



The Flaming Chalice

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

Winter 2020

Sunday Worship Services at 9:15 & 11:00 A.M.

Religious Exploration at 9:15
Nursery Care at 9:15 & 11:00

January

What does it mean to be a people of *INTEGRITY*?

- 5TH Mindful Hymn Sing with Rev. Carie
Special music Jenny McKendry
- 12TH Untangling Colonization with Sue Caldwell,
Rev. Carie, the choir and Dale McCormick, cello
- 19TH God is Change with Rev. Carie
26TH with Molly Brewer, M.Div. and the choir

February

What does it mean to be a people of *RESILIENCE*?

- 2ND Kennebec Advocacy Team
Special music Emily and Astrid Jones, and Sage
Perry on fiddle
- 9TH Today, I Give Up and Rise with Rev Carie and the
choir
- 16TH The Mystic and the Scientist with Rev. Carie
23RD The Breath of Resilience with Rev. Carie and the
choir with guest musicians

March

What does it mean to be a people of *WISDOM*?

- 1ST The Gospel According to Mushrooms with Rev.
Claire Curole
- 8TH Stewardship Sunday with Rev. Carie, the choir
and orchestra
- 15TH The Wisdom of Humility with Rev. Carie
22ND With Heart and Mind with Rev. Carie and the choir
29TH Joining Hands with Kenneth Farrington; Special
music from Jasmine Farrington

April

What does it mean to be a people of *LIBERATION*?


- 5th Free To Be And... with Rev. Carie
12th. Easter Service with Rev. Carie, the choir and
orchestra
- 19th Earth Day Service with Rev. Carie and the choir
26th You Chose with Rev. Lane Fisher

Storytellers wanted: As you peruse the service themes and titles above, consider a wisdom story you might share with the congregation. This short 2-3 minute story might be a personal in nature or your favorite religious story or folk tale. Send a note to RevCarieJohnsen@gmail.com.

Musicians and vocalists wanted: As you peruse the service themes and titles above, consider a piece of music you would like to share with the congregation. Send a note with your musical selection and preferred Sunday to HannahFaulkner@gmail.com and RevCarieJohnsen@gmail.com.

AV Tech wanted to assist with slideshow announcements as prelude to service. PowerPoint or numbers proficiency needed.

Please see the Weekly E-Blast and Sunday Announcements for more information about weekly services and special music.



EVENING SCHEDULE FOR WALKING THE LABYRINTH

- 5:00 - 7:00 Guided INTERGENERATIONAL labyrinth walks
for all age And interactive activities
- 7:00 - 8:00 INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP AND PRAYERS
Please bring a snack to share.
- 8:00 - 9:00 QUIET SPACE for PERSONAL REFLECTION

Please note: ALL AGES ARE WELCOME ALL EVENING.
This schedule represents organized activity for
various age groups and interests.

WALK THE LABYRINTH

A multi-faith community celebration
welcoming in the New Year.

Tuesday, December 31, 2019

5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Community Church
69 Winthrop Street, Augusta, ME

For more information contact Rev. Carie Johnsen
minister@augustauu.org or 508-221-5295

Excerpts from **Choosing Mutuality-The Promise and Practice of Covenant**

By Joe Sullivan, Congregational Consultant

{Over the past month Rev. Carie, the Board of Trustees, and Committee on Ministry have engaged in several sessions of consult with Joe Sullivan. The opportunity to reflect and reorient towards practices of spiritual leadership have been invaluable. We offer the congregation excerpts from Joe's article on the practice of covenant as a tool for your own personal reflection and spiritual orientation.}

In yearning for a better world, we too often neglect the ancient practice that is central to our UU faith - **covenanting** - the religious discipline intended to help us actualize and sustain our will to mutuality. Covenanting is our renewing practice of solemn promises of mutual support and commitment, of mutual fidelity to shared high purpose, and to something greater than ourselves.

When we do consider covenant, we too often limit our understanding of its practice to ritual recitation of core beliefs or values, or we flatten it to a tool to patrol behavior.

Our religious covenants are not about words and not about circumscribing behavior. Covenanting is a resolute daily practice that accepts the reality of human imperfection, of our flawed nature and brokenness, the inevitability of falling short and failure. It presumes our utter dependence on one another and on powers greater than our individual selves.

Covenanting depends not on piousness or enforced consequences. Rather it depends upon humility, love, grace, trust, compassion, mercy. It is inherently forgiving, and when violated (more commonly by neglect than by misbehavior), it seeks restoration and renewal. Nancy McDonald Ladd contends that in converting the will to mutuality by becoming acquainted with the actual conditions and lives around us we become "morally transformed not by ideals, but by compassion and conviction."

