



THE OPEN DOOR

**NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
(UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST) AUBURN, MAINE
159 PLEASANT STREET (SIDE DOOR) AUBURN, ME 04210
(207) 783-0461 - UUAUBURN@MYFAIRPOINT.NET
WEBSITE: WWW.AUBURNUU.ORG
SUNDAY WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION AT 10 AM**

***AN OFFICIAL UUA WELCOMING CONGREGATION:
ALL ARE WORTHY, ALL ARE WELCOME!***

We need not think alike to love alike - Francis David

DECEMBER, 2011

Jodi's Corner - Words from our Minister

Rebecca Bagget writes,

“...I want to say, like Neruda,
that I am waiting for
"a great and common tenderness",
that I still believe
we are capable of attention,
that anyone who notices the world
must want to save it.”

DRE Clara Bolduc and I have been having some wonderful conversations recently about the purpose of the church in general and, more specifically, the role of our church in the larger community. You'll be hearing a lot about this in the near future, and we as a congregation will be having similar conversations over the next many months during our visioning process.

One thing that Clara and I agreed on- and that we've heard from some of you already, is that we want our church to be of service, to bring “a great and common tenderness” into our community. The question is how? To be sure, to the congregation as a whole will develop its own answers as we move through our discernment process. In the meantime though, with the blessing of the Board and Council of Committees, we are going to begin offering small opportunities to serve the community once a month. These activities, which will begin in January, will be a few hours long and family friendly- simple chances to, together, put our faith in action.

During this holiday month we will, as we have in years past, collect gifts for children in times of transition, who are in need of support and

care. The program we worked with in prior years, St. Mary's Genesis house, has undergone some significant changes, but the need remains. We'll offer more details in the days ahead. I look forward to serving with you.

In the meantime, may your days and nights be blessed,

Jodi

Office Hours Change: to increase availability to folks who have difficulty making office hours in the morning, I'm shifting my office hours. Instead of being in the office Monday, Tuesday, and Wed. mornings, I will now be in the office Monday from 9:30- 3:30 (except 12-12:30) and Wednesday from 9:30-12:30. I hope this will make it a bit easier on some of you who have found the morning hours challenging!

Jodi

Sermon Excerpt

Excerpted from "It's not an adventure if you know all the answers" preached by PJ Mears, preached on November 6th:

"...It took me awhile to learn the lessons from those early hills but once I returned to Maine I became a much better hill climber because of them. The only thing within your control pedaling up a hill is the 5 to 10 feet directly in front of you. It doesn't really matter in the moment what exists beyond that, you need to focus on the road right in front of you. Of course you can't ignore the long view, since that ultimately does matter, but you don't pedal the long view. You only pedal those 5 feet before your front wheel. There are small adjustments to make in each of those 5 foot segments, what gear are you in, where is your butt in relation to your pedals, - or your bike seat - where are your hands on the handle bars, do you stand up- sit down, manage your breathing etc. It is these small adjustments that allow you to climb the whole hill. Staying in the moment, no matter how much my lungs are on fire or my legs feel like they will explode, is what gets me to the top of every hill I climb. And now I even go out and climb monster hills on purpose, because it is what leads me to my best performances both on and off the bike.

The life lesson: Do not get distracted by what you can not affect. The "hill" will not get less steep, you may or may not see the top – or what you think is the top, traffic comes and it goes. You can't focus on winning or beating the whole hill – there are too many variables – but you can focus on your best performance on this part of the hill, and once you have strung enough of those parts of the hill together the top appears. ..."

From President Anne Perron

Dearest Congregation,

This fall has been a very busy season. When the leaves start to change and the temperature cools (finally), my family gets out the chainsaws and wood splitting tools.

A lot of you may be rolling your eyes or thinking "no way", but Carm and I actually look forward to this project. Before Christmas every year I drop about 3.5 cord of wood onto the ground. It sits there until late summer, early fall. This is when we cut it up with a chainsaw, throw it in the truck and bring it down to the house to split. Sometimes we even get some help from friends or family. We enjoy it because it's an opportunity to be outside enjoying nature and all its splendors, a chance to get intense exercise, and especially while splitting – a chance to hang out with each other.

Splitting is the fun part for me. If I can get someone to put the wood on the stump, I can swing the axe all day. It's almost like a meditation. Focus on where I want to have the axe strike on the wood, swing the axe around and exhale as it hits the piece. A lot of mastering a good swing is the breath and clearing your mind of cluttered thoughts. With a little bribery I can get Diego to fill the wheel barrow and even bring a couple of arm full's upstairs. It is also a time to laugh and chat with your work partner. These days are very special.

