.

All services are held in the

UCC ZOOM ROOM ← ← **click this LINK to join**

Meeting ID# 823 807 0673 - Passcode: 6971

Join by phone: dial 1 646 558 8656 (**NOTE:** toll charge may apply)

At first prompt (meeting id: 823 807 0673#)

At second prompt: press # (no personal id needed) <No passcode needed when joining by phone>

NOTE---*6 is mute AND un-mute on your phone. The host cannot mute or un-mute people who phone-in.

A faith Journey...

This much I know to be true: My ministry with Unitarian Universalist Community Church is complete. Our shared ministry is complete. In a couple short weeks our time together will end.

We have had a good run. We have grown into this shared ministry together. We have sought to be flexible and adaptive to the changing social, political, and religious landscape. We have listened to the spirit within each and all to discern where we were being called to lead and serve and love. We have become a recognized and formidable faith community in the local social justice issues, on the streets of Augusta, and in the chambers of the Maine State House. We have cared for each other through life and death, joy and sorrow, times of abundance and scarcity. We have reckoned with differing values and ministerial ethics. We have found our way through a pandemic and stay-safer-at-home practices. We grew an interfaith ministry in Augusta and welcomed an immigrant family into the Drew House. This is only the beginning of the ways in which we have shared and been shaped by our Unitarian Universalist principles and values. I encourage you to read my annual report for a walk down memory lane.

Our final act of ministry or gift of generosity will slide faithfully into the future along divergent paths. A minister's departure is one of those moments in ministry where the spiritual well-being of the whole is what leads the way. Many denominations, and the ministers who serve them, have recognized the best practice in parish ministry is for the departing minister to have clear boundaries of closure and good-bye. Over the next several years it is important for me to stay away to make room for new ministries to emerge, become established and flourish in this congregation. It is also vital that I create space in my ministry so as to discern, step into, and nurture the next thing in my call to serve the Grace of Love.

As our ministry ends, a new one awaits. Making space for your next thing to be known and nurtured is necessary. New holy conspiracies are at work in the universe. I believe in you and your future. You are a wise and strong congregation with spiritual depth and breadth. Your leadership serves with uncompromised commitment to the well-being of the congregation. You, the members and friends, are spiritually adaptive, bighearted, generous, caring, compassionate, and forgiving. You are primed and ready to grow into something new. I am excited for the possibilities and opportunities which lie ahead.

Interim ministry is a time for congregational reflection and a time of restoration and continued healing. It is a time for name and claiming who you are and who you want to be in this changing world. Interim ministers arrive with just the right skillset for supporting and guiding a congregation to prepare the way for a new shared ministry to flourish.

I also know this to be true: I have loved this ministry. I have loved this congregation. I have loved all of you. I believe in you. I have faith in your future.

We are approaching the fork in the road where our ministries diverge. On May 16th at 10:00 in the final farewell service, we will participate in an Act of Releasing each other from the covenant we made in 2009/10. I do hope you will join in this important moment either in person at Mill Park or by zoom.

May our ministries continue to boldly claim this faith and continue to be a formidable practice of Revolutionary Love.

In faith, Rev. Carie

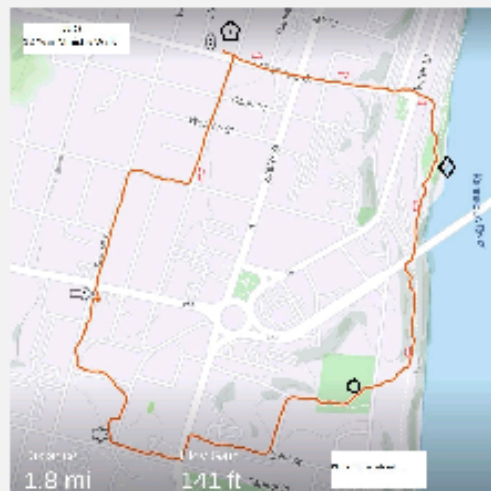
P.S. Please see the announcement in the E-blast with all the details on the May 16th service and options for inclement weather.