How do we really practice covenant? First and foremost, we do so by showing up for one another in spirit and body. We practice covenant in restorative circles and in acts of confession and atonement; in rituals of entering into, renewing, and releasing from covenant. We practice it in authentic mutual relationship with marginalized communities and willingness to follow their lead; and when, as Bryan Stevenson suggests, we "get proximate" to suffering.

We can tell the practice of covenant is truly alive when we see:

- people intentionally putting themselves in uncomfortable, vulnerable encounters, and staying at the table when the going is hard in order to forge or sustain relationship;
- ongoing faithful risking and tolerance for failure in the cause of advancing shared purpose;
- norms, traditions, and expectations intentionally altered in order to be truly welcoming to all, especially those marginalized in our communities.

When freely entered and actualized by the people, our Unitarian Universalist core religious practice of covenant is there to undergird expansive, life transforming mutuality. **What if we committed to practicing covenant as if the wellbeing of our congregations, our faith, our lives and hopes depended upon it?** They do!

AN INVITATION: Consider inviting someone you share differences with to a covenantal conversation. Feel free to start your practice with a person that creates in you a less anxious or emotional response in your practice of covenant. Ask a neutral person to join you to bear witness this practice Living the Grace of Love.

AN OPPORTUNITY: Do you want to more deeply explore the transformative potential of the practice of covenant? Our New England Region staff team will be offering an in-depth workshop on covenanting as a Practice of Spiritual Leadership on Saturday, March 21, 2020 at Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland. Be part of the UUC team! Share your interest with Lynn Smith admin@augustauu.org.

A faith Journey...

Every month I begin my board report with a list of highlights in shared ministry. I would like to mirror for all of you, the joys and blessings you contribute to in our beloved community.

- We have welcomed two new tenants into the Judd House. Maine Unitarian Universalist Community Church shares our UU values and mobilizes our voices in the public square. Kali Bird Isis, a transplant from First Parish Portland congregation is an expressive arts therapist in private practice. She wanted to share space with a community who shared her values.
- Our amazing Professional Staff team all arrived back from summer vacation to enter their sixth year of service. What a bountiful milestone for all of us! We are blessed to have such passionate, committed, and talented staff. Each is a gift to their ministry.
- UUCC now supports two Family Mentor Teams with the Capital Area New Mainers Project. They have been busy welcoming and helping two new asylum-seeking families from Portland to settle into the Augusta community.
- UUCC hosted the UUA – New England Regional “Claiming Your Spiritual Leadership Workshop.” Congregations from across Maine sent teams of 2-5 members to create a provocative and rich learning environment. Augusta congregation had over a dozen leaders participating in the conversation.
- We had the distinct privilege of offering a faith home for Temple Beth El during High Holy Days. The renovation of their Temple extended beyond the expected completion date. The deep spirit of the Jewish community gathered in our space was a joy to witness.
- UUCC has walked alongside the ministerial formation of Rev. Claire Curole for five years. It was an honor to join with UU Society of Brunswick on October 20th to ordain Claire Curole. And our witness of a minister in formation continues. On November 10th the congregation Affirmed Rev. Claire Curole’s new role as Affiliate Minister. In the tradition of collegiality, Rev. Carie and Rev. Claire engaged in a covenant ritual with the congregation.
- On November 10th the congregation commissioned seven Pastoral Ministers. This team of compassionate listeners will serve as an extension of the minister’s pastoral care in the community.
- The Religious Exploration Committee held a retreat led by Rev. Carie with conversation partners from the Board, SGM and COM on October 19th.
- The Holiday Fair was by all accounts a huge success. The optimistic energy and focus on community building connected to this fundraising event was a blessing to all involved. By last count over 100 people were involved in fair activity.
- Music Sunday was a beautiful moment of appreciating the grace of our music ministry. Two services overflowing with so many guests including a large group from Granit Hill. This event was made possible by 45 people – 16 members of the orchestra, 24 members of the choir, our choral accompanist, orchestra director, choir director and minister. WOW!!
- Choir and Orchestra members of UUCC music ministry shared the gifts of this community at the Holiday Cantata Sing-along at Togus Veterans Hospital. Over 150 veterans, family, friends and staff attended this event and enjoyed a shared meal at the close of the concert.

- UUCC has joined with MUUSAN and First Parish Portland to launch Roots and Wings, a cross congregational justice leadership program. Twenty-one leaders (9 congregations) from Bangor to Sanford gather regularly for spiritual grounding and leadership development.
- The Board of Trustees heard the congregation's concerns regarding alternative uses of Drew House. The congregation stepped up to increase their financial contributions. A sub-committee gathered to explore fiscal options. By mid-September the leadership developed an alternative budget with increased pledges, reduced dependence of future facilities account, and the transfer of bequests totaling \$6000 to endowment.
- With the recent developments in the proposed Political Activity Policy, the congregation is learning how to be together in covenantal relationship amid conflicting values and differences of opinions. The time has been confusing, complicated, and layered. People have experienced hurt and people have felt silence. The recent steps to bring in a congregational consultant from the UUA will support the leadership as they prepare for a congregational meeting, and as we all move toward an intentional time of repair and healing.