There is something gratifying about having someone plop a big knotty chunk of wood in front of you and with only axes, wedges and sledge hammers , creating a pile of fire wood that will surely be toasty in the stove and create a warm ambiance while baking some holiday treats.

May all your holidays be filled with joy,
Yours in service, Anne Perron

Meet our new Church Sexton

We're delighted to offer a warm welcome to Robert J. Gibson of Lewiston who joins our staff as part-time Sexton. Robert has extensive experience working as an artist, a carpenter, painter, sculptor, woodworker and builder.



A graduate of the Philadelphia College of Art, Robert has served as co-director of The Turner Center for the Arts, and does carpentry and repair work at a local apartment building.

Robert views his work with the church as an “opportunity to be of service to a community which demonstrates such an open and inclusive spirit...”

The self-portrait shown here is among many of his works displayed on his website www.robert@robertgibsonart.com/ Additional works can be viewed at LA Arts Gallery, Gallery 5.

As Sexton, Robert will work closely with our Building and Grounds Committee, including our regular volunteers, Bob Thorpe, Gerry Fox, and Ron Spofford, all of whom are delighted to learn that Robert is adept with hand and power tools, painting, plastering, custom renovations and design work.



Welcome to First Universalist Church of Auburn, Robert!

Wish List for the church

- **Snow blower** for our Sexton to use!!!
- Vacuum Cleaner “ “ “
- Green cleaning products for the church
- Sponge mop (for cleaning smaller bathrooms)

(Now that we have our wonderful new sexton,
let's give him the proper equipment to work with.
Please contact the church office at 783-0461.)

Upcoming Mission Redevelopment Opportunity

Our current mission statement is on the long side and as nice as the sentiment is, how to implement those words in our everyday congregational and community life is challenging.

Likewise, this mission statement does not clearly tell our community who we are and what we stand for. In January and February we will be hosting facilitated mission development sessions to help us create a short, clear, and behavior based mission statement.

These sessions will focus on a handful of questions designed to bring to light what our church means to each of you and what role you believe it serves in the community.

Sessions will be held on multiple days and times to give all who wish an opportunity to participate. It will be your responsibility to choose the one that works best for you.

If attending a discussion is not possible we will work with you so you can share your thoughts.

Here are a few sample questions to get you thinking:

- a. What does this church mean to you? Why are you part of it?
- b. What might cause you to leave this church (if we were to start doing something, or stop doing something, that you find particularly important)

We will take the results of these facilitated discussions and sort through them looking for common overarching themes, which we will present to the Board in March.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Your facilitators:

Rich Livingston

Karen Lane

PJ Mears

Mary Kay Weisenberger

Jodi Hayashida

Gingerbread Fair Thank You!

Many thanks to all of you who helped in so many ways -- crafted, baked, donated things, prepared lunch, served, made baskets, set-up, decorated, worked on Saturday, provided music, helped with cleanup, shopped, made new friends, renewed old acquaintances -- and generally helped to enhance our church community.

The winner of the \$150 gift card raffle to Hannaford was Catherine Leblanc Gibson. Catherine donated a portion of her prize back to the church. Thanks, Catherine!

We have a few expenses yet to come in but we basically made our goal of \$5000. Thank you all for making this year's fair another successful event.

With gratitude,

--*Mary Lou Hofmann*, Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS – NEW MEMBER PROFILES

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that Caroline Davison, John Davison, Sara Karam, and Giselle Scherle have joined our congregation. We welcomed them during the annual Harvest Communion worship service held on Sunday, November 20th. Our newest members are always asked to write down a brief bio with information they would be comfortable sharing with the congregation. We offer you a profile for each of them below which includes what they shared about themselves.

Caroline Davison is a Reiki Master, an artist, and a poet. Her favorite color is rainbow and she says she occasionally wakes up, "FULL OF AWESOME".

John Davison is a mild mannered accountant by day and at night he is a performing musician. His band, the McCarthy's released its 3rd CD in November.

John and Caroline are Usher Committee Co-chairs. We are also very grateful for their dedication to managing the White Elephant items at the annual Gingerbread Fair in November.