Twelve Year Walk of Ministry

**Saturday, May 15
starting at 9:30 from UUCC**

Join us for a two-mile walk in Augusta, to the river, then to the Capitol Building and returning through the neighborhoods back to the church. Rev. Carie will reflect on her twelve years of ministry as we walk along the riverfront, through Gage Street Park, and past the Blaine House. We will hear about her advocacy work, including the development of MUSAAN, participating with members of the congregation in protests, and her work with Wabanaki people in Maine. (We have mapped the route so that some can join us by car at stopping points along the way.)

A BYO picnic and a congregational blessing will follow the walk.



<< More details, including where we will stop and the significance of each stop, will be provided in the E-blast next week. >>

Spring Board Highlights

It really is true, church life *springs* eternal and I truly mean spring. My tulips are magnificent (if I do say so myself). But I can't take the credit, it's been a wonderful collaboration with the warm earth.



And that's what this spring's Board work has been about ... collaboration. Members of the Board have joined a larger committee (see separate article), charged with vetting and recommending to the Board a candidate for our Interim Minister. This is a humbling and critical task that will move the congregation in its forward trajectory for the next two years.

Additionally, the Board is working with the Committee on Ministry, the Leadership Development team, and the Worship Arts team to plan the **Annual Meeting**. The highlights of the Annual Meeting are the passage of the budget for the upcoming fiscal year (FY2021-22), and the vote on the leadership positions for the Board and Committees. As you may remember, the Annual Meeting, which traditionally takes place on the first Sunday of June, was moved to August last year due to COVID-19 restrictions. We look forward to being back on track and holding our Annual Meeting on June 6th. Lastly, we will all have the pleasure of meeting our new Contract Minister, Rev. Bettina Lehovic, who will lead the service and serve us until we welcome our Interim Minister in early fall.

As announced in the weekly E-Blast, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) **General Assembly** will be held June 23-27, 2021. Organically to be held in Milwaukee WI, the event will be held virtually again this year. The UUA states *"General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. That remains true even when we cannot gather physically. Last year, GA had more than 4,900 registered attendees participate from remote locations around the world. Although we give up the face-to-face interaction and hugs that are prevalent when we meet in-person, we retain our dedication to community and make our experience more accessible and more environmentally sustainable."*

Registration is \$200 per person. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available from the UUA. If you would like to register, please visit: [General Assembly Registration | General Assembly | UUA.org](#). If you are interested in serving as a UUC Delegate to represent the church in voting on UUA business matters, please contact Kathy Ann Shaw, Board President, at kathyannshaw@roadrunner.com.

Lastly, I hope that you have enjoyed the **"What's On Your Mind"** series, on hiatus for the summer. The goal of the series was to allow members of the congregation to 'really' meet the Board, ask questions and register concerns. (If we begin the series up again this fall, we hope more of you will have a chance to join us.)

The "What's on Your Mind" series—as well the April 11th *Beginning Anew* Sunday service and the *Beginning Anew* workshop—were meant to serve as tools to begin the healing of some of the congregational pains from the past two years. We are rescheduling the workshop for later in the year so watch for more details on the date. The Board is truly open to your suggestions for how we can best serve. Our monthly agendas are printed in the church E-Blast and we are happy to bring to the Board items that you want us to hear.

I hope you have the opportunity to go out and enjoy *your* tulips, or what might be left of your daffodils or the beginnings of your irises or just the fresh air and families.

Thinking of you all fondly,

Kathy Ann Shaw
Board President

A message from the Committee on Ministry

On April 13 this year all three COM members attended a full day UUA sponsored webinar on being in covenant and what to do when we fall out of covenant. We all found it thought provoking and valuable.

We know we will be able to think more clearly about the conflict within our community over the past two years and how the congregation responded to it. And we know from other attendees that it is not unusual for congregations to experience conflict. The challenge is not the conflict itself so much as how well a community approaches it and uses an agreed upon standard of behavior, a covenant, to respond to the immediate issue while holding one another accountable to the expectations of the covenant.

We believe that we as a congregation will benefit from building a culture that accepts that conflict is inherent in all human organizations. We believe that managing conflict in an open way can build relationships, grow trust and strengthen our entire congregation. We are interested in working with others at UUCC to find pathways and practices to treat conflict as a transformational process which does not threaten, but rather strengthens the community.

We will be making plans for community engagement as we move into our next phases of ministry. Please consider joining with us in this important discussion. Let any one of us know that you are interested and we will include you in the loop.