The joy of being your minister is felt in all the ways we are *Living the Grace of Love*. May our shared ministry continue to be a place where growing souls leave room for all that is our lives.

In faith, Rev. Carie

Roots and Wings

This innovative justice leadership program has successfully launched with twenty-one participants from nine Unitarian Universalist congregations across Maine. The Augusta cohort has five members and friends: Michaela Loisel, Trisha Morey, Kali Bird Isis, Katie McDonald, and Kay Fritz. Bangor member Jean Adamson is also a member of this cohort.

Participants have committed to participating in ten small group ministry sessions and five workshops with the Portland and Zoom cohorts. Small group ministry sessions will move through the following topics: covenant, gifts, Unitarian Universalism, source and call. The leadership workshops will include the following topics: spiritual leadership, talking across the divide; power, privilege and trauma, racism and bias, and public speaking.

By the end of the year each participant will develop a justice leadership initiative and invite the congregation to join them in the work. The conversations are filled with inspiration and vulnerability. The participants are wise and curious. The work is inspiring and aspirational. We look forward to building up a people of compassionate justice leaders for the long-haul work of justice making.

Check out the justice ministry bulletin board in the vestibule for updated information and invitations to engage.

EXPERIENCING GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly 2020 (June 24-28) Providence, RI and online.

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). GA is rotated around the country. This is probably the closest it will get to us. So consider attending. We can also participate electronically.

In the summer we offered streaming and videos from two events of the 2019 GA in Spokane, WA, the Ware Lecture and the Sunday morning worship service. With GA being so close this year, you might want to consider joining one of the various choirs, participating in various worship services (2-3 available each day), attend workshops, attend as a delegate representing UUCC and join in the business of UUA.

More information will be shared as it becomes available. The Website is <https://www.uua.org/ga> and contact Kathy Kellison, Helen Zidowecki, or Rev. Carie Johnsen for more details.

Message from the President, UCC Board of Trustees

Happy New Year!

As 2019 comes to an end and 2020 beckons on the horizon, I hope that we have all had a chance to fulfill our goals and hopes that we set at this time last year. Reflecting back has given me a chance to think back on all the changes that have happened in my life and in the church. Personally, I have sold my house in Manchester and moved to Gardiner (with a man that I love), lost and gained some weight, dealt (still) with a torn meniscus and got some traveling in.

Our church has seen growth towards financial sustainability, increased volunteering and have engaged in thoughtful dialogue (will continue to do so) around a difficult issue, along with many other wonderful things. I have experienced joy and a whole mixture of other emotions with all the changes that I've experienced this past year. These experiences have given me an opportunity to grow and learn more about myself and others. I hope that 2019 has given you opportunities to grow and learn in your life as well.

My new year's resolutions for 2020 are to stretch myself in all areas of my life, to listen with my heart more and treat my family (church family as well) with a deep felt love and respect that all of us deserve. Please remember to breathe and stay centered on what is truly important in your life.

I wish you all love, health and happiness for 2020 and look forward to growing with you as a church community.
Jill Watson, Board President

12/19/2019

From: Chaplain Susan R. Street-Beavers, D.Min.
1 VA Center
Augusta, Maine 04330

To: Rev. Carie Johnsen
Unitarian Universalist Community Church
69 Winthrop Street
Augusta, Maine, 04330

Dear Rev. Carie and UCC Church Family,

What a blessing to encounter hearts full of love and kindness.

As a "flatlander" (LOL) it was wonderful to feel a part of something bigger than myself. Your congregation came together in a "gigantic" way to help people who were not of your own. Being one of those person who was a recipient of your love and kindness I say Thanks and send hugs to each of you. In this time on earth, unfortunately there are few who are willing to utilize their time, talents and finances to help others. You are truly the light in our community that shines brightly exemplifying the fruit of the spirit. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart for being "you!"

We had 150 people in the chapel and 180 people we fed in the inpatient dining room! Togus has not had community interaction and participation like this in years! I believe this was due to your diligence and perseverance. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you.

I do not have family here and I have adopted all of you... so beware if I surprise you and come over just to get a hug (especially you Hannah Faulkner). I serve here at Togus as the "Pastor of Protestants" as well, and preach here every Sunday. You will be in my thoughts and publicly every Sunday in my prayers.

