



The Flaming Chalice

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

Winter 2021-2022

Worship at UCC

Sunday Services each week at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom

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

A couple of service dates to note:

Sunday, February 13

The Social Justice Committee will be leading the service. Stay tuned for more information!

Sunday, March 20

Our community minister, Rev. Claire Curole will lead worship.

Worship Themes

January Living with Intention

February Widening the Circle

March Renewing Faith

April Awakening

May Nurturing Beauty

June Celebrating Blessings

All services are held in the

UCC ZOOM ROOM ← ← click this **UPDATED 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.

Interim Minister's message

Happy New Year!

As we move from 2021 into 2022, I hold mixed emotions. We are entering a new year with more Covid infections and uncertainty around a new variant. We are also entering a new year filled with hope from strong vaccinations and a deeper understanding of the pandemic. In December, the board began conversations about gradually reopening the church. I hope we will continue to engage in these critical discussions and together decide our direction forward.

In 2022, we are beginning the search process. The first stage includes planning for the search in the budget and electing a search team selected by and from the congregation. This is done through a specific process set by the Unitarian Universalist Association. While interviews and candidate selection will take place in early 2023, the congregation must take steps to prepare for that. Please keep an eye on communications from the board and me as we begin this process.

For our new year, I offer you this:

This year, may you be blessed with **rest** when you need it.

This year, may you be blessed with **hope** when you need it.

This year, may you be blessed with **patience** when you need it.

This year, may you be blessed with **joy** when you need it.

Be blessed, my friends, **be blessed**.

With prayers for a gentle start to your year,

Chloe Briede, Interim Minister

chloeucc@gmail.com

207-623-3663

Update from Transition Team

Last chances to be heard and help.

The Transition Team is wrapping up a series of listening sessions, as we hear the stories of what has made UU Community Church who we are. While many of your stories have been similar to others we are eager to hear untold journeys that we might each have taken when connecting with the community, and then experiences of joy, wholeness, and in some cases pain that you might have celebrated or endured during our times together.

We want to understand our history so that we can purposefully knit the fibers of our past into a common blanket of comfort while resisting the cold and often isolating world with COVID and fortifying our resources before searching for our next settled minister. By understanding how we got to today, we will be best suited to see that future we are destined to become.

Though the Transition Team has sat in on a number of Small Group gatherings, a few additional opportunities remain. Specifically, immediately following the January 9 worship service the "coffee hour" will become a forum for sharing and available to any who would like to. Alternatively, by linking to the following address (<https://forms.gle/URdg51Cr5fJD81HFA>) you may see and answer the series of questions that have centered the listening groups.

We will be collating responses and sharing the history and lessons learned with the community during January and hope to hear from all of you. Many thanks.

Submitted by:

Harold Burnet, Transition Team Chair

Chaplain's Note from Claire Curole

A short note from your affiliated community minister:

As some folks have already heard, I have a new job! As of early December I am now serving as a full time staff chaplain at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, ME, and have completed my service at both Mount (Saint) Joseph in Waterville and Maine Medical Center in Portland. I am excited about this new ministry and especially about having a weekday schedule that I hope will allow me to participate in church more often.

— Chaplain Claire

Notes from the UCC Board of Trustees



Early May Snowstorm

Happy holidays beloved friends and best wishes for the winter months. Below please find highlights from the Board.

We wish the best to Naomi Konesky, our former Vice President, who resigned from the Board in November. Thank you, Naomi, for your hard work on behalf of the community. If you see Naomi, or even if you don't, please thank her for service.

Board leadership has been working with the Leadership Development team to begin the process of filling important Board and Committee positions for the next church fiscal year (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023). Several important positions will open up such as Board President, Vice President and Treasurer. Other committee positions are opening up too. The Leadership Development team is also considering some interesting and creative ideas for filling positions for next year. The congregation will vote on the new slate of Board and Committee members, as it always does, at the Annual Meeting in June. If you are interested in serving our Church in one of these capacities, or would be willing to explore these possibilities in more detail with no obligation, please contact UCC's Leadership Development co-chairs, Cheryl Ring (cherylringmaine@gmail.com) and Stefanie Barley (stefbarley@gmail.com).