Kathy Kellison, Michaela Loisel, Erin McGrath

Report from the Interim Minister Search Committee

The UUCC Interim Minister Committee would like to offer this update on the progress of our work as the Committee recognizes (and is proud of), the great responsibility it has on behalf of the congregation in this work.

We are blessed with the fact that the entire process for hiring is facilitated through the Transitions Office at the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). We do not send out our own individual call for candidates. This provides us with a professional service model and guarantees us a first level of candidate vetting.

As of this date, we have submitted our electronic application to be viewed by the UUA Transitions staff. This application is then published and is available to a national cadre of UUA ministers. The committee sends a hearty thank you to Rev. Carie, Lynn Smith, Monique McAuliffe and Martha Naber for their assistance in gathering information that supplemented our work.

There are two rounds next. In each round, names of candidates interested in serving as our Interim Minister are released by the Transitions Office to the Search Committee.

Once the candidates are identified, the heart of the process can begin which is not unlike any other hiring process, but again with the backup assistance of the UUA. We will review the ministerial records and contacts for each candidate. References will be checked for the candidates we are interested in pursuing further. Those candidates will then be scheduled for either a phone or video interview. When the Committee wishes to dismiss an applicant, it can be done "gently" through the UUA electronic system.

And then comes the critical and engaging work of narrowing down the candidates to one. After what will likely be a number of passionate conversations, a final Interim Minister candidate will be sent to the Board for further and final negotiation.

Written by: Kathy Ann Shaw, on behalf of the Interim Minister Committee

Committee members: Harold Burnett, Terry Cairn, Dennis Maddi, Jill Watson, and Kathy Ann Shaw

Pastoral Ministry Team Report

The work of the Pastoral Ministry Team this spring has involved maintaining connections with community members in need and providing meals, rides, and cards. We have returned to monthly, rather than weekly, meetings as demand for pandemic assistance has leveled off. A portion of most meetings is set aside for Lay Spiritual Care training, a program developed by the UUA to guide lay leaders in ministering to community members.

We recently created and shared with the Board our plan for coverage of pastoral needs during the time between Reverend Carie's departure and the arrival of the interim minister, from mid-May to the beginning of August. During these eleven weeks, the four members of the PMT will take turns being on call for pastoral needs. If changes in coverage occur, I will notify the Board and our administrative assistant. In the event of an emergency or a death, Helen Zidowecki, retired minister and member of the Pastoral Ministry Team, will step in. This system has worked well in past ministerial absences.

According to the policy in place, if the need arises to officiate a Celebration of Life, the church will pay the contract minister for performing the memorial service of a UUCC member, with monies from the Pastoral Ministry budget. Non-members will pay the contract minister directly. The contract minister may also be called upon to officiate weddings, for which she would be paid by the parties involved. Since the contract minister will be new to our congregation, Reverend Helen Zidowecki has offered to officiate ritual events during this time, if that is the family's preference.

The Pastoral Ministry Team is working to provide a high level of services during this time of change, and we welcome the opportunity to grow with new leadership.

In Faith,
Martha Pelletier

News from Religious Exploration

Hello All,

Lifespan Faith Formation is the growth of spiritual, social, ethical and moral development through one's life. Through opportunities for discovery, learning, reflection, study, and service with peers and across generations, people develop a greater sense of belonging and connectedness to themselves, each other, the wider community, the earth, and that which cannot be named. I embrace the UUCC vision and mission and I look forward as Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation to provide dynamic, relevant, and innovative leadership to support members and friends of all ages in the personal journey of spiritual exploration and faith formation, and cultivate a sense of belonging and connectedness rooted in Unitarian Universalist values, principles and theology.

During the Fall of 2020, the Personnel Work Group (Cheryl Ring, Liza Gottlieb, Rev. Carie Johnsen, Monique McAuliffe) worked together to develop a definition and mission for the new position at UUCC of Coordinator for Lifespan Faith Formation (CLFF). We also composed some questions to encourage a conversation with our congregations' many active groups, Committees, and SGM's to discern how they could benefit and utilize the CLFF. In December and January, I zoomed into part of their meetings for this very discussion. I wrote a report that summarized the common threads and insights gleaned which I submitted to the Board and will submit into our Annual UUCCA Report.