It is with love and a few tears I share my appreciation and love. Continue to be loving and kind for it is something rare and invaluable. May your blessings be overflowing.

Ch. Susie Street-Beavers
Togus VA Hospital

Reference: Holiday Cantata Sing-along at Togus Veterans Hospital, December 14, 2019

UUCC's 1st Saturday Community Supper

Structure:

The Community supper has been led for several years by Jenny McKendry, a UUCC member and Carlene Kaler, a community member. Keith Priest is our cook and third leader. Catherine Palmer has agreed to take on the volunteer coordinator role as of December.

History:

The supper was originally started about twenty years ago, by a couple at St. Mark's Episcopal church. When they left the area, the UUCC began to lead and financially support it, but the leadership and volunteers have always come from a variety of churches as well as other community members. The UUCC board of directors eventually created a line item in the yearly budget, for the suppers, which provides the largest percentage of the supper's resources. UUCC members and friends provide those funds with their generous donations.

We buy most of our food from Sam's club and some from the Good Shepard Food Bank. We also receive food donations from Panera, ice from Wendy's, food from a few anonymous volunteers ,gardeners and occasionally from the Augusta Food Bank.

Schedule, funds, dedicated volunteers and venue:

The supper that we lead is served once a month on the first Saturday at South Parish Congregational Parish hall on State Street in Augusta. It's served there, because they have enough space for cooking and serving. When we contacted South Parish seeking a new venue, when St. Mark's Parish hall was sold, we were welcomed. We pay 35.00/ month to rent their hall, kitchen and storage for our food and supplies.

We buy most food from Sam's club and some from the Good Shepard Food Bank. We also receive food donations from Panera, ice from Wendy's, food from Augusta Food Bank and anonymous volunteers and individuals.

A dedicated core of volunteers make up our base. Carlene Kaler, Keith Priest, Jenny McKendry, Becky Harvey, Catherine Palmer, Tracy McNaughton, Marty and David Thornton, Heidi Chadbourne, The Jorgensen family, Ida Gammon and Cheryl Clukey.

Goals:

Jenny, Carlene and Keith seek to add to our leadership team. We'd like to be able to share the leadership, in order to make time for other concerns. We'd like to add volunteers who would sit with guests and gardeners who'd donate a row of fresh produce each month.

Budget terms versus everyday names:

Originally the 1st Saturday Community supper was funded with other ministries that the UUCC helped to support. Neighbor to Neighbor became an umbrella term which covered other ministries which UUCC contributes to, but now it's an organizational term. The community supper is now funded separately and the supper team committee now operates independently. The ministries include 1st Saturday community supper and Bridging the Gap. Bridging the Gap includes the Essentials pantry- a free toiletries bank and Addie's Attic, a free clothing bank which are both housed at the Emmanuel Lutheran-Episcopal Church. The

Message from the Music Director, Bridget Convey

MUSIC AT THE UCC



The music program at the UCC will be welcoming David Morris, as the interim director of the UCCCOO, while Dan Gilbert takes a sabbatical. We look forward to working with David during Dan's absence. During the Fall, the choir and UCCCOO welcomed new members and brought beautiful and inspiring music into our sanctuary. Featuring music by Ruth Elaine Schram, Joseph Shabalala, Brian Tate, MaMuse, Tomas Luis de Victoria, Stephen Chatman, among others.

The choir and orchestra joined forces for the annual Music Sunday on December 8th, which featured music from the Middle Ages through the 21st Century, as well as a fabulous and fun arrangement of "Jingle Bells"!

The Guest Artist concert series welcomed international concert pianist, Gulimina Mahamuti. This is the fourth season for our guest artist programming, we look forward to seeing you at future concerts in our beautiful sanctuary. Back by popular demand, we welcome *James Johnson and Friends*, featuring the Erskine Academy Jazz Combo. This concert was a big hit last year! We will be welcoming a new artist to the series, international soprano, Jennifer Bates!



James Johnson: Saturday, March 28th, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.



Jennifer Bates: Saturday, April 25th, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

The choir is looking forward to the next few months of winter, singing music to lift your spirits and invigorate your hearts and minds. We are always welcoming new members! If interested in joining the choir, please email Bridget Convey at: musicdirector@augustauu.org. All are welcome!

GODDESS/EARTH CIRCLES

We have moved from the harvest from the fall, through the rich darkness of winter.

At the **October 27 Samhain Wisdom Celebration Lunch** we welcomed Naomi Koneska as the twenty-third crone at UCC since the ritual started in the 1990's and became more consistent with a focus on the Women of Wisdom in the last ten years. Over that time, we have created the annual Women of Wisdom book of writings and sharings and the annual Wisdom celebration lunch. While the croning focuses on older women, all ages are part of the Goddess/Earth Circles.