The Board has heard you! In addition to hearing comments from this month's *What's on Your Mind* session (outlined in the e-BLAST following the session) and following a discussion at the Board meeting on December 9th, the Board has become aware of the interest in the congregation for reopening the church campus for church services and other gatherings/activities. We were pleased to have Wick Johnson and Nancy Fritz report at our Board meeting. They made the point that we have been under the current limitations for the last 20+ months and the virus does not seem to be changing (or at least easing). They suggested adopting hybrid services to include on-site and live streaming options. This would take advantage of equipment installed in the sanctuary and fellowship hall in the spring and provide access for congregants and visitors alike. Board members also reviewed a plan that they adopted in August that set up a roadmap for reopening the campus. These steps could be returned to once we do reopen if the congregation determines that as their desired direction.

So, to determine the desired direction of the congregation, the Board will be sending you a quick survey to gather your thoughts about reopening. Please look for the survey and take the time to provide answers. One goal suggested was to reopen in February 2022, if we do indeed do so. Your thoughts, hopes, concerns and wishes are critical.

Please have a safe, healthy and happy holiday.

Thinking of you with the best of the season's wishes,
Kathy Ann Shaw
Board President

Updates from Lifespan Faith Formation

No report submitted.

Updates from Music Director



MUSIC AT THE UCC Winter 2022

As I reflect on the year 2021, I look forward to the year 2022. In years past, the UCC music program would be rehearsing and preparing for a fabulous musical offering for Stewardship Sunday. Here we are again cautiously moving forward and holding as much optimism as possible in our hearts and minds. We will see what transpires musically for us over the next few months.

The UCC choir plans to continue outdoor rehearsals, weather permitting, on Wednesdays at 1:00pm, as we try to optimize on as much warmth and daylight as possible. These rehearsals plan to resume on January 5th. If you would like to be added to the choir email list, please let me know (see email address below).

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

All are welcome!

Bridget Convey,
UCC Music Director

Updates from Church Administrator

No report submitted.

COVID-19 Advisory Group Message

The COVID-19 Advisory Group is an ad hoc group convened by the Board to provide advice related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on church activities. Its members are:

Betty Cairn, RN
Terry Lee Cairn, ND, MSOM, Lac.
Harry Grimmnitz, MD
Don Naber, Ed.D
Cathie Nielsen, MD
Marty Soule, PA-C

- The Advisory Group monitors Maine CDC COVID-19 data on a weekly basis and this information is posted in the church E-blast.
 - The most recent data is very concerning & shows the highest rates of community transmission in Kennebec County and the State since the beginning of the pandemic.

- In response to a request from a member of the UUCC staff, the Advisory Group recommended to the Board that all paid staff be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including boosters when available. The Board accepted this recommendation and passed it unanimously.
- We are awaiting a site visit in early January from a contractor to assess feasibility of installing a ventilation system in the church building to reduce risk of airborne disease transmission.
- The Advisory Group and the Board are aware that there is increasing desire from some members of the church community to reopen the church for indoor, in person gatherings.
 - Any decision to reopen the church facilities will be made by the elected Board of Trustees, not by the Advisory Group.
 - The Advisory Group will make recommendations on how to proceed in the safest way possible with any decisions made by the Board.

Communications Work Group

This is a Newsletter of Change and Connection! The Flaming Chalice represents the light of liberal faith over the generations. This Flaming Chalice can hold us, keep us connected and informed about our community, even -- or maybe especially – when we are not meeting regularly in person.

Thank you for participating in communications within our community. This includes reading and sharing communications that are available, joining special opportunities for discussion, and contributing to ways that communications can be enhanced.

We are reviewing how we use the Soul Matters Packets. Please send your comments to Minister Chloe (chloruucc@gmail.com) or Helen Zidowecki (hzmre@hzmre.com). Some questions for your consideration are below.

- Are you familiar with Soul Matters Packets?
- Have they been helpful in connecting you with the theme of the month?
- How and when have you used the Packets?
- What suggestions do you have regarding the packets?
- Would you be interested in assisting with Soul Matters Packets?

The few comments that we have received since the Fall Newsletter regarding Soul Matters packets have come from informal conversations. While these comments have been positive, it is difficult to know whether this a resource that should be retained or how it can be more helpful. Please advise!