I enjoyed these conversations immensely and began to feel a new intentional connection to our Congregation outside of my previous role as RE Coordinator. I connected resources available through our UUA with some in our SGM and I partnered with the Social Justice Committee on their search for future Social Justice workshops or seminars. We attended the UUA New Day Rising conference and learned about the birth of an 8th Principle!

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

Please read the Social Justice addition to this newsletter to learn more about it! It will be a joy to partner with the Social Justice Committee as Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation on their envisioned workshop / programming for next fall.

The New Day Rising Conference inspired me to join the UU Beloved Conversations Workshop which is a program for Unitarian Universalists seeking to embody racial justice as a spiritual practice. In *Beloved Conversations*, we are here to heal the impact of racism on our lives, in order to do the work of recognizing and dismantling racism. The framework acknowledges and honors the spiritual nature of this work and an understanding that it is essential to our personal and religious development. I look forward to weaving this ministry into my work as Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation.

This Spring I offered the Workshop developed by Valerie Kaur entitled Revolutionary Love: See no Stranger. Valerie is a renowned Sikh activist, filmmaker, and civil rights lawyer – declares that revolutionary love is the call of our time, a radical, joyful practice that extends in three directions: to others, to our opponents, and to ourselves. It enjoins us to see no stranger but instead look at others and say: *You are a part of me I do not yet know*. Starting from that place of wonder, the world begins to change: It is a practice that can transform a relationship, a community, a culture, even a nation. It is being very well received and the participants are really enjoying exploring this practice. Some in this group have experienced this programming before and are ready for a deeper dive. I have sought to enhance their continued journey of this practice with extra resources available through Valerie Kaur’s Revolutionary Love Curriculum.

I have heard from SGM members and our congregation at large requesting some Communication workshops. It is my understanding that the board has been considering Congregation wide initiatives working on similar issues and options. For example developing highly popular worship-workshop series being on conflict-communication. I look forward to partnering with them to offer workshops/seminars around this need.

RE youth and children’s programming is a work in progress; my technical capabilities have improved but I am hopeful that pandemic restrictions will become more amicable as the number of infections decrease and more people are vaccinated. I have had parents reach out about OWL and COA for 2021/2022. I continue to have conversations with my UU colleagues about collaborating on some of these programs. Nursery will be offered should our church reopen and I look forward to developing new children’s programming with the new CLFF Committee next church year.

I will continue this year to work with the Board and Leadership to develop a diverse and dynamic Lifespan Faith Formation Committee: Liaisons from SGM, Seasoned Souls, Goddess Circle, Social Justice, Membership, and Board plus two members-at-large. Attention to diverse demographics (families, age, gender identity and sexual orientation, race).

Participating as a Co-lead and Worship Associate in our Worship Services this Church year has allowed me to develop a new connection with all of you, our Congregation, beyond my former role as Religious Exploration Coordinator. It has fostered an intentional connection with me as a spiritual leader for all ages in our congregation. This growing connection that has been nurturing within me over this year has also transformed my vision of myself from RE Coordinator to Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation.

I will continue my work as CLFF to stay connected, open and approachable to you and friends in our congregation of all ages in your personal journey of spiritual exploration and faith formation. I embrace the many gifts and talents that surround us in our congregation and community. I will encourage others' gifts and talents to be shared in our future programming; cultivating inspiration and spiritual growth...
AND, To Have Fun!

Sowing the seeds --- Monique

COVID-19 Advisory Group Message

Yesterday it was sunny and 73 degrees in Augusta, today it's drizzly and 56 degrees, typical spring weather in Maine. Along with the blooming daffodils, forsythia and hyacinths, spring has brought a dramatic increase in community transmission of COVID-19 in Maine. A month ago we wrote that the number of new cases of COVID-19 per 10,000 people in Kennebec County was 4 times higher than the upper level established for opening the church for indoor gatherings. Today that same metric is 12 times higher than our threshold. Despite Maine's outstanding work in vaccinating >54% of the adult population with a first shot, the numbers of new cases and hospitalizations has risen to levels not seen since January. Folks, we clearly aren't out of the woods yet.

As the medical and scientific communities continue to learn more about how COVID does and does not spread, some of the old dogma is being replaced by more up to date recommendations. Last month we reported that there was no need to continue disinfecting all the indoor surfaces that we might contact because there was no evidence that people become infected by touching surfaces.