December 21 Yule Ritual—Winter Solstice by the Evergreen Grove was held in the Fellowship Hall.

The **December 29 Service** of “Transitions in Time: Crossroads, Companions and Choices” involved roads we travel, the companionship of the goddess Hekate through the richness of the darkness as we go spiritually deeper and awareness of what we are take into the light of a new year.

January 26 We will consider covenant within the earth-based traditions and with our own group.

February 23, March 22, and April 26 We will be drawing from *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven: In Ancient Times* and other sources to start the new year with a focus on:

- Relation between the gender of deity and the power and place of women.
- The Goddess as a symbol of female strength and power and what that means for women today.
- The theories of power between female and male deities and implications for today.

Everyone is welcome. Our gatherings are generally the third Sunday of the month. The brochure for Circles and Sabbats is available in the vestibule, and on the UCC website (www.augustauu.org, Church Life, Goddess/Earth Circles). Contact: Helen Zidowecki, hzmre@hzmre.com, 582-5308

READ, LEARN, SHARE

READ, LEARN, SHARE - First Thursday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m. Drew House First Floor

“I’m really glad I read this. I wouldn’t have if we hadn’t picked it for the group.” “Wow! You had a really different take on this book from me.”

(Frequently heard comments in the church book group.)

If you like to read and discuss books, this group may be for you. A core group of us meets monthly and we welcome those who drop in when a particular book catches their eye.

We have chosen our books for 2019-2020 as follows:

January 2, 2020 Mean Girl; Ayn Rand by Lisa Duggan

PLEASE NOTE: Our January book, Mean Girl is not very available through interlibrary loan. We decided to explore the life and philosophy of Ayn Rand using that title or any of several other available resources. We will be focusing on her ideas and their impact on our culture rather than the book as a literary effort. Please investigate Ayn Rand and the World She Made by Anne C. Heller or Goddess of the Market by Jennifer Burns, and feel free to join us. Thursday January 2 from 1:00-2:30 in the Drew House Parlor.

February 6, 2020 Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

March 5, 2020 The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown

April 2, 2020 Mink River by Brian Doyle

May 7, 2020 Born a Crime by Trevor Noah

June 4, 2020 A Terrible Country by Keith Gessen



Peaceful Heart Sangha invites you to join us anytime for our weekly practice and we welcome you to our January 2020 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 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 that hold us back from happiness. Then for one month we are invited to practice with our personal commitment.

Whether you have never meditated before or practice in a different tradition, no problem. Newcomers are always welcome to join us!

Let's consider what would be most nourishing for us to explore and then gather together for the Opening Session January 6th (9-2, including optional pot luck lunch) **at the Drew House** (next to UCC, 6 Summer St, Augusta) **and/or Closing Session February 1** (same time frame, same place). *You do not need to attend the Opening/Closing to participate*

Some types of practices you might like to explore include:

Adding Sitting, Walking, Eating, or some other Meditation practice to our daily life

Mindfulness: To be fully present/aware as I perform one simple daily task

Study: To observe my own behavior in light of one of the Five Mindfulness Trainings or to read/study a particular sutra, teaching, or book

Dharma Talks: To listen to one or more Dharma Talks during the month (eg <http://tnhaudio.org>, joannefriday.com)

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

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

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

Other ideas:

In January 2020 I would like to explore:

~ Please write to martysoule@gmail.com if you intend to join us (to help us with set up) or show up spontaneously, if necessary.

~ If you have questions about January Intentions Practice or about our mindfulness meditation practice, feel free to contact Marty Soule at martysoule@gmail.com or 685-9270. Our brochures are available at UCC and can be helpful as an introduction to our practice.

~ We meet at UCC every Monday 6:30 – 8 PM and in Hallowell every Thursday 8-9:30 AM unless school/Adult Ed is cancelled due to weather or we decide driving conditions are unsafe.

Small Group Ministry Updates



The annual Small Group Ministry service was held on October 27. As a follow-up to last year's SGM around the world theme, this year's service centered on Deep Connections. All seven groups made impactful presentations during the two services. The theme grew out of the recognition of the important part that SGM plays in the personal lives of the group members. While spiritual intimacy and growth are critical components of SGM, powerful personal bonds are also forged simultaneously. Recent medical studies have focused on the critical part that social interaction plays in increased mental and physical health, especially for older adults. Participation in SGM can go a long way on dropping those pernicious barriers.

The SGM Committee is very pleased to report that eight new members have been placed in the seven existing groups, with more waiting in the wings, bringing the current roster to over 50.