We appreciate Sara Karam's willingness to serve as Co-chair of the church Social Justice Committee. She is single and has lived in the Lewiston/Auburn area since 2007. She moved here to be closer to her work as a school counselor at Turner Elementary school. Sara grew up in Michigan. Her interests include athletics, the arts, reading, weaving and spending time with people.

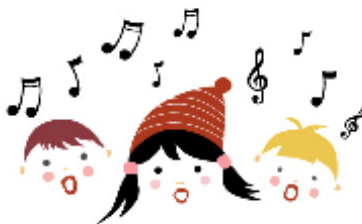
In November Giselle Scherle performed the role of the secretary in our very own UU Theater production of "Whuu done It?", an original mystery dinner theater featuring entertainment and a three course meal. We thank her for designing the poster and cover for the show. She is an artist and an animator and has been involved in saving wolves.

-- *Beth Ayotte*, Chair

Christmas Day

There will be no service on Sunday, December 25 as it is Christmas Day, BUT there will be a waffle breakfast and board games at 9am for any who are looking for fellowship on that day. Those who are interested should contact Hope Tracy or Diane Chasse before December 15th so we can have an approximate head count.

News From Religious Exploration



Holiday Pageant

We hope to have all of our children participate in this year's Holiday Pageant! The pageant will be performed on Sunday, December 18 during the Sunday morning service.

This year, we'll be performing a traditional Christmas Pageant. We will be rehearsing on Sunday, December 11th after the service (from 11:00 to 11:45) and on Sunday, December 18th prior to the service. **All participants need to meet in the sanctuary at 8:30 a.m. on December 18th.**

If your child has to miss the December 11th rehearsal, but would still like to participate, please contact Clara ASAP.

Children's Choir

This year, in addition to performing during the Holiday Pageant, our children's choir will be performing at Clover Manor in Auburn on Sunday, December 18th, exact time TBA.

We'll have a potluck lunch at the church after the service, then carpool and caravan to Clover.

Our children's choir is open to all our children, ages 5 and up, and younger children who like to sing and are able to stand still for a short time. Please see Clara for copies of the music for the performance!

It's time to Welcome A Guest At Your Table!



Each year at this time, friends and families in our congregation participate in the UU tradition of "Guest at Your Table." We bring home special boxes, place them at our tables and share our financial blessings with our "guests."

You can learn more by visiting www.uusc.org.

We'll be passing out Guest at Your Table boxes on Sunday, December 4th. We will close the Guest at Your Table program on the third Sunday in January.

Director of Religious Exploration Clara Bolduc can be reached at DREuuAuburn@myfairpoint.net. Her office hours are Wednesdays, 11:30 to 1:30, by chance and by appointment.

Social Justice Corner

Join us **Wednesday, December 7 at 6:30**. The Social Justice Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 in the RE classroom.

Second Collection is taken on the first Sunday of the month, to benefit the following groups:
December 2011: **Lots to Gardens** -- January 2012: **OUTRIGHT/LA**

Throughout December, we will take nominations for the next 2nd Collection cycle, and you will be asked to vote in January.

"THINK INTERFAITH"- In keeping with this theme from the UUA's Standing on the Side of Love campaign, Auburn UU is cooperating with humanitarian efforts led by other denominations in our area.

- Trinity Jubilee Center is looking for a group of people to run a weekday meal- let us know if you can help.

-High Street Food Pantry- Did you know there is a food pantry open every Thursday at High Street Congregational Church (106 Pleasant)? This important program serves 50 households/month through the cooperative effort of several local churches. Needy persons can apply to receive 1 package/month, if they meet federal guidelines. Also, you can directly designate this pantry on your United Way donation.

Needs:

+Pickup-truck Thurs 8am-10 to deliver food from GSFB (no loading necessary)

+Volunteers for Thursdays 10:30-noon- esp. for 5th Thursdays -contact Eric Howes at howes@roadrunner.com

+Food items or money- they pay only \$.16/lb for food at GSFB, also can specify them in your United Way donation

+Clothing Donations will be brought to the "Clothes Closet" at the Court Street Baptist Church for distribution. The Center for Wisdom's Women is not able to accept clothing at this time.

--- **Social Justice Committee**

November Is

A state of mind,
a stab to the
hopeful heart
engendered by October's
flamboyant promise,
the dream belied
by every falling leaf.
November stands as
sentry outside the door
of the dying
her winds moaning the grief

the regrets of things not
accomplished.
Those of us who whirl in the
circle of seasons know
that beyond the oppression
of time's darkest days
awaits a renewed enlightenment
of mood. Thank goodness we don't
live in November-----
we're just passing through.