Today we can share the good news that when you are meeting outdoors, if you can maintain 6 (six) feet of physical distance, you don't have to wear a mask as well. It's being explained that preventing infection is like a three (3) legged stool:

- Outdoors
- Physical distance
- Masks

You need to have at least two (2) of those legs to be safe:

- If you are INDOORS, you need to maintain physical distance AND a wear a mask.
- If you are OUTDOORS, you only need one other leg, either physical distance OR a mask.

The return of spring like temperatures means that small groups can begin meeting outdoors once again. Our new understanding of maintaining safety for our community means that if your group is meeting outside and maintains six (6) feet of physical distance between individuals, you DON'T HAVE TO WEAR A MASK. Please keep in mind that some individuals may need greater protection and will wish to continue wearing a mask and their decision needs to be respected.

The COVID-19 Advisory Group meets the first Wednesday of each month at 5:00 pm in the church Zoom room.

As always, be safe, take care of yourself and if possible, someone else.

COVID-19 Advisory Group members:

Betty Cairn, Terry Lee Cairn, Harry Grimmnitz, Don Naber, Cathie Nielsen, Marty Soule

Getting Ready to Return by Wick Johnson

The Re-Opening Committee has been working since late winter to coordinate the projects that need completion before we begin meeting in person. It has turned out to be a comprehensive list and most of it has been completed or is due to be completed soon.

In the Judd House, the Minister's Study has been relocated to the front of the building. Hal Booth and Harry Grimmnitz added a door between the two sections of the Minister's Study. The room at the rear will now house the History Committee and be used for Church committee meetings. Last fall, when the Drew House was rented, the History Committee moved to the church building and have now moved again to the Judd House. So this was the 2nd move for the History Committee in less than a year. Thanks to Helen Zidowecki's steadfast leadership the move is nearly complete.

In the main church building a number of projects have been undertaken. The Nursery is being divided in two spaces to accommodate RE and the Nursery on Sunday. An accordion door and new entrance door are being installed and constructed by Hal and Harry. This will allow the entire room to be used for meetings when needed.

There are also two major technology projects taking place.

First: Hall Booth has donated the purchase and installation of two heat pump units, one in the Sanctuary and one in the Fellowship Hall. These units will provide the majority of the heating for both spaces and they will add air conditioning which will make the spaces much more comfortable in the Summer. They should reduce cost and decrease our carbon footprint. Please say "Thank You" to Hal for his generosity.

Second: We are upgrading our technology for broadcasting meetings and holding virtual meetings. The Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall will both have the technology.

As the renovations have been going on Marilyn Dunn and Bill Allen have been reviewing all of the spaces to make sure they are ready. A dehumidifier and shelves have been added in the church basement, painting has been done in spaces following construction and many other projects have been completed.

This list does not properly thank all of the people who have helped out. Most tasks have required helpers and because everyone has pitched in it has gone smoothly. Thank you to all of our helpers!

Also, a number of projects remain. We need to make long term decisions about the furnishing of the Robbins Room and the Hallways are in need of fresh paint and carpet. That said, we will soon be ready for a thorough cleaning and re-opening in the fall.

Wick Johnson, Chair Re-Opening Committee

Finance Committee Update

In March, the Finance Committee authorized Stewardship Campaign letters to be mailed to members and friends and completed our 2021-22 Draft Budget for the Board to review. We hope you have returned your pledge since our annual budget relies on a strong Stewardship Campaign.

Meanwhile, the Finance Committee dedicated hours allocating current revenue and savings for the reopening and updating of the Judd House and in the church. Improvements include adjustments to the former Nursery and the minister's study as well as a major technology upgrade to allow for online streaming of Sunday services. State-of-the-art cameras, microphones and screens in the Fellowship Hall will support multi-use assemblies. Since the rental work for the Drew House has been completed, we are making changes to our spaces to allow for more flexible use.

Fundraising this quarter included the first-ever online silent auction, which raised in excess of \$3,800 for our operations budget. In addition, the Hannaford card program will generate more than \$4,000 in revenue this year. Thank you to all who participated in these fundraising programs.

Catherine Palmer, Chair
Cell: 207.458.7384

History Committee

“Capturing our History as we make it.”