Projected topics are:

January:	Living with Intention” –Soul Matters packet is expected to be sent with the January 5 E-Blast.
February:	Widening the Circle
March:	Renewing Faith
April:	Awakening
May:	Nurturing Beauty
June:	Celebrating Blessings

WEBSITE: Keeping the website updated and relevant is an ongoing process. The intent is to have the website as an information and connections vehicle for the congregation as well as sharing who we are with the larger community. LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAM LEADERS: Please contact a member of the Communications Work Group if you have any updates to help keep the website relevant or provide better information to members and friends or the wider community.

Communications Work Group: Lynn Smith, Kathy Kellison, Helen Zidowecki

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has oversight of multiple areas of the church's fiscal health and is composed of:

Harry Grimmnitz – Chair
Harold Burnett – Member at Large
Nancy Fritz – Invested Funds
Wick Johnson – Planned Giving
Martha Naber – Treasurer
Catherine Palmer – Fundraising

Finance:

- As of mid-December we are nearly 50% of the way through the fiscal year. Pledge income is at \$134,020 (88% of pledges) & our total income to date is \$139,355 (58% of total expected income). Total expenses fiscal year to date are \$78,000 (32% of projected expenses).
- The committee recognized that the job of the volunteer Church Treasurer has become unmanageable and unsustainable.
 - The committee reviewed the numerous functions performed by the treasurer.
 - The position has become so onerous that it is very difficult to recruit volunteers.
 - Our current treasurer will be leaving the position at the end of this FY.
 - The committee reviewed ways to reduce the time and stress requirements of this position
 - Two options were proposed to accomplish this goal
 - Adding hours to the Church Administrator's position
 - Hiring an outside accounting firm
 - The Board is reviewing these options for implementation.
- The committee began formulating the Budget for FY 22-23.
 - Proposed a 3.3% cost of living raise for staff.
 - Anticipate increased expenses for improving the Church Treasurer's position.
 - We will need to allocate funds for the settled minister search process.
- The committee proposed an addition to our Policies & Procedures document that eliminates the ability of writing a check to "CASH". This tightens controls on our finances to reduce the possibility of malfeasance.

Fundraising:

- The Pie Sale at Longfellow's Greenhouse raised \$601 (more than its goal of \$500).
- The Holiday Crafts Fair raised \$2,535 (more than its goal of \$2,250).
- The Hannaford program has raised \$2,000.

Stewardship:

- Annual Appeal
 - Goal of \$13,000 in congregation approved Budget for 2021-22.
 - We have a \$6,000 anonymous matching gift from a member.
 - Letters sent out to friends, supporters & congregation mid-December.
- The Board continues to search for a new stewardship chair.
- Wick Johnson has briefly presented a UUCU Guide to Holistic Stewardship document that he developed. Further review and discussion is scheduled for the January meeting.

Peaceful Heart Sangha

Peaceful Heart Sangha meets on zoom every Monday evening from 6:30-8 and Thursday morning from 7:30-9. Please reach out to martysoule@gmail.com or peacefulheartsangha@gmail.com if you would like to join us and we will send you the zoom link. Newcomers are always welcome!

You are also welcome to join us for our January winter practice. See below:

2022 January Intentions Practice



The dark, quiet beginning of the new year is an ideal opportunity to begin or deepen our meditation practice and to experiment with new ways to bring our mindfulness practice into our daily lives.

We are invited to look deeply to see what would nourish us, help us move closer to our deepest aspirations, and help us to **gradually change the things inside us that hold us back from happiness.**

Then for one month we are invited to practice with our personal commitment.

Let's consider what would be most nourishing for us to explore and then gather together online for an Opening Session – the morning of January 8 and Closing Session – the morning of February 12

You can also join us in this practice without attending the Opening/Closing

What practice(s) would we like to add to our lives for the duration of one month?

Some ideas for practices that might nurture our growth include:

A Mindfulness practice: e.g. Sitting Meditation, Walking Meditation, Eating Meditation, Deep Relaxation or a different Mindfulness practice - daily, weekly, or whatever fits - for 5, 20, or more minutes at a time.