---*Pearl Tibbets Sawyer*



OPEN MIC

The next Open Mic/Poetry Slam will be **Friday, December 9 at 7:15**. For over 5 1/2 years, people have made their way to our unique space, on the second Friday of the month. Our vestry offers good sound quality and a warm, friendly audience that shares a passion for the spirituality of music and spoken word. Join us at this **free** monthly celebration.

Refreshments and children's room available.

UU Theater

Mystery+ Dinner + Fun at UU Theater

Thanks to all who attended "Whuu Done It?," written and directed by Karen Lane, on Nov. 5/6.

The cast included Jay Fiori, Toby Haber-Giasson, Stephanie Hughes, Karen Lane, Russ Perham, Giselle Schelle, Matthew Stevens and Judy Weber.



Thanks to Sara Karam for selling tickets and Nicole Rush who headed up the servers: Bonnie Soper, Diane Chasse, Mary Morin and Hope Tracey. The raffle winner of a bike- tune-up at Rainbow Bicycle was Pam Price-Wharff.

UU Theater is a fund-raising effort which both supports the church as well as spreads our UU values in the community.

Above, Russ Perham, Matt Stevens, Judy Weber, Toby Haber-Giasson and Stephanie Hughes can't stop the drama in UU Theater's "Whuu Done It?"

UU Theater - How can YOU Play a Part?

- Support our church by attending the play- it's a fundraiser!
- Support UU Theater's mission to speak our message to the wider community- bring friends!
- Support the individuals who put time and energy into this endeavor- say hey!
- Support the outside community which supports us via playbill ads:
 - * Major support from Mechanics Bank, Jim's Rent-It, Goin' Postal and Maine Family Credit Union
 - * Strong support from Roy's All-Beef Hamburgers and Advocates for Children
 - * Neighborly support from:

Advance Dental, Austin Associates, Brad's Auto Repair, Bread Shack, Cameron Tire, Dillingham's Funeral Home, Dr. Haltof, Osteopath, Encompass Marketing, Fireside Stove, Florian's, Handy Anne, Marc's Auto, Michel Giasson Architect, Ness Oil, Next Level Business Coaching, Norman, Hanson & Detroy, Orphan Annie's, Pam-Price-Wharf, Rainbow Credit Union, Roy's Hamburgers, Roy I. Snowe, Inc., Studio 88.

- Please patronize these supporters, or let them know you **REALLY** appreciate their participation in UUT.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The **Editorial guidelines for the Open Door newsletter** have been revised. Contributors have been made aware that brevity is the most important aspect of a newsletter story viewed online. Open Door strives to be more concise, to serve the reader's busy schedule. We hope you notice the difference!

Publicity Guidelines- please submit your church event news to Toby (baywest@roadrunner.com) and to Karen (uuauburn@myfairpoint.net). Your info may then be used in many outlets: OOS, email, webpage, & Facebook. Karen is only responsible for the OOS. Please help us make our system work, to serve the congregation better.

The Auburn UU leaders board has been revamped to include not only the Board and staff, but committee chairs, as well. Thanks to the design talents of Hope Tracey, this attractive display in the vestry allows you to see 'who's who' at Auburn UU.

*If you change your email address, please share it with the office or Toby at baywest@roadrunner.com.

* Visit the church Facebook page (at First Universalist Church of Auburn) for events and updates about church doings! Also, church news is on the homepage of our website at www.auburnuu.org.

COUNCIL of COMMITTEES (CofC)

CofC offers a unique opportunity for dialogue and coordination between the many groups in church.

Chairs (or designated committee members) attend these monthly forums. If you are curious, you are welcome to join us! Our next meeting is **December 18 at 11:30** in the Outright room.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVE ANNUAL COLLECTION FOR THE BARTON CENTER FOR DIABETES EDUCATION, INC.

Every year the church donates 10% of the Christmas eve collection to the Barton Center for Diabetes Education, Inc., formerly known as the Clara Barton Camp for Girls with Diabetes, Inc. and, since 2008 managing and then purchasing, in 2010, the Joslin Diabetes Center for Boys with Diabetes.

Should anyone wish to make a special donation for the Campership Fund, checks should be made to the Barton Center earmarked "Campership".