Another newsletter, another move toward re-opening. History moved from the old Nursery area in the church to the first floor newly created History Conference Room from the back part of the Minister’s Office, and storage area. Small Group Ministry members and others helped with various parts of area in the back of Judd House. Thanks to Richard Bridges, Kevin Kane, Mary Kane, Bill Young, Erik Zidowecki for assistance in moving; Jean Sizelove re books to include in the UUCC library; and ongoing support from the Re-opening Committee.

As part of the moving, it was nice that a number of the FREE BOOKS offered by Rev. Carie as she transitions and books that had been in the back area of Judd House found new homes. Some were moved to the UUCC Library in the Committee Room. On May 1, the remaining books were donated to the Kennebec Historic Society for its book fair later this year.

The History Committee is refining and expanding its *Historical Notes: Three Augusta Congregations* with many facets of congregational life over the years. The compilation is in a notebook in the History Conference Room bookcase. More information about this compilation or a listing of the information is available from the History Committee.

The History Committee invites you to participate in short term projects that will add to our information and understanding of UUCC. They are projected for a short time, with specific details to be arranged with participants, and in compliance with the Covid-19 Advisory Committee requirements. Please let us know Projects that you may be interested in working on and your thoughts and ideas for a project listed here or one to add. More information about the projects are given on the UUCC website, <https://www.augustauu.org/minister-staff-and-church-life/history/>

Banners and Flags is listed first for immediate consideration as storage space is part of the Re-Opening process, and banners and flags seem to be in different places. We would particularly like to know your interest for this project to start within a month or so.

- **Banners and Flags** (Not limited, Photographer will be needed, time variable.) Banners and flags show our UU presence in Augusta, in parades and events. Project Action: Compile background notations of the symbolism and when, why, and how a banner or flag is or has been used, and storage location. We have over a dozen such items. How many can you name?
- **Artifacts, RE** (2-3 people, Time 3 hrs.) Description: In the 1960’s women of the All Souls Unitarian Church purchased religious artifacts to be used to bring the lessons of world religions alive. Project Action: Match the items with the descriptions and arrange storage, usage and display.
- **Books/publications of UU History** relevant to us. (2-3 people, Time 4 hrs.) Project Action: Compile a listing of the historic UUCC collection and an annotated listing of histories of the three congregations, and preservation of the oldest church files.
- **Buildings:** Notes and stories (2-3 people, Time: 6 hrs.) Description: Where we live, our home, our connecting place as we do the work of the congregation. We have a number of spaces used in the last 200 years in Augusta. Project action: organize the Buildings Notebooks, including stories and remembrances.
- **Groups and Clubs** (2-4 people, Time: 6 hrs.) Description: We have records on 15 groups from 1897 to 1992 that sustained the congregations (Groups for men, women, youth; fundraising, denominational groups.). Project Action: Prepare a synopsis of each group’s contribution in our church history.
- **Oral Histories** (2-3 people, Time 3 hrs.) Description: We have been collecting oral histories over the last few years on in several different ways. Project Action: catalog the respective oral histories and status (recorded, transcribed, etc.)

Comments, questions, or to express your interest: contact Helen Zidowecki (582-5308 or hzmre@hzmre.com)

History Committee: Helen Zidowecki, Chair; Heide Munro, Richard Bridges, Helen McKendry

Small Group Ministry Updates



Small Group Ministry continues to be a vital part of the mission of the UCC, never more so than during this past year. With the sanctuary closed and the normal pace of church activity at a standstill. SGM remains a strong bonding activity for its members.

There are currently five active groups, while the two other ones have reluctantly disbanded. The Committee is saddened to acknowledge that these groups failed to thrive and have made outreach efforts to their members to place them in other groups.

While all the groups long to return to the more intimate face-to-face meetings that are the backbone of SGM, Zoom meetings have had a very positive impact nonetheless.

In my group, for instance, we have made the meeting semi-weekly, rather than twice monthly, a small incremental bump certainly, but one that was enthusiastically agreed to by the members. What these Zoom meetings have allowed is that members with busy lives raising young families and another member (me!) who has moved to North Carolina, an opportunity to keep these special bonds of friendship and spiritual intimacy intact. Attendance has never been stronger, too!