Daily Life Mindfulness: To be fully present/aware as I perform one simple daily task, e.g. while brushing my teeth, feeling grateful that I have teeth

Study: To read/study a particular sutra, teaching, or book

Dharma Talks: To listen to one or more Dharma Talks during the month (e.g. <http://tnhaudio.org>, joannefriday.com, using the free Plum Village App, or visit <https://tnhmeditation.org/>)

Five Mindfulness Trainings: To mindfully observe my own behavior in light of one of the 5 MT during the month.

Practice: To attend a retreat or Day of Mindfulness or create my own home DOM.

Practice Generosity: To offer my time and resources to benefit others

Sangha Gatherings: Plan to attend sangha &/or opening &/or closing session of the January Intentions

As we move towards January 8, we are invited to choose one practice that we would like to explore –

In January 2022 I would like to deepen my practice in this way:

History Committee

History has been a bit more visible in the last few months. The Soul Matters Packet for November, with the theme “Holding History”, included overview of UUCC history, where to find more information, and questions and activities to explore our history.

In addition, the History Committee developed a series of 15 History Tidbits for the Transition Team’s focus on our history as we move forward. Several Tidbits were included in a few E-Blasts. The entire set still needs to be made more available, along with the answers.

Please let the History Committee know if you are interested in the Tidbits or have some areas of our history that needs coverage. A lot more could be written! And look for more information on where these may be visible.

To become involved in various aspects of the work of the History of UUCC, contact Richard Bridges, Chair, at (207) 626-8134 or Auglaw@roadrunner.com. Other members are Heide Munro and Helen Zidowecki. We invite you to join us.

Small Group Ministry Updates



With 2021 winding down and the New Year approaching, the Small Group Ministry’s annual Fall service turned inward a bit with “We Were, We Are, We Can Be”, a reflection that was designed to have each of the groups assess themselves in the midst of unprecedented uncertainty.

The result was a series of reflections that essentially reaffirmed the importance of SGM in their own lives and those of their fellow members. There was a mixture of video and live presentations that all managed to convey the uniqueness of each group, interspersed with some wonderful and complementary musical contributions by the UUCC Choir and Gary Chapin, plus a poignant video of a favorite and appropriate hymn, “Be Thou My Vision”.

As the UUCC looks to the future with a settled minister, the Transition Committee, headed by Harold Burnett, has been participating with all the groups, asking them the five key questions for formulating a plan. The SGM Committee was flattered that Harold’s committee sought out our input for such a momentous undertaking.

Despite the setback with the new Covid variant and the onset of colder weather, our Small Groups remain vibrantly committed to their members, still meeting on a regular basis via Zoom. It is hoped, of course, that once that winter is over and the variant subdued, in-person meetings will once again be the norm.

The Small Group Ministry Committee would love to talk to you if you are interested in either joining an existing unit or even starting a new one. For more information, please contact Michael Conley at either estherpearl67@gmail.com or directly at 207-248-7941.

Read, Learn, Share Book Group

We are a group of enthusiastic readers who love to discuss books. We meet on the first Thursday of the month from noon until 1:30 from October through June. We will be in the UUCC Zoom room until we can gather indoors. Anyone who is interested is invited to join us whenever a book grabs your attention. The regular attendees create the next year’s list over the summer. We all submit titles and choose the eleven we will read by a ranked choice vote.

Our books for this year are:

- November: A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win WWII by Sonia Purnell
- December: Piranesi by Suzanna Clark
- January: Becoming Nicole by Amy Ellis
- February: The Midnight Library by Matt Haig
- March: Nine Continents by Xiaolu Guo
- April: The Ninth Hour by Alice McDermott
- May: You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacy: Crazy Stories About Racism by Amber Ruffin
- June: Beneficence, A Family, A Farm, And Unshakable Feeling by Meredith Hall

All of the titles are available through interlibrary loan.

For more information, contact June Zellers jzellers@roadrunner.com or Kathy Kellison at kell6787@gmail.com.

GODDESS/EARTH CIRCLES

The meetings of Goddess/Earth Circles are generally held on the fourth Sundays at 1pm, by zoom, unless otherwise noted. Details of gatherings are announced in the E-Blast, especially as the weather warms and we may use the church yard again or have other ways to meet in person.