The Committee wishes to thank the group facilitators for their efforts in keeping their groups vital and engaged. We also want to acknowledge their active participation at our Leadership Meetings. Taking extra time off on a Sunday afternoon is a wonderful contribution, we realize, so their involvement, along with group members attendees, helps to keep the Committee informed of their group's health.

Speaking of group facilitators, I want to mention that there will be a Leadership Meeting in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 19th, from 12:15 – 1:45. Facilitators for each group are strongly urged to attend, or send in a deputy. Also, all SGM members are more than welcome to attend. This will be a 'brown bag' event and the Committee will supply beverages and desserts.

Finally, I will be out of state in North Carolina from January through March (rumor has it that studded snow tires are unnecessary there during that stretch!), so please direct any questions or concerns to Linda Findlay during my absence. She can be reached at linda.findlay@gmail.com.

Thanks again to all the fabulous SGM facilitators and all the participants in this vital spiritual practice!

Michael Conley

Ellis McKeen Small Group

What is still known as the "Men's Group" was founded more than a decade ago at the suggestion of then-SGM Coordinator Kathy Kellison, with the goal of getting more guys involved in the program. Doug Rooks was the first group leader; for the past six years Dennis Maddi has been the leader. Other current members are Phil Brzozowski, Shelly Gerstein, Bill Young, Kevin Kane, Jerry Nault, and Derek Goodwin. We meet on the first and third Monday evening from 6-8 in the Drew House parlor.

We call our group the Ellis McKeen Memorial Group. Ellis was a founding member who, among his many other gifts to us, showed us how to accept death with dignity. This is our way of keeping his memory alive in this community.

Our group meetings begin with "check in," which has become a substantial part of each session. We offer much about our personal lives in a caring, non-judgmental, confidential venue. These sharings are a constant reminder of how much we have in common, both the joys and the sorrows. Sometimes we have worries that are difficult to express. Sharing these concerns helps us to understand, and in turn to deal with them in fellowship. Quite simply, sometimes we don't know exactly what's troubling us until we say it out loud. Our topics vary quite a bit, and we all take turns leading the sessions.

Over the years, members have come and gone, through death, relocation, and for other reasons. Yet the core understandings expressed in our covenant remain intact. Not all the members are church members, but we share this common bond of friendship in fellowship, twice a month. It has changed our lives, and for that we are grateful.

History Committee

The History Committee continues to gather information on donations over the years, including works of art. In the Fall Flaming Chalice, we noted the hangings in the sanctuary that were donated in 2006, specifically the hanging from Pat Halperin (window wall). The hanging on the wall by the double doors is called "A New Home". It was created in January 2006. This quilt came into being as the UUCC began to contemplate a "new home" for our church community in 2003. We had outgrown the current building, so we began to identify the meaning of "home" to ourselves, personally, and to the community, as well. A challenge was extended to members of the community to create pieced squares (or rectangles) that would be brought together to create a quilt to honor "home" and this transition.

Contributors: (Those currently involved at UUCC are in *italics*.)

Karen Fisk, Colleen Freise, *Peg Barnes, Helen Wing, Mary Perkins, Pam Lombard, Helen McKendry, Joan Mohlar, Pat Halperin, Gail, LaHaye, Barbara Crowley, Told Oshima, Patty Boltz, Cheryl Clukey.*

The primary discussion at the November 21 History Committee Meeting was the Indigenous Peoples' Decolonizing Program--Maine-Wabanaki REACH (Restoration, Engagement, Advocacy, Change, Healing). Rev. Carie gave an overview and we discussed some areas of discrimination that specifically involve faith communities, such as

Boarding school assignments that involved religious groups
Churches acquiring/build on stolen land

Action: A group is being developed under the History Committee, with the leadership of Rev. Carie, to pursue possible historic implications in the history of UUCC or its predecessor congregations. Please contact Rev. Carie or Helen Zidowecki for more information or to join this working group.

The History Committee Meetings are being planned for the third Thursday of the month, 12:30-2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Contact the Helen Zidowecki (hzmre@hzmre.com, 582-5308), or put a note in the History Committee mail slot in the Committee Room. We look forward to your comments, questions and things that you have to share from our history. Please join us. Thank you.

Discernment Committee Update

Living the Grace of Love

The Discernment team began the church year with a vision – living the grace of love – and a plan to roll it out gently. The idea was to not say, "This is our vision!" But to try it on. See how it felt. Have a conversation over coffee. We have explored them in pictures, with music, with words, and with blocks. Our hope has been to let those five words – just five words – become a part of our spiritual ecosystem.

We have asked you to consider "living the Grace of Love" as a vision for our church – a North Star by which we would know our course. You have responded by listing ways we already live the grace of love within the church and beyond the church. You have also asked how do we hold ourselves responsible to living the grace of love. How do we know when we are out of right relationship with each other and the wider community?