As we are all aware, Reverend Carie will be leaving the UCC shortly to pursue the next exciting chapter of her ministry, but she made a special outreach to all the groups to bring closure to her long tenure with us. These virtual farewell meetings offered the groups and Carie a unique opportunity for a more personal farewell. The groups understood then how important SGM has been to her. Her session plan with groups, "Deep Listening in A Noisy World" is on the UCC website.

Another challenge that the SGM Committee has faced is how to have the various groups perform their very important service projects during the pandemic. A recent leadership meeting offered some insights, with a recent example, for instance, being some SGM members assisted the History Committee in relocating materials. Other similar projects are being planned with Lynn, the Music Committee and Buildings and Grounds.

We all yearn for the day when we can all meet once again in a common and safe space, but in the meantime, Zoom and the virtual world that many of us still inhabit, will carry us through.

Respectfully submitted by Michael Conley, chair, Helen Zidowecki, Linda Findlay and Judy Gallant

Read, Learn, Share Book Group

The Read, Learn, Share Book Group will begin its book selection process after its May meeting. We usually read an equal number of fiction and non-fiction books. If you are interested in suggesting a book, email its title, author, number of pages, and a brief description including whether fiction or non-fiction to June Zellers. jzellers@roadrunner.com or Kathy Kellison, kell6787@gmail.com. If you would like more information about how the selection process works, email June Zellers.

GODDESS/EARTH CIRCLES

The meetings of Goddess/Earth Circles have been by UUCC Zoom, on the fourth Sundays at 1pm, unless otherwise noted. Joining zoom by phone as well as video is welcome, as we are also looking forward to the option of meeting in person. Information about sessions is available prior to the session.

April 18 topic was the Multi-fold phases of the Goddess. This started as we invited Rev. Carie to celebration of her wisdom and evolved into revising our descriptions of the phases of the Goddess and, indeed, of a woman's life, to name and acknowledge the variety of paths our lives take.

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven introduced Augusta congregations in the 1980's to three stages of women's lives -- Maiden, Mother and Crone --in the 1980's. We added Croning ceremonies that focus on the wisdom of women of post-menopausal age. Along with the focus of a woman's life came awareness and celebration of the phases of the moon, honoring the directions and elements -- each with four phases each.

Over the years we have informally incorporated an additional phase between the Mother and Crone. This phase is a transition to our own direction and self-awareness, acknowledgement of our own wisdom and that we have something to share as we continue growing/evolving. We support others establishing their own paths. This leaves room for new ventures for us, more attention to personal interests.

The April 18 session resulted in a plan to continue evolving our phases of Goddess and women's lives, including the very terms that we use, and concepts of archetypes. The gathering concluded with a Woman of Wisdom celebration for Rev. Carie and appreciation for her support.

The material for the April 18 gathering for discussion and the celebration can be downloaded from the UUCC website under Church Life/Goddess/Meetings.

May 23 gathering of Goddess/Earth Circles is a time to plan exploration of two areas:

First, continue the description of phases of Goddess and women's lives (possibly now through the Women of Wisdom celebration on October 31).

Second, Mary Shifman is interested in offering a several-session introduction to Wicca, with the possibility of having a Wicca group in the Fall. Contact Mary for more information at shifmanmary@gmail.com.

We will be discussing how we would like to offer these themes.

We will be meeting in Summer Connections on June 27, July 25, and August 22. These focus on sharing and may be planned more at the May 23 meeting.

You are welcome to join us. Material from the gatherings is available. Contact Helen Zidowecki (582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com). Also see the material on the UUCC website (Church Life, Goddess)

Social Justice Committee

Is It Time for an 8th Principle?

By Michaela Loisel and Hilary Neckles (Social Justice Committee) and Monique McAuliffe (Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation)

On February 27th, we joined over 1,500 UUs from across North America in the New Day Rising National Conference. Hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the virtual conference was an opportunity to explore paths for congregations to change white supremacy culture. Our day of exploration expanded our minds, enriched our spirits, and inspired us to learn more, to do more, to *be* more.