At the Women of Wisdom (WOW) Celebration on October 31, Heide Munro was celebrated as a WOW/crone. We also had a recognition of Phyllis Cudmore, a WOW who died earlier in the year. Following the celebration, we compiled our wisdom statements for 2021. The focus is for women to reflect on their sense of wisdom over the years.

Goddess/Earth circles are leading the Sunday morning service on December 28, 2021. Frequently the theme of services at this time of year are on Solstice. This year we considered the broader theme of Yuletide, from Solstice to Twelfth Night (New Year's eve). This is probably the holiest time of the year, considering the celebration from many traditions and cultures. These focus on light and dark, survival, community and family, and attributes for living.

Goddess/Earth Circles will be starting the new year on January 23 with an Introduction to Wicca with Mary Shifman. This will present an overview and the possibility of developing a series of sessions that explore areas of Wicca of interest to participants.

See resources posted by Goddess/Earth Circles on the UUCS website at <https://www.augustauu.org/minister-staff-and-church-life/goddess-continuing/>

Suggested pieces:

WOW Celebration Script, Oct. 31, 2021

Goddess Group Resources. August 2021, includes resources for Wicca

Yuletide: The Holiest Time of the Year, service Dec. 28, 2021.

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 UUCS website (Church Life, Goddess) as noted above. These include dates of gatherings.



**SIDE WITH
LOVE**

In January, we will be selecting an organization to receive the second annual award of \$1,000.00 from the Reverend Carie Johnson Social Justice Fund. Consideration will be given to organizations whose missions most closely align with our UU Principles.

We invite you to send recommendations of Maine-based organizations to Deb Mattson at DebbieMattson@gmail.com or Michaela Loisel at Michaelatloisel@gmail.com

The award will be announced during the February 13, 2022 **Side with Love** service. We will also

celebrate and honor the deep commitment to social justice actions Unitarian Universalists are called to do. We would love to have you share your talents and energies with our Social Justice/MUUSAN Committee as there are endless possibilities for action and advocacy.

Opportunities to be involved in Social Justice:

The COVID pandemic has limited so much, even restricting our ability to help our neighbors. Here are some ideas from the Social Justice Committee, the ideas range from no risk to low risk of COVID exposure; from local to statewide.

Local Community, No Risk: It's COLD in Augusta! Bridging the gap is a free clothing and essentials pantry and they are in need of new or gently used clean WARM, waterproof Coats and Boots. Bring to 209 Eastern Ave, Augusta (the Episcopal Church) Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 2 pm. Please schedule large donations in advance by calling Melissa at 458-7088.

Local Community, Low Risk: Deliver Meals on Wheels. This meal program has expanded due to COVID and more people are eligible to have meals delivered to their homes. Volunteers may sign up for one or more routes per week. From start to finish, it will take as little as an hour and as long as two hours. Meals are delivered at the person's door; the exchange is less than 30 seconds. If you are interested, call the Cohen Community Center in Hallowell, 207-626-7777. Or if you want to talk with a current volunteer, email debbiemattson@hotmail.com.

Statewide, No Risk: Support for the Maine Tribal Sovereignty Bill (LD 1626) is a major focus for MUUSAN this upcoming Legislative Session. If you are interested in joining with other UUs to ensure passage and implementation of this bill, contact Mary Kane MaryKane072@gmail.com.

If you, as a reader, want to promote other ideas for social justice, please contact the Co-chairs, Debbie Mattson debbiemattson@hotmail.com or Michaela Loisel michaelatloisel@gmail.com.

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

Newsletter Submissions

Submission Deadline for SPRING newsletter is April 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.

Interim Minister: Chloë Briedé

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 UUCC directory or obtained by contacting the Church Administrator.

Church Administrator: Lynn Smith

Phone: (207)622-3232 or email:

<mailto:admin@augustauu.org>

Office hours: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (Tues, Wed & Thurs)

No office hours: Monday or Friday

Minister Chloë

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Email: chloeuucc@gmail.com

Office: (207) 623-3663

For pastoral emergencies please call her cell phone (757) 234-1303. She will return your call as soon as possible.

Minister Briede's office hours:

Monday No office hours - Sabbath

Tuesday Noon – 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday Noon – 4:00 p.m.

Thursday Noon – 4:00 p.m.

Friday No office hours – Writing day

<Other hours available by appointment