In some ways it is easier to live the grace of love while in disagreement with the wider world. We know how to show up and protest injustice and we lobby the Maine legislature. As we work together towards justice we know we are in right relationship with the world. When we respond to our neighbors with food, clothing, rides, and celebration we know we are in right relationship.

In most ways it is more difficult to live the grace of love while we are in disagreement with each other. The recent disagreement over the political policy has drawn the attention of all – there is an urgency to the issue that drowns out so much of what we do. It’s hard to consider an abstract idea like “the grace of love” when many of us feel as if we are in conflict with each other.

When we feel our imperfections, when we experience gaps between us in the congregation, when we stop listening to each other with curious and open hearts. We begin to seek “us” and avoid “them.” This is when we need to live the grace of love most.

Discernment Team - Next Steps

Many people ask us what the Discernment Team does, and a few think they know what we do. The essence of it is that we are like a Long Range Planning committee except that, instead of finance, we are trying to chart our spiritual sustainability (not that the two can really be separated, but for the purposes of this conversation, we have done so). One of the unofficial mottos of our team is “one conversation at a time.” All of the best things – love, friendship, relationships, church – happen one conversation at a time. That has been our work.

And, while the Discernment Team has been working to engage the congregation with the idea of “Living the Grace of Love” as the Vision for the Church, the Team is now discussing the supporting Mission of this Vision. Some feedback that we have received from the congregation involves the idea of how we hold ourselves accountable to this idea: are we actually achieving our Vision? Our view is that a Vision is something that we reach for, something we hope to attain as much of the time as possible; the Mission Statement is what guides us to achieve that Vision in our church life as well as our lives outside of church. With that in mind we are now pondering questions that a Mission Statement would provoke us to ask in order to attain our Vision.

Our discussions have led us to believe that the sustainable governance of the Church is inextricably linked to its Mission and Vision. Our goal is to inform the way we “do Church” with the hope of encouraging new ways for people to engage in the on-going work of the church. The Discernment Team has begun reaching out to other congregations to discuss their governance structures to find out what works in other communities, to see how the “needs” may have been redefined and to glean ideas that might work within ours. We will continue to have these conversations over the next two months so that we can develop some concrete ideas and suggestions to bring to the Board and congregation.

If you want to be a part of this conversation, please feel free to approach any of us. I mean it! We actually think these kinds of talk are a good time.

With love

Karen, Debbie, Gary, Catherine, Erin, Claire, Reverend Carie

Chaplin Clair’s Corner

As we turn the calendar into the new year, I want to thank the members and friends of UCC for participating in my ordination service in October. Thank you for being with me all along the way, and continuing our journey together into the future through my affiliation with this congregation as a community minister.

A few folks have asked me questions about what happens next, whether I will be leaving or taking a different role in our congregation.

The short version is that I will be continuing, for the foreseeable future, to do the things I have already been doing -- both in our congregation, and in the world beyond its walls. I plan to sing with the choir as much as my work schedule permits, lead worship from time to time, continue to serve as a member of our Discernment Team, and occasionally do the other sorts of things around the church that any member might do. I remain a pledging, voting member of our congregation, and not an employee.

But I am a member of our congregation who also happens to be a recently fellowshipped and newly ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, a minister whose livelihood is out in the community rather than in the church. I continue to serve as a health care chaplain, part-time in Waterville at Mt. St. Joseph's nursing home, and per-diem at Maine Medical Center in Portland. I am currently doing professional development work toward the long-term goal of board certification as a health care chaplain, and as a minister in preliminary fellowship I have continuing accountability to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA.

In our tradition, a newly credentialed minister is considered to be in preliminary fellowship for the first few years of their ministry, accountable to our credentialing committee for three renewals of fellowship before they are considered to be in full fellowship. (It's a bit like getting tenure!) A minister serving in a UU congregation is assumed to be grounded in our tradition through that relationship, but those of us who serve in the wider community are expected to maintain connection to a UU congregation through an agreement of affiliation. Our board voted to approve my affiliation back in October and the covenant between us has been posted on the bulletin board in the foyer, along with my collegial covenant with Rev. Carie.

Once the winter holidays are past, I will be asking a small number of folks in the congregation to serve as members of my Ministerial Formation Team. The MFT supports a newly credentialed community minister in the way that a Committee on Ministry would support a newly credentialed minister serving in a congregation: by meeting regularly, about once a month, to talk with the new minister about issues related to their ministry; and to assist the community minister in preparing fellowship renewal paperwork by offering appropriate feedback.

I am looking forward to sharing my ministry in the world with the congregation I come home to!