The Barton Center offers many programs for children with diabetes and their families. The FALL 2011 newsletter is very much worth reading and is posted on the bulletin board in the church downstairs lobby. With the two camps only three miles apart there has always been a lot of interaction between the camps and campers. In the Fall newsletter there is an article written by one of the Leader-In Training who shares her love of Camp and an article by one of the campers at Camp Joslin who wrote of his Camp Joslin Experience.

In 1932 the Clara Barton Birthplace Camp for Diabetes Education and Treatment was established. This humanitarian project to honor Clara Barton is inspirational. **The Clara Barton Camp for Girls with Diabetes**

was the only camp of its kind in the world that helped children to see a brighter future while living with diabetes. The donations of the Universalist women's groups maintained the camp and also made it possible to offer camperships.

The Barton Center for Diabetes Education, Inc., formerly known as the Clara Barton Camp for Girls with Diabetes, Inc., continues to inspire children and empower families. As Clara Barton herself fought a continuous battle to meet the needs of others, let us also help to meet the needs of this worthy cause.

More information about the history and work of the Center is posted on the church bulletin board.

---*Esther Tucker*

Use *iGive.com* and Benefit our Church

If you are shopping online, now or for the holidays, please consider using www.iGive.com. When you order through this portal, our church receives a percentage of each sale. Just go to www.iGive.com to sign up or order. A great way to earn some extra income for the church by doing what we already do!

Immigration (In)Justice Calls UU's to Phoenix

The 2012 General Assembly (G.A.) of the Unitarian Universalist Association will be *unlike any other*. It is planned as a **Justice G.A.** and for five days, June 20-24, 2012, in Phoenix, Arizona, UU's will work directly in partnership with communities that are most impacted by immigration issues.



This yearly gathering of UU's from around the country (and the world) will focus solely on immigration injustices and human rights abuses. This unique G.A. will allow participants to witness in ways that reflect our UU commitment to one of our most important civil and human rights issues. Attendees will also do hands-on work with community partners: projects will take place in a variety of settings, and include multigenerational teams and accessible venues. Whether participants choose to witness for one hour, make signs for people to carry, or spend a day at a project, there will be opportunities for everyone.

Justice G.A. will provide training in how to build stronger relationships, community partnerships, and movements for justice with in-depth offerings on such significant justice concerns as colonization, border issues and advocacy. Church *teams* are encouraged to attend G.A. in order to share experiences and learn how to continue this work at home.

Our Northern New England District (NNED) is willing to help organize teams and group travel plans from our churches in Maine, N.H. and Vt. Those interested should contact Karen Brammer, our district's Justice Specialist, at kbrammer385@comcast.net.

Those of us who will not be able to go to Phoenix in 2012 can work here at home to engage in immigration as a human rights issue. **Food** may be one such connection. The reliance on immigrant labor for our food - from apples to cheese - is a natural connection between the two issues. Unsafe exposure to chemicals, limited access to health care, anxiety about legal status, and substandard living conditions are some of the issues migrant food-workers deal with. Our ability to eat ethically is bound to their realities.

The UUA has two excellent resources on immigration: [a web page](#) and [a blog](#) called "Cooking together, recipes for immigration work" There is a great pool of ideas, stories and connections in each.

- - *Anne Kinney, Denominational Affairs Representative*

UU AUBURN - DECEMBER, 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																									
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<p>4</p> <p>Worship and RE at 10am followed by coffee hour in the Vestry. Second Collection: Lots to Gardens-GAYT Boxes distributed-Second Collection nominations-11:30 RE Committee</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Social Justice 6:30pm</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>OPEN MIC 7:15</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Leah Wolfsong Winter Solstice (R)</p>																																									
<p>11</p> <p>Worship and RE at 10am -Pageant Rehearsal - followed by coffee hour in the vestry</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Board Meeting 6:30pm Finance Committee 6:30pm</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Dave Rowe + Phil House Holiday Concert - 7pm</p>																																									
<p>18</p> <p>Worship and RE at 10am followed by coffee hour in the vestry - Christmas Pageant, multi-gen service - Council of Committees 11:30</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Board Meeting 6:30pm Finance Committee 6:30pm</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7pm</p>																																									
<p>25</p> <p>CHRISTMAS DAY - no regular service - Christmas breakfast 10am</p>	<p>26</p> <p>January Newsletter Deadline</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Equality Maine New Year's Dance (R) (New Year's Eve)</p>																																									

For an up-to-date calendar, visit auburnuu.org and click on "Calendar." - (R) is a rental event.