An overarching theme of the conference was steps individuals and congregations can take to create Beloved UU Communities. Such communities are defined as occurring when “people of diverse racial, ethnic, educational, class, gender, sexual orientation backgrounds/identities come together in an interdependent relationship of love, mutual respect, and care that seeks to realize justice within the community and in the broader world”. On the surface, the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism may seem to embody this definition. Indeed, our seven principles guide us to affirm and promote the inherent value of all people, to seek justice and equity in all relations, and to respect the interdependent web of all existence – is this not a Beloved Community?

Paula Cole Jones, Director of Racial & Social Justice for the Central East Regional Group of the UUA and Co-Founder of the 8th Principle Project, explained at the Conference her realization that UUs can live by the Seven Principles without ever confronting systemic racism. The current set of principles was adopted in 1985 – a whole generation ago -- following a revision in response to the women’s movement. None of the principles explicitly address racism. Even those UU congregations located in diverse, multicultural areas are majority white, comprising people of European-American ancestry; it is easy to overlook the policies and practices that uphold the pervasive differences in power, resources, and opportunities that exist between white people and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. In recognition of the need to renew UU commitment to civil rights, to hold ourselves accountable, and to fulfill the potential of our existing principles, the 8th Principle Project was born.

Beginning in 2017, Paula Cole Jones and her fellow Co-Founder Bruce Pollack-Johnson, of the UU Church of the Restoration in Philadelphia, worked with other antiracism activists to propose the following as an 8th principle within our faith:

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

Today, as the legacies of slavery endure through police violence against Black people, mass incarceration, voter suppression, and racial, social, economic, and environmental injustice, adoption of the 8th principle would make antiracism central to our identity. Paula Cole Jones asked us, “Will we ever fulfill the mission of Unitarian Universalism if we are not living out the 8th principle?”

UU Congregations across the continent are discussing adoption of the 8th principle at local levels. As of the Conference, 38 congregations had voted for adoption, and that number is expected to double during congregational meetings in June. Is it time for UUCS to consider adopting the 8th principle? Can we, as a loving faith community, afford not to?

You can learn more about the 8th Principle Project at <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>. The UUCS Social Justice Committee is pursuing ways for our congregation to enhance our collective understanding of how we can work toward racial equity. Possibilities include engaging a national UU speaker on these issues and establishing regular dialogues on racial justice. Please reach out to any member of the Social Justice Committee or Monique with your thoughts. We are eager to continue this essential journey together.

Social Justice Committee Co-chairs: Debbie Mattson (debbiemattson@hotmail.com) and Michaela Loisel (michaelatloisel@gmail.com)

Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation: Monique McAuliffe (Lifespanff@augustauu.org; 207-242-6415)

Peaceful Heart Sangha



This year Peaceful Heart Sangha, our UCC Mindfulness Meditation group, has continued meeting every Monday 6:30–8pm and Thursday 8-9:30am via zoom! We have met in person a few times to practice Walking Meditation outdoors. We enjoy sitting and practicing with each other with the online format and we look forward to more practicing in person in the future!

We stop, calm, rest and heal together so that we can more wisely sort through what is most important for us to be doing at this moment in our lives. At the same time, we nourish our needs for beloved community and connection.

With zoom we are able to share our practice with friends new and old, near and far! What a gift! We continue to have sitting meditation and a mix of special readings, recitations, audio/video sharings, musical offerings, deep relaxation, and special time for sharing from our hearts.

We are grateful we were able to offer a UCC church service this spring on a helpful & healing practice called Beginning Anew.

Please feel free to join us for sangha anytime! Newcomers are always welcome!
Write to peacefulheartsangha@gmail.com or martysoule@gmail.com for zoom details.

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

Newsletter Submissions

Submission Deadline for the Fall newsletter is August 16th
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.

Minister: Reverend Carie Johnsen

Board President: Kathy Ann Shaw

Coord of Lifespan Faith Formation: Monique McAuliffe

Choir Director: Bridget Convey

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

Church Administrator: Lynn Smith
Phone: (207)622-3232 or email: admin@augustauu.org

Office hours: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (Tues, Wed & Thurs)
No office hours: Monday or Friday

Rev. Carie **VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS**

To schedule a visit, appointment, or meeting, please call **(508) 221-5295** or use her local # **623-3663** (both lines will reach her!) or email her at RevCarieJohnsen@gmail.com

Emergencies please call her cell phone (508) 221-5295. She will return your call as soon as possible.