Peace and Joy in the year to come - -

Rev. Claire

Communications Work Group

A function of the Communications Workgroup is to be aware of successes in communication and to work to enhance communication within the church community. The Communications Work Group meets monthly, usually on the third Wednesday of the month. Suggestions and comments are welcome. Please contact any of the members, or leave a message in the Communications Work Group mail slot in the Committee Room.

Have you noticed the Board of Trustees information in the Weekly E-Blasts? The agendas are posted and there are summaries of topics discussed. Board minutes are posted on the leadership bulletin board in the front hallway and available from the church office.

We are continuously working on how to improve communication with people in the community who do not have access to e-mail. Most newsletters are sent electronically and about twenty people without e-mail addresses receive them through the postal service. There is also a phone tree that can get urgent information to those without email. *Please stay alert to those who may not receive information in our usual manner so we can be sure to keep them informed.*

Communications Work Group is developing a way to get an overall picture of who connects with UUCC and how. The demographics of a congregation are much broader than who attends Sunday services! Members and friends connect in our musical activities, Small Group Ministry, Peaceful Sangha and Goddess/Earth Circles/Sabbats, to give some examples.

Coming in the New Year: the updated Program Book outlining the many opportunities for connecting with UUCC and the contact information to start a connection. We hope that the program book will enhance the understanding of ways to be involved in the UUCC community.

Communications Work Group members are Lynn Smith, Administrator; Kathy Kellison, and Helen Zidowecki.

Community Connections

UUCC offers a variety of opportunities for interested people to connect with other community members to learn, to grow, to serve.

CAPITAL AREA NEW MAINERS PROJECT

(CANMP) is a cross-cultural organization that welcomes immigrants and works to create a thriving, integrated, multicultural community in central Maine. There are many ways to get involved and help support this group's mission.

FMI: <https://www.newmainersproject.org/>

Death Talk – Augusta is an informal monthly gathering which provides a safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment for people to gather to discuss death and dying. Church members and friends, as well as members of the wider community are welcome. The group meets the 3rd Thursday monthly 4:00 -5:00 p.m. in Drew House

GODDESS/EARTH CIRCLES AND SABBATS

celebrate earth-based and goddess traditions.

Circles meet monthly, Sunday, Noon-2pm. Sabbats or earth festivals, occur at differing times.

ELDER LUNCH happens on the second Sunday of each month between October and June.

Volunteers serve lunch to self selected 'elders' meaning all are welcome. A chance to enjoy a meal and good company and/or a chance to volunteer to offer food, help set-up, serve or clean up.

GENTLE YOGA is a physical practice that makes us stronger and more flexible by helping us to link our mind, body and breath. No experience needed; just curiosity. Classes are free and are taught by Debbie Mattson on Wednesdays from 5 PM to 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall. We have extra mats, blocks, and bolsters—everything needed for Wednesday Yoga.

MUUSAN is the Maine Unitarian Universalist Social Advocacy Network. The group brings the voice of UU churches across the state to the legislature. FMI: visit the website at www.MUUSAN.org.

PEACEFUL HEART SANGHA is a mindful meditation group that meets in the Sanctuary weekly on Monday's from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. All are welcome to join this group.

PEER RUN AFFINITY GROUP is a support group for those that struggle with mood disorders and their families and friends. The group meets **every Thursday from 1:30 to 3pm in Robbins Room at the Church**. Attend this confidential group to learn the useful **facts** and to dispel the harmful **myths** about mood disorders. Meets year round.

SEASONED SOULS is a group of older church members and friends (65+) that meet to talk openly about topics related to the aging process. The group meets the 2nd & 4th Wed. of each month in the Fellowship Hall as a study/support group.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY refers to groups of up to 10 people who commit to meeting regularly for spiritual exploration, ministry to one another and to the church and the wider community.

READ, LEARN, SHARE is for devoted readers who enjoy book discussions. We meet (Oct. – June) on the first Thursday of the month from 1:00-2:30 downstairs in the Drew House. Join us at one or all discussions.

Current information about any of these activities is available on our web site at www.augustauu.org. Information is also published in the weekly E-blast and the Announcements insert in the Sunday morning Order of Service.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, contact the Church Administrator at 622-3232 or via email at admin@augustauu.org.

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

Newsletter Submissions

Submission Deadline for Spring newsletter is April 20th

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: Jill Watson

RE Coordinator: 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: admin@augustauu.org

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

Rev. Carie's Office Hours:

Monday 2:00 – 5:00

Wednesday 2:00 – 5:00

Thursday 2:00 – 5:00

Other times and days available by appointment.

Tuesday Day of Silence: reading writing, reflection

Friday is Rev. Carie's Sabbath. She does not attend to emails, phone calls or meetings. For pastoral emergencies please call her cell phone (508) 221-5295. She will return your call as soon as possible.